

The Book of Zechariah

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(2000 and 2003 Studies, plus Chapters 12–14 from 1991 Study)

The following notes on the Book of Zechariah were compiled from Bible studies led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1991, 2000, and 2003. They should be utilized with the following understanding:

1. Each paragraph preceded by “**Comment**” or “**Q**” (an abbreviation for “**Question**”) was introduced by someone other than Bro. Frank.
2. The original study did not follow a prepared text but was extemporaneous in nature.
3. Although the transcriber tried to faithfully, with the Lord’s help, set forth the thoughts that were presented in the study, the notes are not a verbatim rendering and, therefore, should be considered in that context.
4. Finally, Bro. Frank did not review the notes for possible errors that may have inadvertently entered the text.

With this disclaimer in mind, may the notes be a blessing as a useful study guide.

THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH

(Studies led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 2000 and 2003)

Zech. 1:1 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,

The word of Jehovah came unto Zechariah in the eighth month of the second year of Darius. Haggai and Zechariah were contemporaneous prophets, and Haggai's prophecy immediately precedes that of Zechariah in Holy Writ. Haggai's ministry started in the sixth month of the same (or second) year of Darius (Hag. 1:1; 2:1,10,20). Haggai spoke again in the seventh and ninth months, and then his ministry ended, whereas Zechariah's ministry continued on. The Book of Haggai consists of only two chapters, whereas the Book of Zechariah has 14 chapters.

Haggai's ministry was of short duration, lasting for only four months before he disappeared from the scene. Zechariah's ministry was also brief. As a young prophet, he appeared on the scene like a meteor and recorded the visions and tremendous knowledge that he received. Incidentally, through the lineage, Zechariah was both a prophet and a priest, as were both Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who prophesied approximately a hundred years earlier, around 606 BC.

The thinking of Bible scholars has been that Haggai, as a very old person, was helpful in stirring up the Israelites who had returned to the homeland from Babylonian exile. When Zechariah came on the scene, he was a young prophet, as shown in the second chapter, where he was watching a scene in a vision and hearing about himself. It was said of him, "Run, speak to this *young man*" (Zech. 2:4).

When Cyrus, king of Persia, issued the decree in 536 BC that allowed Jews to return to the homeland to rebuild the Temple, about 50,000 Jews were willing to forsake all in Babylon and go back to Israel. There the Jews were under the jurisdiction of Joshua (or Jeshua) as high priest and Zerubbabel as governor. At first, the Jews zealously worked on the Temple, but the work soon bogged down when they began to slack off on the Lord's work and to build their own homes instead. They were more concerned for their families and their own dwelling places than for hastening to complete the work on the Temple. Accounts in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah tell what happened. For two years, the Jews made progress on the Temple, but after that, they were frustrated and had difficulties with their neighbors in the Jerusalem area, who were like a hybrid race. (Some of the Jews who were not taken into Babylonian captivity came back to Israel and intermarried with people of the land.) As a result, no work was done on the Temple for 15 years. In other words, following the two years, there came a 15-year hiatus with no progress being made on the Temple.

Eventually along came another important individual, Ezra, who was given permission to return to Israel. Of the two contemporary prophets Ezra wrote the following. Haggai and Zechariah "prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them.... And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it [the Temple], according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius [Hystaspes], and Artaxerxes king of Persia" (Ezra 5:1; 6:14). Thus the ministries of Zechariah and Haggai pertained to the rebuilding of Zerubbabel's Temple. As short as Haggai's ministry was, it greatly helped and encouraged the rebuilding.

The Darius of verse 1 is Darius Hystaspes, the sequence of the Persian kings being Cyrus, Cambyses, Smerdis, Darius Hystaspes, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes. The sequence becomes important in understanding the time period. Cyrus reigned for seven years (not the nine years

attributed to him in history by incorrectly accrediting to him the two years of the reign of Darius the Mede). In round numbers, Cambyses reigned for eight years, Smerdis was king for about three months, and Darius Hystaspes was on the throne for 36 years. The ministry of Zechariah began early in the reign of Darius Hystaspes, starting in the second year.

“Darius” was a title. The Bible mentions that the kingdoms of the Medes and the Persians were combined (Dan. 8:3). This uniting happened through marriage with the daughter of one line and the son of the other line. When Babylon was captured in 536 BC, Darius the Mede was the king, and Cyrus (the Persian) was the general. For a very short time, the Median kingdom was superior to the Persian kingdom, but then the Persians took the ascendancy. For Hystaspes to take the title “Darius” many years later indicates a Median background in his lineage.

Verses 1-6 provide a historical introduction to show what period of time the Prophet Zechariah occupied, and they also serve as a backbone for the advice about to be given. Zechariah, whose name means “God remembers,” was “the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet.” However, Zechariah is also said to be simply “the son of Iddo” (Ezra 5:1; 6:14). How is this difference harmonized? Berechiah seems to have been the true father of Zechariah, but when he died early, Iddo apparently married Berechiah’s wife. During the 70-year captivity in Babylon, liberty was given for this type of arrangement, which occurred frequently. Under the Law, whenever a man could not produce seed with his wife and he died, another took the same wife to bear children so that the posterity would not be lost. Therefore, Zechariah could be titled “the son of Iddo the prophet.” It is interesting that in the Book of Ezra, the priesthood is traced back 17 generations to Aaron. Thus the priestly lineage was not lost down to and through the Babylonian captivity.

Zech. 1:2 The LORD hath been sore displeased with your fathers.

The opening remarks of the Book of Zechariah were uncomplimentary to the Jews who had returned from Babylonian captivity.

Zech. 1:3 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.

Zech. 1:4 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.

The prophet spoke the message God had given him: “Turn ye unto me, ... and I will turn unto you.” Not only were these words the keynote here, but the same principle is involved with consecration in the Gospel Age (James 4:8).

Many years earlier Isaiah had described the sinful condition of the nation of Israel: “From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it [the nation]; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment” (Isa. 1:6). Moreover, through Isaiah, God likened the people to Sodom and Gomorrah: “Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah” (Isa. 1:10). But then God added, “Come now, and let us reason together, ... [for] though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as [white] wool” (Isa. 1:18). In dealing with His people in Old Testament times, God was forgiving and merciful *as long as they repented*.

Through Zechariah, God was enjoining the people by reminding them of their fathers and saying in effect, “Do not follow the example of your forebears, who have had a history of not

listening to me.” The Lord deals with individuals the same way in the present age; that is, He calls attention to their sinful condition and their need for cleansing, and then, as one responds, He speaks encouragingly.

Comment: Throughout the Old Testament, even though the Israelites continued to sin generation after generation, God repeatedly pleaded with them to turn from their evil ways. He has been very merciful from their earliest days.

Reply: Yes, this has been the message, but in addition, God punished them for disobedience.

Q: Cyrus gave the decree allowing the Israelites to return to the homeland in 536 BC. Was the time setting now about 16 years after that?

A: We know from history that the year was about 520 BC. When the city of Babylon was taken, Darius the Mede was the king and Cyrus the Persian was his general. At first, therefore, the kingdom of the Medes was superior to the kingdom of the Persians. The decree of Cyrus was not given until he succeeded Darius two years later.

Q: Why was the title “LORD of hosts” used nine times in this first chapter of Zechariah?

A: Zechariah was trying to encourage the Israelites by reminding them of God’s power and authority. Thinking about His being “the LORD of hosts” helped remove their fear and trepidation of the enemies that surrounded Jerusalem and were threatening them. The city lay in ruins and the enemies far outnumbered them—much like the Arab-Israeli situation today. The enemies were very hostile to the Israelites’ rebuilding effort.

Zech. 1:5 Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?

Zech. 1:6 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.

After saying, “Be ye not as your fathers,” God asked the Israelites, “Your fathers, where are they? Your prophets, do they live forever?” The answer to those questions was past history, and now a new chapter of history was starting. God was saying, “Based upon what happened back there, you have come to a time of decision making. Will you do the same as your forebears?”

God continued, “But my words and my statutes, which I commanded ... the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers?” In other words, “The prophets are off the scene, but weren’t their prophecies fulfilled? For example, didn’t Jeremiah predict the destruction of Jerusalem and the burning of the Temple? Didn’t those things happen?” God’s words and statutes as given by previous prophets had proven to be true, and now Zechariah was coming as a prophet in the name of the Lord.

Verses 5 and 6 can also be read from the negative standpoint that the smooth, good things prophesied by the false prophets never materialized. In fact, just the opposite occurred.

“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 [God] dealt with us.” The Jews who went back to the homeland 70 years later when Cyrus issued his decree for the rebuilding of the Temple attested that what Zechariah was saying was true. What the prophets of the past had spoken in

the name of the Lord came to pass just as they had said. The Jews had learned the lesson.

Comment: Lamentations 2:17 is pertinent: “The LORD hath done that which he had devised; he hath fulfilled his word that he had commanded in the days of old: he hath thrown down, and hath not pitied: and he hath caused thine enemy to rejoice over thee, he hath set up the horn of thine adversaries.”

Reply: The Book of Lamentations was the expression of the Israelites in Babylonian captivity, where they could affirm that events had come to pass exactly as predicted by Jeremiah. Although Zechariah 1:5,6 was written later, about 520 BC, the sentiments are similar.

Q: What is the thought in the last part of verse 5: “and the prophets, do they live for ever?”

A: From one standpoint, the implied answer was yes. Even though the prophets died, their *testimony* and the *truthfulness* of their testimony lived on. Zechariah was merely reviewing what had already happened and was saying that the fulfilled events verified the words spoken by the prophets and God’s displeasure toward the fathers who had disobeyed and refused to hearken. However, if the question is taken from the negative standpoint, the answer was no because the false prophets had perished.

And there is another point. Prophets may come and go, but are they recognized? Sometimes people forget a true prophet. He dies and his prophecy dies with him. But generally speaking, if he has been a true prophet of the Lord, that testimony is sure. The Lamentations text is saying the same thing, namely, that God has proven Himself to be correct.

Incidentally, how much rested on one man’s shoulder! Had King Zedekiah *obeyed*, Jerusalem and the Temple would not have been destroyed. That is an astounding realization. Earlier the princes were presented with the same option, but they also failed to hearken. Thus a person’s background powerfully affects his decision making over the years. In regard to God’s Word, Christians need to ask themselves the following questions. Am I influenced by numbers? Am I influenced by friends? Am I influenced by family? Almost everyone is influenced by one or more of these factors, but some are *radically* influenced. With some, the difference is black and white. With others, it is more of a gray area, and with still others, there is a little bending of the truth depending on the closeness of the relationship. To be truly just in decision making is very hard, but we must strive for that goal and practice over the years. It would be wonderful to be correct in every matter, but perfection will not come on this side of the veil. Actually, if we were always correct in the present life, the danger would be pride.

Zech. 1:7 Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Sebat, 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,

In the eleventh month—just three months later—Zechariah had a *series* of visions in the *same* night (see chapters 1–6). Of course the Holy Spirit aided his memory, but here is another case where God used as His instrument a person who had the power of retention and memory. Zechariah had to remember all the details of multiple visions, plus the explanations that accompanied them, and record everything the next morning. Depending on how the visions are counted, there were seven or eight in all. The words “I lifted up mine eyes” introduce many of the visions and are a clue they all occurred in the same night (Zech. 1:18; 2:1; 5:1,9; 6:1). First, the prophet saw a vision, then he listened with rapt attention as it was explained to him, and after that he thought on the vision. Then he lifted up his eyes and saw the next vision, etc.

Zech. 1:8 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.

The first vision was of a man riding on a red horse in a forest of myrtle trees. The horse came to a stop and stood among myrtle trees that were in “the bottom,” that is, in a valley. In other words, the man on the red horse entered a forest glade that was in a valley. Behind him were three groups of horses, each being a different color: red, speckled, and white.

What does the “red horse” represent? Usually a horse is a doctrine or message that goes through the earth on a mission. Here is where the writings of the Pastor have proven very valuable, for they show that the color red refers to the Ancient Worthies. The red heifer that was slain in connection with the Tabernacle sacrifices is a picture of the Ancient Worthy class (Num. 19:2-10). As further confirmation, the memory or example of the Ancient Worthies is spoken of in the Book of Hebrews as the “ashes of an [red] heifer” (Heb. 9:13). After the flame of a fire goes out, smoke continues to ascend for a while. In the antitype, sometimes the smoke is favorable, and sometimes, as with mystic Babylon, it is the opposite. The figurative smoke of the burning (destruction) of the mother system will forever be a memorial to future generations; that is, what has happened in past history will forever be etched in memory.

Zechariah “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.” If we understand correctly, “myrtle trees” did not grow too high, but they provided shade and coolness. Moreover, they had a beautiful fragrance as if to say that something good would result.

In the vision, the man, representing the Logos, was back in Zechariah’s day during the development of the Ancient Worthy class. Horses symbolize doctrines, and the doctrines go throughout the earth on a mission in a sequence of development. Stated another way, each color horse (doctrine) develops a different class. As we will see, chapter 6 furnishes more clues for the interpretation of this vision in chapter 1.

The “red horses,” which appeared on the scene first in this vision, represent the doctrine that developed the Ancient Worthies. Accordingly, the Ancient Worthies were the first faith class to be developed. Hebrews 11 gives a partial listing by name of individuals who comprise this class by faithfully finishing their earthly calling for future service in the Kingdom. The last Ancient Worthy was John the Baptist, who had the honor of announcing the presence of Messiah at the First Advent. God does things according to His own will, and we cannot say that fairness would require John’s eligibility for running the race for the high calling. Many Christians have been perplexed as to why God bypasses one person and calls another, but that is His prerogative. To illustrate the principle, Jesus showed favoritism to three disciples: Peter, James, and John. The Old Testament states the principle of not showing partiality to either the poor or the rich, but that is in matters of *judgment* in court cases. In other words, has the individual done right or wrong? Will he get a pardon or a sentence? However, God has the right to show favoritism, or partiality, and we should be very thankful for whatever providences we receive as individuals and not desire more honor and recognition in the present life. In the future, in the Kingdom arrangement, we will be rewarded according to our faith and faithfulness now.

The color red is appropriate for the Ancient Worthies, for they were a sinful class in the sense that they were not justified like Christians in the Gospel Age, whose sins are covered by the blood of Christ. The Ancient Worthies were reckoned as righteous from the standpoint of being a friend with typical justification, and not a son with real justification (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23). They manifested the same type of faith that the Church in the Gospel Age manifests, but since Jesus had to be the *first* of this very elect class, God chose him to be the first

among many sons in both *time* and *importance* (Col. 1:18; Heb. 2:10; Rev. 1:17; 2:8; 22:13).

Of course Jesus was the Logos at the very beginning. The Logos rode the red horse for many centuries before the First Advent, that is, (1) during the dispensation before the Flood when there were at least three Ancient Worthies (Abel, Enoch, and Noah) and (2) during the Patriarchal and Jewish Ages after the Flood when there arose other prophets, such as Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel, to whom the Logos gave messages from Jehovah.

Zech. 1:9 Then said I, O my lord, what are these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will show thee what these be.

Now we are told that the man riding on the red horse was an “angel.” Zechariah inquired of the angel, “What is the meaning of this vision?” Who might this “angel” be who was sent to convey information to Zechariah? He was the Logos back in the prophet’s day during the development of the Ancient Worthy class. The man, the angel, was on a *red* horse because the time setting of the vision was in the period of the Ancient Worthy selection. Thus the angel who talked with Zechariah and the man on the red horse were the *same* individual: the Logos. He said to Zechariah, “I will show thee what these [the horses] be.”

Zechariah’s question “O my lord, what are these?” shows that God reveals prophetic matters according to one’s interest. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” is the principle (Matt. 11:15). Those who hunger for prophetic understanding and are interested in things of the Lord are proportionately blessed as long as a time restraint does not prohibit the revealment. In other words, much of the understanding of God’s Word was locked until an appropriate time period for the information to be disclosed. Many prophets and angels desired to see the things prophesied, but in spite of their holiness and intense interest, understanding was not given because it was not the due time. However, when the due time comes, those who have this hunger and interest are usually the ones most informed and proportionately blessed. Thus, in addition to the more *technical* prophecies, subtle nuances such as Zechariah’s question are woven into the Scriptures to give us understanding along the lines of *character* doctrine.

Zech. 1:10 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 (the Logos) replied to Zechariah’s inquiry about the horses: “These are they whom the LORD [Jehovah] hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth.” The point is that the horses had a heaven-originated mission to accomplish in the earth, namely, “to walk to and fro through the earth.” We know the messages are favorable because *God* sent them to walk to and fro.

Zech. 1:11 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.

After the angel on the horse explained to Zechariah who the horses were, they responded in a chorus, “We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.” In other words, “We were sent on a mission, but there has been no response.” The silence, or peace, signified that they had not received the anticipated reception. They had performed their commission, but conditions were not yet conducive for the message to be revealed. In fact, there was almost a Laodicean spirit, for the people were engrossed in their own problems and were not looking to the Lord in a special sense.

It is important to realize the circumstances of the time. A few months earlier, the Prophet

Haggai had begun to stir up the people. His prophecy, consisting of only two chapters, was very short, but it awakened the people.

Comment: *God's sending the horses to walk to and fro through the earth would imply a selection of individuals by the respective horse doctrines down through the ages.*

Reply: The Logos was standing among the myrtle tree *class*, those individuals who would be called in all three periods, that is, the people of God in whatever age they happened to be, whether prior to or during the Gospel Age. Through the Logos, God sent messages down here to seek out and develop these individuals.

Comment: Then the thought is that the myrtle trees were men in any age whom the horse doctrines would select for the respective classes.

Reply: A doctrine develops a class. Therefore, the horses represent doctrines that develop individuals, who are represented by the myrtle trees.

The horses answered the angel of the Lord, the Logos, and said, "We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest." This picture, or *prophecy* of the future, is meant to be a message of encouragement. Sometimes the Lord speaks of the future as though it were in the past; that is, He speaks of things that have not yet occurred as being in the past, whereas they are really prophecies of events yet to occur. The world will be at rest in the Kingdom Age after all of these selections have taken place.

Zech. 1:12 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 Logos, the "angel," the rider on the red horse, petitioned God, "O Jehovah of hosts, how long will you not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which you had indignation for 70 years?" The Jews had been in Babylonian captivity for 70 years as a result of God's indignation, which caused the land to be desolate and the Temple of Solomon to be destroyed. At the end of the 70 years, the Lord answered the Jews through the decree of Cyrus, which granted liberty to return to the homeland to rebuild the Temple. However, there had not been much progress because of harassment from neighbors. As a result, the Jews, being frustrated in their efforts to build the Temple, quickly lost interest and concentrated instead on personal matters and building their own homes.

Comment: The Logos asked this question for Zechariah's benefit.

Reply: Yes, and for our benefit too.

Zechariah's ministry took place years after the 70 years of indignation that Jehovah had on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah. And the time setting was a number of years after Cyrus's decree that permitted the Israelite captives who so desired to return to their homeland. Cyrus even wanted to supply protection, and he gave them aid in going back. Of the Jews, who had multiplied prolifically during the 70 years, only about 50,000—a minority—went back to Israel. The others stayed where they were, being comfortable with houses and property; they did not want to return and start from scratch. The Jews who went into captivity were instructed to build houses, for they would be there for 70 years. However, as expressed in Lamentations, those in exile who mourned for Jerusalem and Israel had the right heart condition.

Now, in the second year of Darius, 16 years after some of the Israelites had gone back to the

homeland, they were complaining. The reasons for the complaints are revealed in the Book of Haggai. God said to the Israelites through the prophet: “Do you expect me to reward you when you came back and laid the foundation of the Temple and then started to build homes for yourselves? For many years, you have forgotten the Temple. Consider what has been happening to you. While you were building your houses, your crops yielded only half of what you expected. Moreover, all this time you have been under a threat from your enemies, and they have made certain incursions. However, if you *hearken* to me, you will prosper. If you *turn around* and think of *my* house, not your houses, I will support, bless, and prosper you.” Way back in Leviticus 26, Moses had warned of calamities that would occur if the Israelites disobeyed.

In this vision, the Logos was questioning Jehovah in order to point up what the Israelites had been thinking and doing. The people got the answer in verses 13-17. God’s indignation subsequent to the 70 years would have been eliminated if the Israelites had continued to work on rebuilding the Temple.

Zech. 1:13 And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me with good words and comfortable words.

Zech. 1:14 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.

In the vision (or dream), Jehovah now responded with good and comfortable words to the angel on the red horse, who had been talking with Zechariah on the side. He said, “I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.” For the benefit of Zechariah’s hearing, the angel (the Logos) mentioned his prayer (verse 12), which was ostensibly to Jehovah.

Then the Logos turned to Zechariah and instructed him to “cry,” that is, to raise his voice and *cry aloud* to the public. The prophet was to do this public crying after he came out of this series of visions in the night and resumed his normal activities. In other words, it was Zechariah’s duty to proclaim to the people the message “Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.” The people were encouraged when they heard this message because they thought it was the promise of the Kingdom when God would speak comfortably to Jerusalem. Of course that was not the case, but the Jews grasped the point that God was giving them good news and that He would help them if they turned around and finished the Temple.

Comment: The “jealousy” of verse 14 was in a good sense, meaning “zeal.” God was zealous for Jerusalem and Zion.

Zech. 1:15 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.

The angel continued to speak for the Lord of hosts: “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.” Similarly in principle, the Moabites and the Ammonites rejoiced when they saw the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 606 BC. This helping to “forward the affliction,” this harassment by the neighbors, took place both when the Jews were in Babylonian exile for 70 years and also afterwards when some of them returned to Jerusalem. Thus, in the homeland, the problem was now occurring again. At first, God was only “a little displeased” because the trouble was intended for the correction of Israel. The heathen nations were allowed to render a judgment upon Israel, but they went beyond what God intended them to do.

Zech. 1:16 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.

This was a prophecy of mercy. God promised that “a line” would be surveyed for the court of the Temple so that the returned Jews could build the house of the Lord. Hence “mercies” were gradually coming back to the Jews. Of course the work was frustrated for a while, but a number of years later Ezra got a commission to return to Israel and beautify the house. Thus, at the time of Ezra, the Temple was built and refurbished to its former glory with the vessels that had been brought back.

God said, “I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies,” but at first, in the second year of Darius, the mercies seemed to be short-lived because a hiatus occurred before Ezra’s appearance on the scene. Later, 13 years after the house was beautified, a line was laid on Jerusalem by Nehemiah, and the wall of Jerusalem was built. Just as the building was done in steps and stages back there, so the same is true at this end of the age. The Pastor expressed, among other things, that the Church would be complete and glorified in 1914. When that expectation was not realized, he extended the date to 1918. He also expected a full return of favor to the Jew by those dates, but that event did not happen. Thus we learn from the way the “mercies” began to extend to the returned Jews from Babylonian exile that the Lord accomplishes His favor in steps and stairs in harmony with the hunger, desire, prayer attitude, and longing of His people. Here we are in the year 2003—quite a long time after 1914—and the Church is not yet complete. The time period from the decree of Cyrus until the building of the walls of the city was 82 years, and in our day, not only has the time period been more than 120 years since 1878, but it is getting close to 100 years since 1914.

God gave this information to Zechariah, and when the prophet repeated the words, the people were very encouraged. God was for them, but they had to get busy and work in this reconstruction era. Haggai, an old prophet, had spoken during the two preceding months, opening the door on this subject. Probably he deceased shortly thereafter, in the ninth month. Beginning with the eighth month, the Lord was using Zechariah, a new mouthpiece, in Haggai’s stead.

In summary, the return of the Jews from Babylonian exile was a very small beginning followed by frustration and struggle. During the Harvest period, there has been somewhat of a parallelism in principle.

Q: Does verse 16 refer to the building of the Third Temple after Jacob’s Trouble?

A: Verse 16 is speaking of the condition that existed at the time Zechariah received the vision. Cyrus had issued a decree about 19 years earlier—that is, 19 years before the second year of Darius—for any Jews who so desired to return to the homeland and rebuild the Temple and the wall that circumscribed the Temple. However, the work came to a standstill. The Jews leveled the ground, built an altar, and offered sacrifices, but when they were frustrated and harassed by surrounding neighbors, they stopped working after only partially finishing the Temple complex. Instead they were determined to build their own homes. Now, some 19 years later, the Lord raised up two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, to prompt the Jewish people to finish the Temple. The work that was started at the time of Joshua and Zerubbabel, when the Jews initially returned from Babylon, needed to be completed. Zechariah said in effect, “The Lord is telling me that you should go back to the work of the Temple, and then you will have His blessing. God will help you.” His message was basically one of encouragement and incitement to finish the work. The Apostle Paul stated the *principle* of Zechariah’s mission: “Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works” (Heb. 10:24).

Review and Further Explanation

Zechariah had a series of seven or eight visions at night, which are covered in chapters 1–6. In the first vision, which pertained to horses, Zechariah saw a man riding on a red horse enter a valley of myrtle trees and come to a stop. Three types of horses were behind him: red, speckled, and white. This first chapter (and vision) purposely omitted the fourth category of horses that is mentioned in chapter 6, a grouping described as grised and bay.

We can assume that the three kinds of horses in Zechariah 1:8 were *good* horses (that is, good doctrines of the Lord) because they followed the Logos on the red horse. The word “speckled” is a confused term that needs clarification, for it implies spotted or sprinkled—having a variety of spots—which is not the thought in the Hebrew.

Notice, first, that a *sequence* is implied with the three kinds of horses. But we want to know, Are the red, speckled, and white horses a sequence of importance or a sequence of time and development? If importance is indicated, we would not know whether the sequence is one of ascending or of descending importance; that is, which is more important, the first (red) horses or the last (white) horses?

For the moment, we will set aside the thought of sequence and consider the speckled horses. Verse 8 is the only time the Hebrew word translated “speckled” is used in the Old Testament. However, the root meaning of this word, which becomes very important, is used elsewhere in Scripture but not in this type of classification. To reach a definitive conclusion on the meaning of the three kinds of horses, we assumed that the same horses are described in chapter 6 plus a fourth category. There is a seeming difference, however, for in chapter 6, the second type of horses is described as black, and here the corresponding horses in the second category are speckled. A rabbi named Levi, who is considered one of the wise men whose sayings are collected by Jews in a book called the *Targum*, suggested that the Hebrew word *saroq*, translated “speckled,” does not refer to a color but to a *dark-maned* horse. In other words, instead of just calling the horses “black” as in chapter 6, the first chapter calls attention to the mane, the long hair, of the horses. The root Hebrew word, when used elsewhere in Scripture, usually signifies “to be entwined” or “to be entangled,” depending on whether it is used in a favorable or an unfavorable sense. With the favorable sense applying here in chapter 1, the field is narrowed down a little. The startling fact about this second category of horses is that the hair of both the mane and the tail was intertwined, or *braided*. To repeat, the mane and the tail were both braided. In horse shows and exhibits, especially when a breed is of a very pure line genetically speaking, the hair of the horse is braided to signify nobility, and one of the meanings of the Hebrew word *saroq* conveys the thought of “noble.” For instance, a *noble* vine in a vineyard would be a vine that is well dressed and well cared for. One who sees such a vine knows that the owner of the vineyard considered it to be a very precious strain of vine.

With this background for the Hebrew word, we feel that the speckled horses, the second category, are the most important. The listing of horses in chapter 6 verifies this thought, for there the black horses are shown to go to the “north country”; that is, the Little Flock goes to heaven. In the Song of Solomon, the color black is a sign of favor, for it signifies the basic ingredient of humility that God is looking for in His people. In contrast, the *white* horses of chapter 6, the Great Company, follow *afterward* into the north country.

Now we begin to see that the “speckled” horses are a noble breed. Their manes and tails are braided to show nobility. The Hebrew word *saroq* can also mean *princely, princess, queen, or captain*—a leadership capacity. Thus, of the three kinds of horses in chapter 1, the most important is the second, the “speckled.” We can also conclude that the *sequence* of the horses is

one of appearance on the scene of history.

The foregoing long explanation of chapter 1 harmonizes with chapter 6 of this same book. The horses have the same representation in both chapters. The fourth category of horses, as listed in chapter 6, is omitted in chapter 1 because it pertains to the development of humanity in the Kingdom Age (and thus *human* salvation), whereas the first three categories pertain to those who will eventually get a *spirit* resurrection. Even though the Ancient Worthies will be raised perfect and will be human agencies, or servants, of the Little Flock in the Kingdom Age, being “princes in all the earth” (Psa. 45:16), their ultimate destiny is a spirit resurrection. The Pastor gave three lines of evidence to support this conclusion. At the end of the Kingdom, when the saved and obedient of mankind are brought up to human perfection, the Ancient Worthies will be rewarded with a spirit resurrection for leading many people to righteousness (Dan. 12:3).

The Great Company will not be dealt with as a class until after the Church has been changed to glory. Then attention will be turned to the Great Company, the little sister who has no breasts (Song 8:8). Jesus and the Church will assist the Great Company to the reward of a secondary spirit salvation. After the wedding has taken place, the call will go forth, “Blessed are they which are called [not to the marriage but] unto the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Rev. 19:9). In another picture, “the virgins her [the Bride’s] companions that *follow* her shall be brought unto thee [after the wedding]” (Psa. 45:14). Only the names of the Little Flock will be individually presented and confessed before the Father.

In summary, then, Zechariah chapter 6 provides clues for interpreting this first vision. The red horses picture the Ancient Worthies, the speckled horses represent the Little Flock, and the white horses are the Great Company.

Q: If the red horses picture the Ancient Worthies, why was the Logos riding a red horse?

A: The vision occurred in Zechariah’s day, which was during the time of the calling of the “red horse” (Ancient Worthy) class. Zechariah saw the vision in the second year of King Darius Hystaspes. Subsequently he saw a repeat of this vision with a little different characterization. (For example, four chariots were included.) The time setting of the prophecy was when Jesus was the Logos, the mouthpiece of God, and no doubt he was the particular angel to whom Zechariah spoke (verse 9).

Verses 10 and 11 bring out another peculiarity with regard to the horses. “The man [the Logos] that stood among the myrtle trees answered [Zechariah] and said, These are they whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth. And they [that is, the red, speckled, and white horses behind the Logos] answered [in a chorus] the angel [the Logos] 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.” In other words, the horses, who had been sent on a mission into the earth, affirmed what the Logos, who was in front, had just said. In the chorus, they said not only, “Yes, what the Logos just stated is true,” but also, “We have *already done* that which we were commissioned to do.” A logical question arises. Since Zechariah was on the scene in the *second year of Darius Hystaspes*, the king of Persia, how could it be said that the horses had already accomplished this work? The horses represent doctrines, truths, prophecies, teachings, etc., and these *teachings had already been recorded in the Bible* at this point in time. Zechariah was one of the last prophets of Israel, for only Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi were on the scene later. The horses had already gone to and fro throughout the land. In other words, the people of Israel had already been informed, in prophetic language, about the doctrines and events yet future.

When we examine the books of the Old Testament that were written by prophets, we find that

the doctrines of these three classes are mentioned. Certainly Jesus is traced throughout the Hebrew Scriptures as the scarlet thread of redemption, and restitution is also spoken by the mouth of God's holy prophets. In addition, the Little Flock and the Great Company are shown. For example, Elijah pictures the Little Flock, and Elisha represents the Great Company. In the Song of Solomon, the sister picturing the Little Flock arises of her own volition, whereas the sister who represents the Great Company delays until it is too late to be of the Bride class. Rebekah was accompanied by bridesmaids in her journey to meet Isaac in the field. The Benjamin class is contrasted with the Joseph class. Of the 2 1/2 tribes that occupied land in Gilead, Reuben pictures the Little Flock, and Gad is the Great Company. Thus the two spiritual classes of the Gospel Age, as well as the Ancient Worthies, had been sufficiently recorded at the time of Zechariah's vision.

Even Jesus' role as the Logos was taught in the Old Testament. Hence the "man" riding on the red horse was past tense by Zechariah's day. For example, Moses had spoken of Jesus: "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet [Jesus] from the midst of thee [the nation of Israel], of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deut. 18:15). In summary, then, the horses following behind the man on the red horse could say, "We have done what God commanded."

Zech. 1:17 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.

Verse 17 was a climactic statement, certifying that God's purpose would be fulfilled. There was a partial fulfillment in Zechariah's day; the real fulfillment is still future.

Zech. 1:18 Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns.

Zech. 1:19 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.

Zech. 1:20 And the LORD showed me four carpenters.

Zech. 1:21 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.

In verses 18-21, the second vision, Zechariah beheld four horns and four carpenters. Because of the wording in verse 18, "Then lifted I up mine eyes," this vision presumably occurred on the same night as the vision of the three kinds of horses; that is, after the vision previously described, there was a follow-up dream the same night of four horns and four carpenters.

In the Scriptures, a "horn" is a symbol of *power* (whether on an altar, on an animal, or used figuratively), and a "carpenter" is a symbol of one who *builds up*. Therefore, the four horns in this vision are four powers, but what powers? They could not be the best of powers because they destroyed or injured, their effect being to scatter (punish) Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. The implication is that *Gentile* powers did the scattering. The usual explanation given by Bible commentators, if they treat the subject at all, is a localized application, which is probably how those living in Zechariah's day viewed this prophecy.

In this particular context, the sequence is Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem (the city). The usual application benefited those back in 520 BC in Ezra and Zechariah's day. Judah, the southern kingdom was scattered by the Gentile powers of Egypt and Babylon. With Israel, the northern

kingdom, the scattering Gentile powers were Assyria and Syria. But since the Old Testament prophecies are written for the Christian's admonition, the primary application pertains to a greater picture with a different starting point than either Egypt or Assyria.

The four universal empires listed in Scripture are Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Consider King Nebuchadnezzar, an enemy of Israel, who was called a "lion" that would come down from the north and scatter Israel (Jer. 4:7). God also called him "my servant" (Jer. 25:9). Nebuchadnezzar was permitted to come down against Israel to destroy Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple because of the nation's previous disobedience and waywardness. And even when Cyrus, the king of Persia, allowed the Israelites to go back to their homeland, they were a subject people, for Israel could not be a sovereign nation again until after 1914—until after the Times of the Gentiles were fulfilled. Then Israel would come into a condition of rest. Although today we see favor coming back to Israel and the Jewish people have national polity, they certainly have not been at rest. While they have their independence in that they are no longer a subject people, the Bible is speaking of a different type of rest. Therefore, the four horns picture the four major Gentile powers, or empires, starting with Babylon and corresponding with the image in the second chapter of Daniel. After the stone smites the image (yet future) and starts to grow, it will picture Israel. The present growth of Israel is not the growth of the stone.

In addition to prophecies by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel of the destruction and tearing down by Babylon, each of these prophets also predicted a restoring work, a building up. Isaiah not only told of dire things to come but also gave encouragements, conveying some of the most beautiful prophecies of hope for mankind. Although the bulk of Jeremiah's messages were harsh, he also gave some wonderful encouragements, and so did Ezekiel. Thus the Jewish polity would have the experience of being visited by four destroying powers, but four carpenters would also be used to build up the nation. In the final analysis, Zechariah's message was one of encouragement.

Zechariah asked, "What come these [four horns and four carpenters] to do?" The angel, the Logos, replied, "These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did [could] lift up his head: but these [the four carpenters] are come to fray [terrify—RSV] them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the *land* of Judah to scatter it." The image of Daniel 2 consisted of a head of gold, arms and breast of silver, thighs and belly of brass, legs of iron, and feet and toes of clay mixed with iron. The image was a prophecy of the four Gentile powers that would be permitted to overcome and oppress Israel at various times. However, these prophecies were really a prototype. Of course the right-hearted Jews benefited from these prophecies, but they were really written for our admonition during the Gospel Age.

Back there the Jews viewed the prophecies from the prototype standpoint by trying to look at four individuals or powers that frustrated them in connection with the rebuilding of the Temple, but the larger picture is Gentile dominion over Israel. Since the First World War, the tables have changed, and Israel is beginning to come back into more and more favor. In spite of the terrible conditions that exist today, the Jews are at least organized as a nation with armaments and a society. Moreover, the Word of God is available to them, and they are still God's people. Although full favor has not yet been restored to them, the current experience is deemed necessary for their instruction in righteousness, which will eventually lead some of them to repentance. Many sour with persecution because they lack faith, but a Holy Remnant class is being developed. The unfaithful class is being temporarily cast off, but these Jews will be restored and given an opportunity for life later when the Kingdom is established.

A consideration of the identity of the four (Gentile) horns starts with King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, the first horn. What did he do? Didn't he destroy Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple, and didn't he decimate the Jewish people? In all, 4,600 males, plus women and children, were

taken into captivity, but what happened in Babylon? Daniel, who was among the captives, was elevated to a very high office, being made chief of the wise men, and three of the Hebrew children were his companions. The point is that the decimation, which was designed of the Lord to lead to repentance, actually led to a promotion with some.

The next Gentile empire (and hence the second horn) was Media-Persia. Under Darius the Mede, Daniel was also promoted, even though he was later temporarily cast into the lions' den. Thus the enemy was sort of a friend to one class of Jews and a means of punishment to the greater number of exiles who were resident in the foreign land. Cyrus the Persian gave the Jews permission to go back to the homeland and allowed Zerubbabel to return. Darius Hystaspes granted permission for Ezra to return to Israel, and he also favored Zechariah. In addition, Artaxerxes gave permission for Nehemiah to go back to Israel.

In other words, in the prototype back there in Zechariah's day, the Jews identified four personalities who had a leading role in both visiting judgment upon and, at the same time, promoting individuals in a sensational fashion. However, in the larger type, the four horns picture four Gentile powers down through the age: Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Stated another way, there are two pictures here; one is a condensed picture in which the Jews looked for four "carpenters" (individuals) who would be built up, or promoted, by the very enemy who did the destroying work. These things are not usually spoken of because of a lack of the knowledge of history. In fact, ancient secular history negates and minimizes events and time periods as recorded in the Bible.

Thus far in the visions on the same night, three kinds of horses picture doctrines that develop classes, four horns represent Gentile powers that scatter Israel, and four carpenters represent constructive building forces (in contrast to the tearing down). It is logical to think of the carpenters as either four individuals or four peoples under the leadership of individuals. The four horns scattered Judah, but the four carpenters troubled and cast out the horns of the Gentiles.

Q: Can the prophets be considered "carpenters"?

A: Yes, in principle, for they were constructive. The Hebrew word for "carpenter" is "plow."

Comment: A plow turns over or breaks up the soil. The four carpenters would take the four universal empires and dispose of them, as stated in verse 21. Thus the four carpenters would accomplish the reverse of what the four horns did. First, the four horns scattered Israel; then the four carpenters would oppose the four horns and plow them under.

Reply: Since the four carpenters fray or control the four horns, they are in opposition to the horns. Who are the four carpenters that turn over the four horns? To "fray" means to cause trouble, terror, dismay, etc. Hence the carpenters are troublemakers to the horns, disrupting the status quo that exists during four periods of time. Back to the question, what four individuals would overthrow the four Gentile powers? (1) Cyrus, as the general of King Darius the Mede, overthrew the Babylonian Empire; (2) Alexander the Great of Greece overthrew the Persian Empire; (3) the Caesars of Rome overthrew the Grecian Empire; and (4) Jesus will overthrow the Roman Empire when the stone smites the image. God providentially raised up certain individuals. For example, Cyrus had great accomplishments for several years before he got down to Babylon. The talents of Alexander the Great were so unusual that those underneath his control almost idolized him, especially when they saw his brilliant ideas and successes. And Tiberius, Julius, and Augustus Caesar were also providentially raised up. Of course the overthrow of the fourth universal empire, Rome, will result in Jesus' Kingdom.

Q: Ezra 5:1,2 reads, “Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them. Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God helping them.” With the carpenters, was there a *specific* time frame or an *overall* view?

A: There are two thoughts. The localized view is that Zerubbabel the governor, Joshua the priest, and the two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, were the four carpenters. The two prophets spoke comfortable words to the people, and their deeds were constructive in helping Israel. But the four carpenters who negate the power of the horns are the empires of Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome plus the overthrow of the Roman Empire by Jesus.

Let us consider the fourth universal empire, or horn, in more detail. Rome has been in existence and power for a long time—from before Christ all the way down to the present age. Today Europe is the remnant of Rome and the ten toes. No doubt God has raised up different Jewish individuals during the Gospel Age to keep the Jewish hope alive and to help preserve that identity. For example, two of the more recent individuals were Theodor Herzl, who founded the Zionist movement, and Chaim Weizmann. Although the Jews are called a stiff-necked people in Scripture, God treats them with the view that there is to be a reawakening, a resuscitation, in the future (Exod. 32:9; 33:3,5; Deut. 9:6,13; 31:27; Jer. 17:23). If there is no resuscitation and no new beginning with a new opportunity for life, God’s dealings with them would not make sense. As the Apostle Paul said of Christians (paraphrased), “If there is no resurrection, then we of all people would be most miserable” (1 Cor. 15:16-19). We are sacrificing our lives for the hope of a resurrection.

We are in the day of the *presence* of Jesus, but he is not yet reigning as King over the world. However, we can see God’s providence overruling events that have been helpful before the real Kingdom of peace is established and before He stands up in the person of Jesus and the Church—“saviours” (plural) coming from Mount Zion—to rescue Jacob in the nation’s hour of trouble (Obadiah 21; Jer. 30:7). At the present time, a preparatory work is going on, preceding the real breaking, or scattering, of the Gentile powers. The smashing of the image, a cessation of the Gentile powers, will be to the glory and happiness of Israel as a people, who will be saved in their hour of need.

Zech. 2:1 I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand.

This was the third vision Zechariah had on the same night, for he stated, “I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked.” The series of God-given messages, or visions, was the focal point, the nucleus, of Zechariah’s ministry. While his ministry, as far as we know, occupied only two years, with just two dates being given, he could have prophesied for 20 or more years (Zech. 7:1). During his ministry of whatever length, he recited the visions he beheld and explained their significance. He had plenty of information for witnessing to his own people. Similarly with us, once we learn the plan of God, we are furnished with a sufficiency of information to tell others about His purposes in the future. In the 14 chapters that comprise the book bearing his name, Zechariah was given an intense experience.

Zechariah saw “a man with a measuring line in his hand.” A measuring *line* is used to measure longer distances than a measuring *rod*. Verse 1 reminds us of Ezekiel’s experience with regard to the yet future Temple. As the prophet was brought thither, he observed, “Behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed; and he stood in the gate” (Ezek. 40:3). With a measuring “reed,” or rod, and a cord in his hand, the brass man (probably a human agency) instructed Ezekiel about the

measurements of the future Third Temple. In other words, a human conducted Ezekiel on the tour. In the present vision, Zechariah lifted up his eyes and saw a man walking—a man with a measuring line in his hand.

The messages of Haggai and Zechariah were constructive and comforting. When the Jews went back to the homeland, everything was in disarray. They had started to build the Temple but then stopped to work on their own houses—that is, until these two prophets came along and reminded the people to concentrate on finishing the Temple.

Zech. 2:2 Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof.

Zechariah did not remain silent but asked the man with a measuring line in his hand, “Where are you going?” In the vision, the man was walking past Zechariah, who was in a still position, not moving—whether he was lying in bed, sitting in a chair, or standing. (It helps to understand the mechanics of the vision.)

The man replied that he was going to measure Jerusalem, for he wanted to see what the length and the breadth of the city were. An inquisitive viewpoint was helpful to the prophet, and it is also helpful for the Christian. We, too, should ask questions, at least mentally, and hunger to know the Lord and His ways and principles.

Zech. 2:3 And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him,

In verse 3 and subsequent verses, we must be careful to distinguish each of the three personalities who were involved in this third vision. “And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth.” This “angel” was the Logos, the *same* man, or angel, who was seated on the red horse in the first vision (Zech. 1:8,9). While on the horse, he came to a stop—he was at a standstill—and, in compliance with Jehovah’s instruction, began to explain the significance of the horses in the background. Then the angel (the Logos) continued to speak, and Jehovah answered him “with good words and comfortable words” (Zech. 1:12,13). In other words, God instructed the Logos to explain the significance of the vision to Zechariah.

Now we return to chapter 2. Here, in verse 3, the man with the measuring line walked by Zechariah and continued to walk off into the distance. Meanwhile, Zechariah was at a standstill, just witnessing the activity. (It would be like sitting in a movie theater and looking at the action occurring on the screen.) As the man with the string went by, Zechariah asked, “Where are you going?” The man answered and then continued on without further discussion.

Next the angel who had been talking with Zechariah from the first vision (Zech. 1:9) started to leave. As Zechariah looked at the vision, he saw this angel walking, let us say, 150 feet in the distance. By now, the man with the cord was *gone*—he was out of the picture. The distinction is that the angel who had been talking with Zechariah and had walked past was now *almost* fading out of the picture; that is, he was still visible but was off in the distance. Before he disappeared, however, another angel came out of nowhere. In other words, in looking at the vision, Zechariah saw three different individuals: (1) the man with the measuring line, (2) the angel who had been doing the explaining, and (3) another (or second) angel, who talked with the first angel, the one who had been speaking with Zechariah.

Now the question is, What did one angel say to the other angel? That information is provided in verse 4. Not only could Zechariah *see* what was happening, but also he could *hear* the two angels talking to each other in the distance.

Zech. 2:4 And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein:

Who gave the order “Run, speak to this young man”? Was it the angel who appeared out of nowhere to meet the man (the angel, the Logos), who had been explaining the vision to Zechariah? No, the *Logos* gave the order. If we did not know the setup when reading verse 4, we would say from the grammar and wording that the second angel was doing the speaking. However, the angel who had been the mainstay, the man on the red horse, was speaking, and he continued to speak in subsequent visions.

The Logos gave the order to the angel who met him, saying in effect, “Run back [for they were both at a distance] and tell the young man [Zechariah] that Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein.”

This message was helpful, for it indicated that Jerusalem would be built again. First, Zechariah saw a man with a measuring line in his hand who said, “I am going to measure the length and breadth of Jerusalem.” What a miraculous experience to show there would be activity! Then the man passed by and disappeared from sight. Next the angel who had appeared out of nowhere ran back to Zechariah with *good* news: “Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the *multitude* of men and cattle.” When we see the scene from this standpoint and understand which of the actors was speaking, the vision takes on vitality.

For 16 years, not much progress had been made on the Temple, so God employed Zechariah and Haggai to stir up the Israelites to get back to the original plan to restore the Temple and to rebuild the city. Now Zechariah was given an encouraging message. Not only would Jerusalem be rebuilt, but the city would be so large that it would not be practical to build walls around it. Subsequently, the account suggests the walls would not be needed because no enemy would be able to harm the people. Actually, in the final picture, this information begins to shed light on the end-time experience yet future.

Zech. 2:5 For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.

The angel who ran back to Zechariah continued to speak. As instructed by the Logos, he carried the message that God would be unto Jerusalem “a wall of fire round about” and “the glory in the midst” of the city.

The question is, When will this prophecy be fulfilled? Verse 5 refers to the deliverance of the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble and the inauguration of the Kingdom. At the time of Jacob’s Trouble, God’s fury will rise up into His face, and He will make bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations (Ezek. 38:18; Isa. 52:10). “God speaketh once, yea twice,” and the third time He thundereth from on high (Job 33:14). Pertaining to the inauguration of the Kingdom, He said, “Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth” (Psa. 46:10). The angry waves will be stilled. From other pictures, we see that Jesus, the Prince of Peace, will be the central agent, but the Church will be with him. Eventually, so many Jews will be going back to Israel that there will not be enough room, and the people will burst over into the land of Gilead (Zech. 10:10; Obadiah 19).

The Third Temple will not be built right away when the Kingdom is inaugurated, for when the forces of Gog and Magog come to Jerusalem, there will be so many dead bodies that it will take seven months to bury the dead (Ezek. 39:11-16). All able-bodied young men will be employed full-time to rid the ground of rotting corpses lest they spread disease. Even after the seventh

month, a crew will be established to go throughout the land looking for bones not previously found and bring them back to the designated cemetery for burial. Therefore, in the final analysis, clearing the land of corpses will require more than seven months. This message of verse 5, an end-time picture yet to be fulfilled, was good news, for it was saying that God *will defend* His people at an unknown date in the future. God will be a wall of protection to Israel.

The “wall of fire round about” reminds us of the cloud over the Israelites in connection with the Exodus. It is also a reminder of the two angels God set at the entrance of the Garden of Eden after Adam’s disobedience and expulsion. Two angels were stationed on the east side to prevent anyone from violating the garden by entering it. Those angels were a fire to consume anybody who dared to penetrate the preserved Garden of Eden. In the future, not only will Jerusalem be miraculously saved during Jacob’s Trouble from the forces of Gog and Magog, but also no one will be able to harm Israel, for God will be the nation’s defense.

This enthusiastic message was to be given to the Jewish exiles who had returned from Babylonian captivity in Zechariah’s day. When the prophet relayed this information, the people did not recognize it as a prophecy that would be fulfilled way down here at the end of the age. Instead they applied the words to their own work in rebuilding Jerusalem and restoring the Temple. While Cyrus had given a very favorable decree in 536 BC, the returned Jewish exiles did not finish the work. After they laid the foundation of the Temple and built the altar, they went back to building their own homes because of continual harassment from surrounding neighbors. Then, years later, in the second year of the reign of Darius Hystaspes, permission was given for Ezra to go back to Israel to complete the Temple. Zerubbabel and Joshua, who were in the first return from Babylon, were still alive when Ezra appeared on the scene.

Q: Please explain again the relationship of the man with the measuring line and the two angels.

A: In verses 1 and 2, Zechariah spoke to the man with the measuring line, who said he was going to measure the city of Jerusalem. Then the man walked by and continued on, disappearing completely from the picture. The “angel” of verse 3 who talked with Zechariah is the same “man” (the Logos) who appears in the first, second, third, etc., visions. The Logos then talked to a second angel, who “went out to meet him.” Thus the two angels in verse 3 are separate from the man with the measuring line. In verse 4, the angel (the Logos) who had been explaining the vision instructed the second angel, “Go back quickly and tell Zechariah that Jerusalem will be inhabited.”

When Zechariah saw the man with the measuring line, heard his answer, and then watched him go off the scene, it was natural for the prophet to desire more information. Zechariah’s interest was aroused: “The man is going to measure Jerusalem. What is going on here?” Then Zechariah saw the “man” (the angel, the Logos) who had been talking with him all along. In addition, a second angel appeared. The Logos told the second angel to run back to Zechariah and explain the measuring line and the measuring of the city. The second angel said in effect, “The man you first saw has gone to measure Jerusalem. Not only will the city be built, but there will be so many people that they will burgeon forth into the suburbs. The city will not be able to contain the multitude of men.” The second angel was describing conditions in Jerusalem way down the stream of time, that is, *after* God delivers the Holy Remnant by manifesting His Kingdom rule through miracles. That is the time frame for the rebuilding and the population explosion of Jerusalem.

In summary, verses 1-5 are a message of encouragement. Zechariah, a young man, was now a ball of fire with something significant to say. Shortly before, the Prophet Haggai, an old man, had similarly encouraged the Jews to finish the Temple. Evidently, he died and passed off the scene, and young Zechariah had a mission to expound to the nation of Israel. The message he

was commissioned to give begins in verse 6. As a result of the message, Zechariah and the Israelites were very encouraged, and they went forth with enthusiasm to complete the work.

These visions are a much larger picture than the localized setting back there in the prophet's day. The Lord has used this method with prophecy all down through history. He does not disclose too much information *until the due time* lest the people become discouraged.

Q: Will the “wall of fire” be for security?

A: Yes. Just as two cherubim guarded the Garden of Eden, so a protective wall of fire will surround the entire city, or enclave, that was being measured. Moreover, God will be “the glory in the midst of her.” We are reminded of the pillar that came down from the main body cloud over the Tabernacle and produced the Shekinah light in the Most Holy.

As we continue in the Book of Zechariah and sum up the visions, their purpose will become clearer.

Zech. 2:6 **Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the north, saith the LORD: for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the LORD.**

Zechariah was given the details of what to do. Just as Ezekiel faced the north and talked about Gog and Magog coming down at the end of the age, so Zechariah was given a similar commission. Each day he went out and witnessed to the returned captives from Babylon. He positioned himself in a favorable spot to talk to a lot of people and then dramatized this encouraging message. Facing the north, he would cup his hands on his mouth and shout, “Ho, ho!” However, the invisible *host* to the north was different from the invisible *foe* of Gog and Magog to the north that the Prophet Ezekiel addressed. Likewise the Prophet Jeremiah spoke of an enemy that was coming down from the north to spoil Jerusalem. Here, instead, Zechariah was telling *the Jews* to come down: “Flee from the land of the north ... : for I have [*previously*] spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the LORD.” During the period of the Diaspora, as a result of the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 69-70, the Jews were dispersed into all nations by Titus.

Zechariah was not referring to what we are witnessing today with Jews coming from the north, for we see them returning to Israel *before* Jacob's Trouble. Several Scriptures show that there will be another return of Jews to Israel *after* the Kingdom has been inaugurated—a *second* regathering of Jewish exiles from Gentile nations. It is estimated that 2 millions Jews in Russia alone have not returned to Israel, and certainly there are at least 5 million Jews in the United States. Therefore, after the Kingdom is established, all Jews who survive the great Time of Trouble will go back to Israel in a second regathering. This is the scene here in verse 6 where Zechariah cupped his hands and told those who had previously been spread abroad as the “four winds of the heaven” to come down and reinhabit the Promised Land. The message continues in verse 7.

Zech. 2:7 **Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon.**

The time setting in Zechariah's day was 520 BC, so literal Babylon had already been destroyed. Therefore, as with verse 6, there is a spiritual connotation pertaining to Christendom in our day, that is, at the end of the Gospel Age. From this standpoint, verses 6 and 7 are a call to the Jews to come out of the so-called Christian nations, a call to flee Christendom. They will come from “the four winds,” meaning from *all* directions including Europe. As shown in many little prophecies, the Jews are to go back to Israel from Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Russia, etc., *after* the Time of Trouble. These verses in Zechariah are packed with information; they are like an acorn

that grows into a great tree.

Comment: Isaiah 11:11,12 applies to the same time frame. “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the *second* time to *recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.*”

Comment: Another pertinent Scripture is Zechariah 8:23, “Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew [who is on his way back to Jerusalem in the second regathering], saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.”

Reply: Yes. The term “ten men” signifies “from Gentile nations,” i.e., primarily from Europe but embracing other nations as well. “Ten” is a symbol of earthly completeness. In addition to the Holy Remnant in Israel, a Holy Remnant of Jews will be dispersed throughout other nations, and the names of both are written in the book of life for survival (Isa. 4:3; Dan. 12:1).

Zech. 2:8 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.

Verse 8 verifies that Zechariah was referring to the second regathering, or coming back, of surviving Jews who will be in other nations: “*After the glory [of the deliverance from Jacob’s Trouble] hath he [God] sent me [Zechariah] unto the nations which [previously] spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.*” Zechariah was not referring to Jews who go back to Israel today, for this is strong language. *No one will dare to touch the redeemed and contrite Holy Remnant, who are written in the book of life to be spared, because God’s presence will be with them in a very manifest way. In contrast, the first, or current, regathering has been accomplished by hunters and fishers and in a more general way (Jer. 16:16). The second regathering will be much more particular and powerful in manifesting God’s presence with His people as individuals.*

A clear lesson is that both natural and spiritual Israel are to separate themselves from the nations that spoiled them. God regards both with such interest and concern that any harm done to them is like having a speck go into the eye, a very sensitive part of the body.

Zech. 2:9 For, behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me.

The Revised Standard Version reads, “Behold, I will shake my hand over them [the Gentiles, the enemies], and they shall become plunder for those [the persecuted Jews] who served them. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me.” The roles will be reversed, and the captives will become superior to the Gentiles who formerly had them in captivity. Instead of Israel’s being a subject nation, the time is coming in the near future when God will shake up the whole arrangement, and Israel will take the leadership role. In other words, those who previously subjected Israel will become subservient to Israel.

“Ye [the Holy Remnant] shall [then] know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me [Zechariah].” The prophet will be recognized by the Jews as a signet when the Kingdom is inaugurated. They will then realize that his prophecies were true. In fact, verse 9 indicates that one of the most illuminating prophetic writings to open the eyes of the Jews will be the Book of Zechariah. Just as the Great Pyramid will be a witness to all peoples, so the Book of Zechariah will be a witness

to the Jews because it contains so much information. As the study proceeds, we will see this to be a true statement in a very powerful way. We are only in the second chapter, and already a tremendous amount of information has been furnished.

Q: How do we know that the pronoun “me” refers to Zechariah?

A: The second angel ran back and told Zechariah that Jerusalem would be rebuilt as towns without walls and that God would be the glory in the midst of the city (verses 4 and 5). Even the translators understood that Zechariah, being instructed about this *glorious* future, would *enthusiastically* give this message to his people. He demonstrated and dramatized his message by using his hands and feet and varied voice inflections.

Zech. 2:10 Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD.

Zech. 2:11 And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee.

Zech. 2:12 And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again.

Zech. 2:13 Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.

The emphasis of verses 6-9 is as follows: “Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the north.... Deliver thyself, O Zion.... For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations.... For, behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil.” These verses are an end-time picture pertaining to the close of the Gospel Age.

Verses 10-13 are still part of the encouraging message. Preceding verses told how God will miraculously manifest that the natural Jew has returned to full favor with Him and that anyone who touches the natural Jew at this still future time in history will be punished immediately. The effect of such an action against the Jew would be like a speck of dust getting in God’s eye; such interference will not be tolerated.

No wonder the prophet was to “sing and rejoice.” Young Zechariah now had wonderful information to tell the Jewish people. We can be sure that just as a fire burned in Jeremiah’s bones, so a fire was now burning in Zechariah’s bones. Not only did he have the information, but also he had the vitality and the enthusiasm that go with youth to preach the message effectively. His energetic preaching was contagious to God’s people back there. Haggai, the old prophet, appealed to the older element, whereas Zechariah appealed to the younger ones, who were the bulk of the population. Now the people would finish the work on the Temple. Those who listened to Zechariah’s message interpreted it as having a fulfillment only a few years hence, and God intended the message to be an encouragement to them, even though the real fulfillment is yet future. Stated another way, Zechariah is the prophet of the future. His prophecy is one of the elements that will open the blind eyes of the Jews (Rom. 11:25).

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for ... I will dwell in the midst of thee [Israel], saith the LORD. And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people.” In Zechariah’s day, there were only about ten nations, so he would have emphasized that in the future, “*many* nations” (the Gentiles) would be joined to God and be His people. God’s presence, power, and glory will be center stage in Jerusalem. The Law will go forth from Zion,

and the word of that Law will go forth from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3). “And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again.”

Verse 13 is a summation of the whole vision: “Be silent, O *all flesh*, before the LORD: for he is *raised up* out of his *holy habitation*.” God will lift up His mighty hand and show His muscle when He manifests His deliverance of the Holy Remnant. God will make plain that He is the God of Israel. The Gentiles will have to become proselyte Jews in order to get the blessings of the New Covenant and become “my [Jehovah’s] people” (verse 11).

Ezekiel 39:22 reads, “So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God *from that day and forward*.” And speaking of Gog, the account states, “Thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen [the nations] may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes” (Ezek. 38:16). God’s fury will rise up into His face, and He will make the nations to know that He is the God of all the earth (Ezek. 38:18). In the very short time period of Gog and Magog, God will manifest MIGHTY judgments.

Verses 6-13 in this second chapter of the Book of Zechariah help to acquaint us with the sort of thinking that encouraged the Israelites back there, but the primary fulfillment is yet future. We are being alerted to the significance of end-time events, which will become very particularized later on in the book. Thus far we are only being introduced to end-time thinking. Incidentally, verse 12 is the only place in the Scriptures where Israel is called “the holy land.”

Q: Is verse 13 the result of Michael’s standing up (Dan. 12:1)?

A: Yes, at that time, Michael will stand up for Israel as the representative of Jehovah. Other Scriptures show that Jehovah will stand up as well. For example, God’s feet will stand on the Mount of Olives when it splits at the time of the deliverance of the Holy Remnant: “And his [God’s] feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south” (Zech. 14:4). A *visual* representation of Jehovah’s feet will be seen. God has been silent for thousands of years, relatively speaking, as far as the world is concerned. The people, being the children of their father the devil, have not recognized Him, but conditions will be reversed in the near future (John 8:44). The Kingdom will be manifested in GREAT power and GREAT glory (Matt. 24:30; Mark 13:26).

Review

Haggai and Zechariah had extremely short ministries. Haggai began his ministry on the first day of the sixth month of the second year of Darius Hystaspes, and it ended on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month of that same year—a total of *less than four months*. An old man, he passed off the scene quickly, but he served God’s purpose, nevertheless. The ministry of Zechariah, a young man and a contemporary of Haggai, started on the first day of the eighth month of the same second year of Darius and continued until the fourth day of the ninth month of the fourth year of Darius. Thus the total ministry of Zechariah was *25 months and four days*—also a short ministry. Both Haggai, the old man, and Zechariah, the young man, appeared on the scene like meteors.

Ministry of Haggai

Began: 2nd year of Darius, 6th month, 1st day
 Ended: 2nd year of Darius, 9th month, 24th day
 Total: Less than 4 months

Ministry of Zechariah

Began: 2nd year of Darius, 8th month, 1st day
 Ended: 4th year of Darius, 9th month, 4th day
 Total: 25 months plus 4 days

The Lord told Haggai to speak to (1) Zerubbabel, the administrator in charge of civic affairs; (2) Joshua, the high priest; and (3) the people. The content of Haggai's message, on behalf of the Lord God, to the Jews who returned from Babylonian exile can be summarized as follows.

“You came back from Babylonian captivity to build my house. You started well, but then you stopped to build houses for yourselves, plastering and garnishing them. You left my house alone. In the meantime, you planted much seed in your gardens but reaped very little produce. Didn't I previously blow upon the land, causing it to lie waste, because of the neglect of my house? Therefore, the heavens did not bring down dew, nor did the earth yield its fruit. Moreover, those of you who earned wages put the money in a bag with a hole in it. Don't you get the lesson?” God also inferred through Zechariah that when the Jews stopped building the Temple, these were the results.

Then Haggai instructed the people what to do. They were to go up into the mountain to get wood so that they could finish the house of the Lord. “Then God will take pleasure in you and will glorify the work. You have His blessing now—just do as He says.”

Three weeks later the Jews commenced work on the Temple. Then Haggai said, “Do you see the result of your building? For those of you who saw the first house [Solomon's Temple] and its glory, doesn't this current house seem like nothing in your eyes in comparison?”

The Lord continued, “Be strong, for I am with you. I will shake all nations and fill this house with glory. In fact, the glory of this latter house [Ezekiel's Temple] will supersede that of the former [Solomon's Temple]. Also, I will give peace when this takes place.” Although Zerubbabel's Temple was being built at the time, this reference was to the *future* literal Third Temple, which will be built in the beginning of the Kingdom Age.

Just before the end of Haggai's ministry, along came the young man Zechariah, who said to the returned Jews, “God told me to tell you, ‘Turn unto me, and I will turn unto you.’” After this very short message, Zechariah disappeared off the scene for a moment. Next Haggai gave his last words from the Lord: “Remember and consider that before a stone was laid upon a stone of the Temple, the land did not bring forth, and when the altar was built, I considered your offerings unclean because of your neglect with regard to my house. However, from this day forward [the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month of the second year of Darius], I will bless you.” Then Haggai disappeared off the scene.

Zechariah began his ministry that same year. In the first vision were three kinds of horses (doctrines): red, speckled (black-maned), and white. The Logos was in front as the “man,” or rider, of the red horse, and he and the horses with him were in a valley of blessing (called a valley of “myrtle trees”). Myrtle trees have shiny green leaves (the color green being a healthful sign) and unusual delicate white flowers with a small purple border. The flowers exude a fragrance that was likened by some commentators in those days to an exquisite perfume. Thus the trees had verdure with a healthy look and a pleasing fragrance. In addition, the trees were tinged with a sort of reddish hue, and the seeds were used as a spice, yet they also had a tonic, or medicinal, effect. The Logos, who was sitting on the red horse in this environment, spoke good and comfortable words. We can see, then, that the message was encouraging, especially when we remember that the horses themselves came from Jehovah. In fact, the messages of both Haggai and Zechariah were encouraging. Both prophets said repeatedly, “Thus saith the LORD,” but Zechariah was more pragmatic in the sense of being a visionary; that is, he described the visions he received from the Lord.

The second vision was of four horns and four carpenters. The four horns tended to frustrate and hinder the progress of the prosperity of both the Temple and the people of Judah.

Therefore, the four horns had a negative effect, but the four carpenters built up and thus offset the horns. Each horn was followed by a carpenter. There are two applications for the horns and the carpenters; one is the localized application, and the other is the larger prophetic picture. The Book of Ezra mentions four individuals who were like horns, two from one time period back there and two from another time period. The four corresponding constructive individuals, or carpenters, were Zerubbabel, Joshua, Haggai, and Zechariah.

The second application, which was the real intent of the four horns and the four carpenters, gives a brief summarization of the long period of time before the Lord's glory would be manifested to all peoples in the Temple that will be erected in the Kingdom Age. The first horn that was of a damaging nature to the children of Judah was King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, who laid waste Jerusalem and the Temple of Solomon. Then along came a carpenter in 536 BC, Cyrus of Persia, the power that God used to issue a decree to the Israelites so that those who desired could go back to the homeland and rebuild the Temple and its surrounding courtyard.

The second horn in history was Cambyses of Persia. The Persian records indicate that Cyrus, the first king, reigned nine years, but he actually reigned only seven years because he was the general of Darius the Mede for the first two years. Upon his ascension to the throne in 536 BC, he conveniently erased the name of Darius the Mede from the records and included those two years in his own reign. Cambyses, who came along seven years after the death of Cyrus, frustrated Judah in the homeland by issuing a decree that halted the Temple work. The Bible uses the title Ahasuerus rather than the name Cambyses. "And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they unto him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.... Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem" (Ezra 4:6,24). Following the second horn came a second carpenter, Darius Hystaspes, who issued a comforting decree. A builder-up, he was mentioned by both Haggai and Zechariah, and during his reign, Zerubbabel and Joshua prospered. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah had short, meteoric ministries, whereas Zerubbabel and Joshua had long periods of service.

During the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes, who was the third horn, the people of the land told the king that the Israelites were building the city, not just the Temple. When the records were searched, Artaxerxes saw that the original decree of Cyrus the Persian allowed the Jews to return to the homeland to build the Temple. Thus the work ceased for a while. However, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, the third carpenter, Nehemiah was privileged to go back to Israel and rebuild the walls of the city of Jerusalem. This condition lasted until the next horn.

The fourth horn occurred under the Roman Empire, which destroyed the Temple and the city of Jerusalem in AD 69. Both Titus and Vespasian were involved in the destruction, but particularly Titus. The fourth carpenter, coming on the scene many years later, was General Allenby in the English army, who broke the yoke of the Ottoman Empire in 1917. As a result of the defeat of the Ottoman Empire's hold on Palestine, the rebuilding began to take place, and Jews started to return. Also, the first Jewish prime minister of England was on the scene at the same time, plus a Jewish scientist, who was recognized for the work he had done.

In summary, not only *empires or nations* but also *individuals* of those powers were represented by the four horns and the four carpenters. Stated another way, a carpenter power opposed or negated the influence of each horn and allowed Israel to prosper in these four stages of redevelopment.

In the third vision, a man appeared with a measuring line in his hand. When Zechariah asked him where he was going, the man replied, "To measure the city of Jerusalem," etc. Now we come to the fourth vision.

Zech. 3:1 And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.

The Logos, the “angel” of God, showed Zechariah a fourth vision. In this vision, Joshua, the high priest, was standing before the Logos, and Satan was standing at Joshua’s right hand. Thus there were three personages: Joshua (the high priest), the angel of God (the Logos), and Satan. The name Joshua, a form of Jesus, represents the priestly aspect. To repeat: Joshua was standing before the Logos (the Word of God, God’s mouthpiece), and Satan stood at the right hand of Joshua.

Logos
Joshua Satan

Usually when a person is standing at one’s right hand, the connotation is favorable, but here Satan was the critic and opposer of Joshua. The name Satan means “accuser,” and his purpose was to resist Joshua. Everything was negative.

Zech. 3:2 And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?

“And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan.” On the surface, this statement seems contradictory, for in both cases, “LORD” is in all capital letters, meaning Jehovah. A clarification is obviously needed.

The same type of circumstance occurred at the burning bush when an angel appeared and told Moses to remove his shoes. God was pictured as speaking to Moses, but the one saying, “I am Jehovah” was actually “the angel of the LORD,” that is, the Logos, who was speaking on behalf of God (Exod. 3:2,6). In other words, whatever the Logos said was just as meaningful as if God Himself were speaking. Three or four places in the Old Testament use similar language with the “angel of the LORD” and Jehovah.

Therefore, when we read verse 2 here in the Book of Zechariah, we should mentally insert the words “the angel of”: “And [the angel of] the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee.” Right away we are reminded of Jude 9, where Michael (the archangel) said to Satan, “The Lord [God] rebuke thee.”

“Even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee.” In this context, Satan was trying to thwart the rebuilding of the Temple by creating all kinds of obstacles. The returned Jews had started to rebuild the Temple but had accomplished very little when they stopped to build *and decorate* their own homes. Zechariah was sent as a prophet for the purpose of encouraging the completion of the Temple.

“Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” From one standpoint, Joshua was the “brand plucked out of the fire” in that God’s providence protected him in coming forth from Babylon, where he could have died. God had determined that this scenario would take place with its symbolism preserved.

From another standpoint, the “brand plucked out of the fire” was Judah. The Temple and the city had been destroyed, but a remnant of Jews had been plucked out of the fire, the destruction, to go into Babylonian captivity. Then, after the 70 years’ desolation, they returned to the homeland in two different groupings, and Joshua, the high priest, was on the scene. Joshua represented part of the remnant.

Zech. 3:3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.

Joshua, who was standing before the Logos, was “clothed with filthy garments.” In the antitype, Joshua represents Jesus at the First Advent and how he was viewed by others. Not only was he regarded as a sinner when he died on the Cross, but also the great majority considered him a false Messiah. Stated another way, Jesus appeared as the antitypical Joshua and as a sin offering. Hence the Jews viewed his garments as filthy, especially when he was crucified. The nation rejected him, and the relatively few who received him became the sons of God (John 1:12).

However, when Zechariah related this vision to the people, they thought that “Joshua” was the literal Joshua, their high priest. The name Joshua is a Hebraic form of the word “Jesus,” so there is a double picture, just as there was with the four horns and the four carpenters. Here again are a localized representation and a larger picture pertaining to Jesus at the First Advent.

The word “filthy” means “excrement,” signifying that in the localized application, the office of high priest was defiled, besmirched. For instance, intermarriage with the heathen occurred again. When the Jews returned to the homeland, they had problems, and the priesthood was defiled in another sense too because, not having a Temple, they did not observe the Day of Atonement. Therefore, blood was not sprinkled on the Mercy Seat to atone for the nation.

The altar in the court was finished first, and next came the foundation of the Temple. Later, with encouragement from Haggai and Zechariah, the people began to build up from the foundation with wood and stone, and they finished the Temple. But at the time of this fourth vision, the people were not yet cleansed, so even though the high priest was of the proper lineage, he was not seen in his true stature.

Of course conditions would change, but meanwhile, there was an interim period—just as with Jesus. He had a short public ministry of only 3 1/2 years and was considered a curse on the Cross, but when he was raised from death, some of the nation saw him in the proper light. To these, who realized he was the Messiah, his garments were changed. His disciples sang, “Hallelujah!” but not the nation.

Zech. 3:4 And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.

The fact that the angel (the Logos) spoke “unto those that stood before him” indicates that others were present besides Joshua and Satan. The Logos gave the authoritative order: “Take away the filthy garments from him [Joshua].” And unto Joshua, the Logos said, “Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.”

Two trains of thought are coming together here, both of which have an application. In one sense, there was a small-scale fulfillment back in Zechariah’s day, but actually, when Jesus was resurrected, it was seen that God accepted him. Jesus’ offering was proven by the fact that he did not remain dead, and his awakening from death brought life to the brotherhood—as signified by the change of raiment.

In other words, in this vision, the angel (the Logos), who was speaking for God, gave an order to Joshua, and yet in another sense, the Logos was giving the order to Jesus. This thought necessitates a retracing of the account from another standpoint. When the priesthood started in the days of Moses, it was an honorable profession, for the type began with purity. However, subsequently the “orthodox” prophets were mostly disobedient false prophets, and the priesthood became corrupted. The priesthood, the prophets, and the king’s court were all

corrupt and out of harmony with God's commandments. Thus they were an abomination in the eyes of any of the people who were looking for righteousness. However, the majority of the Israelites were satisfied. Conditions are the same today, for while many of the clergy do not lead exemplary lives, the people are rather pleased with the lax conduct. For example, if the priest drinks, the people think he is one of them. They like the pretense, for it gives them an excuse to be loose and free.

Back there the priesthood was defiled, the prophets gave false messages, and the court (the judges) accepted bribes. When Jesus came as the Messiah, the scribes and Pharisees regarded him as a youngster. Their attitude was, "He is only 30 years old, yet he talks to us as if he is somebody." Because Jesus lacked formal education, they detested him and considered him a pretender with ulterior motives. Moreover, the people were convinced he was a pretender when he was crucified and hanging naked on the Cross. "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13; Deut. 21:23). Although the people marveled when Jesus raised Lazarus shortly before the Crucifixion, they soon forgot the miracle when he was put to death as a criminal. Thus he was tainted as a false prophet and priest—until his resurrection.

Jesus is the true High Priest—he is the Christian's High Priest now, and he will be the world's High Priest in the next age—and he performed that function even during his earthly ministry. In the type, lepers went to the priest to be diagnosed for cleansing based on a certain procedure under the Law. In the antitype, Jesus performed a priestly function in cleansing lepers, restoring limbs, and resuscitating individuals from death. However, the reaction of the Jews shows that for those who are turned off to the merits of an individual, it is almost impossible to change the thinking *no matter what that person does*. The Little Flock will be judges in the next age, and the consecrated are being judged now as to whether they are fit for that role. The Lord watches to see how they react to various situations and whether they are trying to learn the lessons in His Word of having mercy, love, pity, and compassion as well as a hatred of iniquity. On the one hand, Christians have to *love* righteousness, and on the other hand, they must *hate* iniquity. Sometimes they are to be compassionate, and sometimes they are to be adversarial, admonishing others.

In the Book of Zechariah, Joshua and Zerubbabel were both types of Christ, and what was done with Zerubbabel's Temple back there will be done with Ezekiel's Temple in the Kingdom Age. The Zadok priesthood, the Ancient Worthies, and civil authorities will all be part of the Kingdom arrangement. These types were not perceived at the First Advent, and Satan was an adversary of Jesus, doing everything he could to demean and defile the antitypical Joshua, especially at the beginning and the close of his ministry. The First Advent is contrasted with the next age, when Jesus will be re clothed.

Q: Since Joshua was the high priest, those standing with him were underpriests. In the antitype, do they picture, respectively, Jesus and Christians who are trying to follow in his footsteps?

A: Yes.

Q: Please explain again the words "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee."

A: The Scriptures tell that Jesus was spotless, holy, and undefiled and that he was without guile or sin of any kind, yet he was crucified as a sinner (Heb. 7:26; Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 2:24). *He had to be a curse*, the principle being a perfect man's life for a perfect man's life, that is, a corresponding price. The perfect man Adam had life, but he disobeyed and lost life. The perfect man Jesus earned the right to life, but he forfeited that life for the human race, ransoming not only the Church but also the world of mankind (1 John 2:2).

Therefore, while Jesus was sinless, harmless, and blameless, he was viewed in an unfavorable light by the nation as a whole. Those who accepted him at the First Advent were the sick, yet of the ten lepers who were cleansed, only one returned to give thanks (Matt. 9:12). The other nine did not become Christians, even though they were recipients of a miraculous cure. The point is that in spite of all the healing, the providences surrounding Jesus' life seemed to be negative. But nevertheless, the people reflected after his resurrection, and the gospel lived on because Jesus had done some marvelous things that no one could negate. Contemporary writings by rabbis and others could not disallow what the New Testament tells about the events that took place. For example, an earthquake occurred, and a man named Jesus actually lived. If a person sincerely investigates, he can get the truth from the sufficiency of facts that exist, but the amount of error that prevails screens the world so that only a relative few have a hearing ear.

Zech. 3:5 And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by.

Q: Do the pronouns “me” (verse 1) and “I” (verse 5) refer to Zechariah?

A: Yes. It is helpful to keep in mind that all of the successive visions in chapters 1-6 took place in one night. Zechariah was specially selected to receive these visions, and he had a remarkable memory (enhanced, of course, by the Holy Spirit).

Why did Zechariah say, “Let them set a fair mitre upon his head”? He was so emotionally involved and responsive that when Joshua was being clothed with a change of raiment, the prophet was anxious for him to have a turban around the forehead. A well-known saying among Orthodox rabbis is, “The spirit of Jeremiah was very evident in Zechariah.” A similar emotionalism was apparent in both.

When Joshua was clothed and the turban put on his head, “the angel of the LORD stood by” with approval. The Logos, who had given the orders to take away Joshua's filthy garments and clothe him with new garments, was inspecting the clothing process to make sure it was done properly (verse 4).

Q: Was the “fair mitre” part of the priestly garments?

A: The mitre was the narrow band to which was fastened the golden plate, or crown, that said, “Holiness to the LORD” (Exod. 28:36,37). Although done to the high priest of the Aaronic priesthood, the crown was a hint of the coming Melchisedec priesthood.

Why was the mitre described as “fair”? As shown in the type, Aaron (picturing Jesus) was first robed in sacrificial garments as a priest for the brotherhood in the Gospel Age. Then later he got the garments of glory and beauty, in which he will perform service for the world in the Kingdom Age (Lev. 16:3,4,23,24). Similarly here, Joshua was first clothed in sacrificial garments, and then his raiment was changed to garments of glory and beauty. In regard to the mitre being put on Joshua's head, the reference is to something that will occur in our day, yet future. The mitre was only a linen turban, so the golden plate upon that mitre made it “fair.”

Zech. 3:6 And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying,

Just as Jehovah spoke through the prophets, so here He was speaking through the “angel.” In this vision, which took place about 520 BC—more than 500 years before the First Advent of Christ—the “angel of the LORD” was the *mouthpiece* of Jehovah.

We now have to use a little supposition. When God broached the matter of man's redemption

to His Son, He did not command Jesus to come down here and die. Jesus was probably very sympathetic to the plight of the human race and wanted to see a restoration from their fallen condition. He witnessed all that was happening, but he did not know that he would be the Messiah. For instance, when the Bible states that Jesus was the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8), did he know before the foundation of the world that he was to die? No. There were things Jesus did not know, as he stated on more than one occasion (Mark 13:32; Rev. 5:1-5).

Thus we find that the setting of this vision was 500-plus years before the First Advent, and the Logos, Michael, was involved (his name was not yet Jesus). The office of Logos—that is, being honored as God’s mouthpiece—was more important than the personal name.

Zech. 3:7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.

Verse 7 tells what the Logos “protested” to Joshua (see verse 6): “If thou wilt walk in my ways, and ... keep my charge [ordinance], then thou shalt also judge my house, and ... keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.” But what did God mean when He said to Joshua through the Logos, “[If you are obedient] I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by”? In the type, the local picture, we can see that the Israelites lacked diligence at first. Zerubbabel and Joshua went back to the homeland and started with a bang, but that zeal was short-lived, for a period of neglect followed. Then the prophets Haggai and Zechariah appeared to both Zerubbabel and Joshua, telling them to get active and complete the work on the Temple. Thus there was a lapse as far as the literal Joshua and Zerubbabel were concerned back in Zechariah’s day, after which they diligently performed the offices of priest and governor, respectively, on behalf of their people.

The Logos was telling Joshua that the Israelites, if obedient, would have a measure of peace and communication favorable to the administration of the office of high priest. Also, prophets and even Jesus gave sermons in the Temple precincts, and their speaking required peaceful conditions. They would preach in one part of the Temple and then move to another part. In other words, not only would the Temple and its courts be rebuilt, and not only would Joshua and the underpriests serve, but also the Israelites would prosper spiritually.

The first part of verse 7 reminds us of the words God spoke to Solomon: “Concerning this house which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father” (1 Kings 6:11,12). Solomon’s heart condition was good at that time, at the beginning of his reign, as shown by his prayer for wisdom to judge the Israelites properly. “O LORD my God, ... I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?” (1 Kings 3:7-9). God was pleased with Solomon’s prayer but also gave a caution: “If thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days” (1 Kings 3:14). Moreover, the Book of Leviticus gives rules, regulations, and requirements for the priesthood.

In the first dispensation, the world before the Flood, God gave the angels an opportunity to lift mankind from their sinful condition. However, many of the holy angels became defiled when they tried to minister to mankind. Instead of performing their errands and returning to heaven, they lingered and stayed and lived down here. In preferring to remain on earth, they

left their first estate and became contaminated with sin. The second dispensation, the “present evil world,” was given to Satan, “the god of this world,” under the permission of evil (Gal. 1:4; 2 Cor. 4:4). Satan, a traitor, has entirely wrong motives and ambitions, desiring his own elevation. And during Gentile times, various kings were permitted to see what they could do. In every instance, the efforts of men and angels were failures.

When Jesus saw that the only hope for the redemption of mankind was a corresponding price, he probably suggested, like the words of the Prophet Isaiah, “Here am I; send me” (Isa. 6:8). Of *his own initiative*, Jesus wanted to come down here and pay that price. Similarly, God does not command Christians to consecrate and give up their earthly hopes. God’s plan was to draw a Little Flock class from mankind, and when we began to understand His plan, we wanted to become identified with it. We asked for forgiveness and declared our desire to become followers of Jesus Christ, promising to be faithful unto death. The Father no doubt told Jesus of the perils of disobedience, saying that he could come down here but that he had to be faithful. God gave similar advice to Solomon at the time of his right heart condition.

Even after the severe test that came upon the angels in the dispensation prior to the Flood, the holy angels outnumbered the unholy ones. What helped them to withstand the evil was seeing God’s glory, seeing God as He is. Even though they were perplexed as to why sin was being permitted, they had faith and obeyed, based on their limited understanding. God had all holiness and power, but when He created man and man sinned, it looked as if God had failed. The angels who did not succumb to the evil suggestions of that period of time showed an appreciation for God—for who and what He was—even if they could not understand.

And so, prior to consecration, many of us looked at the natural creation and reasoned that there must be a God, even though we did not fully understand what was happening. In time, when we got some understanding of His plan, we said, “Yes, this makes sense.” Then we volunteered and submitted to follow the Lord. But we were told in advance what the result would be if we forsook our consecration vows, namely, extinction.

Jesus was likewise informed. But notice that he was given encouragement first, as stated in verse 7. God told Jesus, “I will give you the privilege of redeeming the human race and bringing them out of this mess.” Jesus thoroughly understood what the conditions were. Because he was perfect, perfect obedience was required.

When Jesus occupied the role, or office, of Logos, he did not have freedom to do things he might have liked to do but had to do what he was told. In contrast, when Lucifer was created, he was not given a restrictive role but was allowed the liberty of walking up and down among the stars of God; that is, he had liberty of access and communication on the various planes of being (Ezek. 28:14). Evidently, the Logos, as God’s spokesman, did not have such liberty but acted as God instructed—whether he spoke to Adam in the Garden of Eden as the “voice” or to Moses or performed some other function (Gen. 3:8-10). Moreover, Jesus would not have come down here to earth unless he was told to do so by his Father. Consider, as an example, a United States ambassador in another country. Normally speaking—and excluding vacation time—an ambassador is tied down with rules and regulations and has to go wherever he is sent. Similarly, the Logos was limited in his role to a certain extent, but in the final analysis, the limitations benefited him and gave him real training. His obedience crystallized his character.

Thus the Logos had the privilege not only of paying the price for man’s redemption but also of communicating with man and trying to lift him up. And that will be Jesus’ role in the Kingdom Age. As Prophet, Priest, and King, he will rule over the earth in a very direct sense, being present in earth’s atmosphere. Satan has misruled, but Jesus will lift mankind up. He will be the administrator, overseeing all the details of the literal Temple with his fellow kings and priests,

the glorified Church. During the Gospel Age, he has been preparing a place for them: “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you ... that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2,3). Jesus loves his followers—and he also loves the world (John 3:16). The point is that the administration of the future was held out to him, but it was conditioned by obedience. Just as God had rules and regulations in Old Testament times, so He has rules and regulations in the spirit realm.

Satan had freedom and lost it. Jesus did not have freedom but will receive it. He is privy to all of God’s thinking and activities, for he is in the inner circle of the fellowship of God in the utmost sense of the word.

As high priest, Joshua pertained to the priesthood, and Zerubbabel was the governor, the civil authority. Jesus is to be a King and a Priest, but chapter 3 focuses on the priestly, or healing, aspect of the Kingdom Age, which is probably needed first. In the Old Testament, a priest was a doctor for sick people. A sinner is more interested in being forgiven for sins and having fellowship with God than in other things. To go to other things first is to miss the point of the calling, which is to be conformed to the image of Christ.

A priest stands out. As a judge, the high priest has the antitypical breastplate on his heart. This emotional aspect is very important, but more is needed. Many people are emotionally involved in decision making and do things impulsively that are not too rational. The motive may be good, but the mechanics are not too favorable. Nevertheless, mechanics have their place, for a well-functioning machine has its value.

Joshua was told, “If you are obedient, you will have a ministerial office.” If we are faithful, how wonderful it will be to receive the authority and the miraculous power to heal and to raise the dead—to be accounted by God as worthy of such a reward!

Jesus was placed in a body that was “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom. 8:3). Although he may have been a little taller and more noble in appearance, and although his words were seasoned with grace even before he appeared at Jordan and began his ministry, the people who beheld him just saw him as a man. He did not appear as a conqueror or as a charismatic leader until he started his ministry, and then his miracles, plus the way he spoke, enamored many, so that thousands eventually followed him. Then came the shock: the Crucifixion. His death dashed their hopes.

When Jesus was placed down here in a vessel of clay, which was perfect humanity, he had to perfectly obey the Law of God. Therefore, when he was a man prior to his ministry, he had to attend all of the required Jewish feasts (Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles). Even during his ministry when the situation was different, he went to some (and perhaps all) of the feasts. The point is that he implicitly obeyed all of the ordinances. Of course Jesus was perfect to start with, but there was a conditional requirement for obedience. Being in the likeness of sinful flesh, he was considered the same as others, yet he was sinless—without sin.

Q: The Lord admonished Joshua by saying, “If thou wilt keep my charge, ... I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.” Who was standing by?

A: An element stood by *idle*. In the priesthood, Joshua awoke from temporary inactivity and became a fireball. This principle also occurred with Jeremiah, who had a period of quiescence, but God’s words were like a fire in his bones (Jer. 20:9). In Zechariah’s day, God’s providence opened the road before Joshua so that he would become an exemplar in behavior and zeal and would thus uplift those associated with him. The inference is that those who stood by were on the scene earlier, even though only the Logos, Joshua, and Satan were mentioned. The

suggestion is that others were there witnessing and hearing the conversation. Verse 4 refers to these same individuals as “those that stood before him [the Logos].”

Zech. 3:8 Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.

In the continuing vision, the Logos, the “angel of the LORD,” told Joshua that another personage would eventually come on the scene and that his name would be “the BRANCH” (Zech. 3:1,6). Jesus came from Nazareth. Although he was actually born in Bethlehem, he was, to all appearances, born in Nazareth, where he lived for many years. Very few people—just his disciples and immediate family—knew about his birth in Bethlehem.

How wonderful that the word “BRANCH” is in all capital letters, but why was Jesus called “the BRANCH”? There are several reasons. The term reminds us of his saying, “I am the root and the offspring of David” (Rev. 22:16). Not only would Messiah come out of the Davidic line, but David, who was a picture of Christ, would come out of Jesse. “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots” (Isa. 11:1). In his earthly lineage, Jesus inherited royalty.

In the account of Noah and the Flood, the twig brought by the dove to the Ark represented Jesus as “the BRANCH.” The twig was an emblem, or evidence, of the beginning of the assuaging of the Flood. Also, the fact that the twig was brought to Noah identified him as the branch from whom everyone subsequently descended. Being an *olive* branch, it symbolized peace, and Jesus is called the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6). Easy-flowing olive oil is an unguent that soothes wounds. It is interesting that the Logos spoke these words but did not realize *he* would be that honored one.

Jesus said, “I am the vine, ye are the branches” (John 15:5). From the vine, the *main* branch, come auxiliary branches, or subdivisions. God expects each of us, as Christians, to bring forth fruit as a result of our being converted, and we should witness to others concerning what the Lord has done for us. The literal Joshua back there was in one sense a representation of the more glorious “Joshua,” who appeared on the scene at the First Advent.

Comment: A cross-reference is Jeremiah 23:5, “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.”

Reply: Jesus’ coming as a Branch at his First Advent was one aspect. The Jeremiah citation tells that eventually he will be King over the earth. He will execute judgment and be a success in the ones who get life through obedience in the Kingdom. In the final analysis, many will not obey, and the startling fact is that with all the wonderful things Jesus has done in the past, and will do in the future, some people will inherently follow Satan and evil. At the end of the Kingdom Age, the number of those who go up to the Holy City to do verbal battle and demonstrate, and thus go into Second Death, will be as the sand of the sea (Rev. 20:8). Therefore, *both* the number who are saved and the number who do not get life will be as the sand of the sea. Earth’s population today is approximately 6 billion—a great number. If half go into Second Death, a large number will not get life. Evidently, the Pastor became very sober on this subject late in life. For example, one observation was that there were more goats than sheep in Israel. At the dinner table on a Sunday evening at Bethel not long before his death, he questioned how many of the consecrated would make their calling and election sure. The point is that many will follow Satan, who looks beautiful but caters to the flesh by offering many goodies which lead to depravity. All of us, no matter how old or young, must be on guard and not assume we can put off the armor. Satan is very beguiling.

Joshua had people (“fellows”) on his side, and the “angel of the LORD” had people on his side. The Logos, who appeared to Zechariah, did not know at the time of the vision that he would fulfill the prophetic role. Not until much later did the Logos realize that he would be the select one to redeem mankind.

Q: For “men wondered at,” the King James margin has “men of wonder” or “men of sign.” Is the NIV accurate? It reads, “Listen, O high priest Joshua and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring my servant, the Branch.” The RSV uses the word “omen”— “Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men of good omen: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch.”

A: Yes, that is proper.

Review

Thus far in the study of the Book of Zechariah, we have had several reviews. The peculiar thing about this book is that it bears considerable repetition because if we go through every verse in minute detail, the study gets too heavy in the sense that we do not grasp the overall picture of the purpose of the visions. Therefore, we will have another review at this point. Repetition helps to bring out facets of detail that are easily overlooked.

To begin with, we will state that approximately the first half of the book pertains to Zechariah’s explaining a series of seven visions he had in one evening. The visions, which were given to him one after the other, both opened and closed with a scene of horses. In other words, the first vision pertained to horses, and the seventh vision also concerned horses. This duplication becomes a signal point.

In the vision of horses in the first chapter, Zechariah “saw by night ... a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom” (Zech. 1:8). Behind him, there were “red horses, speckled, and white.” In this vision, then, there was a man on a red horse, but the account does not specifically state whether there were riders on the horses behind him. Verse 11 seems to infer that there were riders: “And *they* answered the angel of the LORD ... and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.” The fact this statement is voiced by “they,” a *plural* pronoun, could make us jump to the conclusion that the horses had riders who were speaking. However, the conclusion may not be correct because in the last vision of horses in chapter 6, the Prophet Zechariah saw horses and chariots coming out from between two mountains, and no riders are mentioned (Zech. 6:1-8). Thus the question arises, Did the horses have riders, or were the horses riderless? We might reason that horses do not speak, so there must have been riders, but that is not necessarily the case because in the Bible, animals and creatures are shown as speaking. For instance, the serpent in the Garden of Eden spoke to Mother Eve, and that serpent was not created with the ability to speak, even though it was the most subtle of all the creatures in the garden. It was Satan who spoke through the serpent and reasoned with Eve.

Another instance occurred with the Prophet Balaam, who was riding on an ass. When the animal pushed Balaam’s leg against a wall, the prophet beat the animal mercilessly. The ass then turned and said to Balaam, “Why do you beat me? Haven’t I been obedient to you all these many years?” Balaam was so angry that he was not even startled when the ass spoke to him. (This incident shows that anger can interfere with one’s reasoning faculties.)

A third instance is Psalm 96:12, which speaks of a field being joyful and of trees rejoicing and praising God. Moreover, when Jotham spoke to rebellious Israel in a parable, he likened some

there to various trees and a bramble (Judg. 9:1-21). The trees spoke like Disney characters.

Thus, on occasion in the Bible, animals and even inanimate objects are pictured as speaking. In still another instance, in connection with a covenant that was being made with the 2 1/2 tribes across the river Jordan, Joshua spoke to a stone so that it would be a witness in the future (Josh. 24:26,27). And Jesus remarked that if the people had not rejoiced and shouted when he entered the city of Jerusalem on a colt, the foal of an ass, the very stones would have cried out (Luke 19:35-40).

These examples are mentioned to show that the horses of Zechariah chapters 1 and 6 represent doctrines, and the doctrines spoke. In the first chapter, no activity was described. The horses (doctrines) that were behind the man on the red horse were at a standstill and said simply, "We have walked to and fro throughout the earth and accomplished our mission." Since the Book of Zechariah is next to the last book in the Old Testament, these doctrines were laid down and recorded earlier, that is, before Zechariah appeared on the scene. For example, the Ancient Worthies, pictured by the red horses, were represented by the Kohathites in the Tabernacle arrangement, by the ashes of a red heifer, by the statements "I will restore thy judges as at the first" and "there shall be no herd in the stalls" (Isa. 1:26; Hab. 3:17), and by the "prince" who will sit in the east gate of the Third Temple (Ezek. 44:1-3). The Little Flock, pictured by the black-maned horses, were represented by the Amramites on the east (front) side of the Tabernacle, by Rebekah as the "mother of thousands of millions" (Gen. 24:60), by the King's daughter who marries Jesus in Psalm 45, by the Lord's goat in the Tabernacle arrangement, and by the bride in the Song of Solomon and the one who gets out of bed before the Lord knocks on the door. The Great Company, the white horses, were pictured by the Merarites around the Tabernacle, by Rebekah's maids, by the virgin companions of the King's daughter in Psalm 45, by the scapegoat (Lev. 16:20-22), and by the little sister in the Song of Solomon, who puts off her slippers and robe but finally reacts. These doctrines, which were previously laid down in the Bible, were at a standstill when the Book of Zechariah was written. Later on, in chapter 6, the horse doctrines take on a different significance.

The second vision, the one of four horns and four carpenters, has already been discussed in detail. The third vision was of a man with a measuring line. Zechariah asked him, "Who are you, and what are you doing?" The man replied, "I am going to measure the city of Jerusalem"; that is, he would stretch forth a line over the city. As he went off the scene, the Logos gave instructions to an angel who appeared, telling him to run back and tell Zechariah that there had been a change in the plan. Instead of the city being measured at that time, Zechariah was given the comforting words that there would be no need for a wall around Jerusalem because the city would be inhabited with such an abundance of people. This prophecy is not yet fulfilled.

The Book of Zechariah is different from the other books in the Old Testament in the way it is arranged. This book will speak loudly at the end of the Gospel Age, for it will be of great benefit to two classes: the Great Company (a *spiritual* class) and the Holy Remnant (a *natural* element of Israel). This prophetic book will help the Holy Remnant to understand conditions that exist particularly at the time of Jacob's Trouble.

It is significant that the Prophet Zechariah uttered the expression "After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations" (Zech. 2:8). Two applications for this expression are as follows.

1. A natural application applied back in Zechariah's day to the Jews who had returned to Israel from captivity at the time of Cyrus's decree. To them, Zechariah was saying, "God has sent me as His prophet to inform you that after the destruction of the glory of Solomon's Temple and the city of Jerusalem, you are now in a condition where you have been restored to your land

and are trying to build another Temple. The people who are frustrating you in this building work are touching the apple of God's eye—and you, Israel, are that apple.”

2. The same pronoun “me” portrays the role of Jesus at the First Advent. He alerted the nation of Israel that God would raise up a prophet of their brethren like unto Moses (Acts 3:22; Deut. 18:15).

In Zechariah 2:11, the prophet said, “Know that the LORD of hosts hath sent *me* unto thee.” The first application, as explained, was that Zechariah would be sent by God to the people of Israel back there, but another application is that Zechariah and his prophecies will be recognized in the future—much like what will happen with Daniel. Daniel's prophecies were so specific that it was said he would be a “seal” unto them. “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and *seal* the book, even to the time of the end” (Dan. 12:4). In other words, when we saw that the 1,260, the 1,290, and the 1,335 days had been fulfilled, the fulfillment was a “seal,” or a testimony, that Daniel was not only a true prophet of God but also a teller of future events already fulfilled. In the near future, it will be seen that God sent Zechariah many centuries ago to utter prophecies that will be helpful in our day for the Holy Remnant (Zech. 2:9; 4:9; 6:15).

In Zechariah 3:1, Joshua, the high priest, was seen standing before the angel of the Lord. This “angel” (probably the Logos), the messenger from Jehovah, was a constant figure in the various visions. Joshua, representing Jesus future from Zechariah's day, was pictured with the angel of God and Satan “standing at his right hand to resist him.” This verse sounds a lot like the chapter 1 of the Book of Job, where Satan and God had an allegorical discussion about Job.

In this fourth vision, God rebuked Satan, saying that Jerusalem was a brand plucked out of the fire. Imagine the intense interest of the Lord Jesus Christ in reading this account at his First Advent! When he came to the Book of Zechariah and saw the name “Joshua,” he knew it meant Jesus, his *own* name. He would have taken much interest in this particular prophetic vision. We feel that this book helped Jesus, for he would have been thoroughly familiar with it even before he was Spirit-begotten at 30 years of age at Jordan. The account mentions that this Joshua had filthy garments.

In regard to the natural application back in Zechariah's day, the priesthood had lost its honor, and the Temple had been destroyed. Now, with the return of Jews to the homeland, the priesthood was coming back into honor but still did not have its former esteem. In addition, at the First Advent, Jesus was in this role of being robed in filthy garments. Some of the Pharisees said of him, “How can a man that is a *sinner* do such miracles?” (John 9:16). The Apostle Paul wrote, “For he [God] hath made him [Jesus] to be *sin* for us, who knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5:21). And again, “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without [the appearance of] *sin* unto salvation” (Heb. 9:28). “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of *sinful* flesh, and for *sin*, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3). “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a *curse* for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal. 3:13). From these five Scriptures, we can see that Jesus was a high priest at his First Advent, but to all appearances, he was clothed with filthy garments. During his ministry, he *seemed* to be an imperfect man just like anybody else, especially when he was put to death on the Cross by crucifixion.

In continuing the review, we note that Zechariah said, “Let them set a fair mitre upon his [Joshua's] head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by” (Zech. 3:5). Then the angel of the LORD, on behalf of God, “protested unto Joshua”—that is, made Joshua take an oath—saying, “If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also

keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by” (Zech. 3:6,7).

Now we want to know, Who are “these that stand by” in the spiritual fulfillment? The next verse reads, “Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at” (Zech. 3:8). Notice, these “men” who sit before Joshua are to be *wonders*. To get the correct thought, we almost have to read this verse with a magnifying glass. Therefore, we will read it again with emphasis: “Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, *thou, and thy fellows* that sit before thee ... are men [to be] wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.” These words are significant. In Isaiah 8:18, Jesus spoke prophetically, “Behold, *I and the children whom the LORD [Jehovah] hath given me* are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.” In other words, the ones in the vision who were on the sidelines—on a back burner, as it were, unnoticed but recorded—have to do with the Church. They are those who are specially called, plus the other consecrated. Paul provided additional information in the Book of Hebrews: “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he [Jesus] also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them [primarily the Great Company class] who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2:14,15). The Great Company, a unique class that have been called during the Gospel Age, are also children of God. Therefore, “I” and the “fellows,” the “children,” include (1) our Lord Jesus, (2) the Bride class, and (3) even the Great Company as part of the “church of the firstborn” (Heb. 12:23).

Q: Please explain verse 8 again. Where Zechariah said, “Hear now, O Joshua,” does Joshua represent Jesus?

A: Yes, he represents Jesus in the antitype, which is the deeper significance. From a natural standpoint back in Zechariah’s day, these prophecies were meant to be an inspiration to the returned exiles, who were in need of encouragement. Thus these prophecies were worded in a way that would benefit them as well as us today. In the natural picture, the vision was applicable to Israel, and in the antitype, Joshua is Jesus. The “angel of the LORD” was the Logos.

Zech. 3:9 For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

In this highly symbolic vision, Zechariah saw a stone that was set before Joshua, the high priest, and on that stone were “seven eyes.” Wouldn’t we like to see this stone exactly as Zechariah saw it? How were the *seven eyes* arranged? If the stone is considered to be a pyramid, there is a problem because a pyramid has only *four* faces. Even if we add an eye to the base of the pyramid, that would account for only five eyes. Therefore, the stone in the vision, in the natural picture, was *seven-faceted*, having *seven* faces instead of four. After Zechariah saw this vision, we can be sure that he ran to both Joshua and Zerubbabel to tell them what he had dreamed, and after that, he would have told the people, the nation.

“Behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts.” Notice that *Jehovah* engraves this stone, which has seven eyes.

The “seven eyes” are the first point that stands out when we read verse 9, and the logical question is, What do they represent? Revelation 4:5 reads, “And out of the throne [of God] proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were *seven lamps of fire* burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.” The seven lamps are the “seven *Spirits* of God,” and “Spirits” in this case represent doctrines. As an illustration, Paul said, “Now the

[Holy] Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and [even] doctrines of devils” (1 Tim. 4:1). The Apostle John admonished, “Beloved, believe not every spirit [doctrine], but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Thus a “spirit” can be a doctrine that manifests or discloses information and intelligence, and a “spirit” from God gives beneficial understanding.

What is the signification of the seven eyes being seen *on* the stone in the vision? The *stone* is the power that has the seven eyes and guides the Church down through the Gospel Age. Of course God is the Author of this intelligence. Immediately we are reminded of Revelation 1:1, “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him.” In other words, the message did not originate with Jesus, for the *Father* gave the message to Jesus to disclose to His servants.

God also said, “I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.” What “land” and “one day” are the subject of this prophecy? God was referring to the land of Israel at the time He delivers the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble. First, the city of Jerusalem will be captured by the enemy force, who will rifle the houses and ravish the women (Zech. 14:2). Subsequently God will go forth and fight for His people as “in the day of battle” in the past (Zech. 14:3). Hence the “one day” corresponds to the “day” of Ezekiel 38:19; 39:8,11,13,22. “For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that *day* there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel.... Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord GOD; this is the *day* whereof I have spoken.... And it shall come to pass in that *day*, that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel.... Yea, ... it shall be to them a renown the *day* that I shall be glorified, saith the Lord GOD.... So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that *day* and forward.”

As explained in an earlier study, the “seven eyes” represent wisdom, the seven messages to the Church, and God’s omniscience. God’s eyes “run to and fro through[out] the whole earth” (Zech. 4:10). This prophetic vision showed way back in Zechariah’s day that Jesus, as High Priest and Counselor, would have supervision over the seven stages of the Church. The seven stars, or messengers, correspond to the seven eyes. Accordingly, there have been seven dispensational-message outpourings of the Holy Spirit. Stated another way, the seven eyes picture intelligence that God would use to superintend the seven messengers in a special way. Revelation 5:6 reads, “And I [John] beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne [of God] and of the four beasts [living beings], and in the midst of the [24] elders [the Word of God], stood a Lamb [Jesus] as it had been slain, having seven horns and *seven eyes*, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” For example, at the Second Advent, Jesus, the present Lord, feeds his Church through the seventh messenger, who is described as “a faithful and wise servant,” but it is *God’s* message that Jesus dispenses (Matt. 24:45-47).

Zech. 3:10 In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree.

Verse 10 is an abrupt change of thought. Through the Logos, God was speaking prophetically to all people, starting with natural Israel. The fulfillment will start quite speedily at the inauguration of the Kingdom, and it will last throughout the Kingdom Age. A radical change will take place not only in Israel but also in the whole setup of the culture that exists today. Here the expression “in that day” refers to a period of time starting with the deliverance of the Holy Remnant and the establishment of the Kingdom.

Comment: A Scofield footnote reads, “Verse 10 marks the time of fulfillment as in the future kingdom. It speaks of a security which Israel has never known since the captivity nor will know till the kingdom comes.”

Reply: That is a very good comment, for it returns to the theme of chapter 3. In every one of these visions, as the first chapter states, “The LORD answered the angel that talked with me [Zechariah] with *good* words and *comfortable* words” (Zech. 1:13). The visions gave assurance and encouragement to the Jews back in Zechariah’s day. For us, too, wherever we are in the end time of the Gospel Age, there is encouragement in regard to God’s dealings in the earth.

When this prophecy was given to the Jews in Zechariah’s day, they were all thinking along natural lines. Therefore, having one’s own vine and fig tree was like a condition of rest, peace, sustenance, and self-satisfaction with no dependency on others. It was something to look forward to, for at the time this prophecy was given, the land was laid waste in the Jerusalem area. When Israelites returned after the 70 years, the setting was primarily Jerusalem. They were commissioned to rebuild the Temple and the city, but it was not until 70 or so years later that Nehemiah dealt with restoring the city.

Zech. 4:1 And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep,

Zechariah was awakened out of a dream into a dream and thus saw another picture—the fifth vision.

Zech. 4:2 And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof:

The angel (the Logos) who talked with Zechariah said to him, “What do you see?” Zechariah replied, “I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it.” In other words, the bowl was positioned above the candlestick. From that bowl came down seven pipes, or channels, that led to seven lamps on the candlestick. The fact there were seven lamps indicates it was a giant candelabra with seven branches—a seven-branched lamp stand.

The candlestick being *golden* reminds us of the lamp stand in the Holy of the Tabernacle, which also had seven lamps. Of course the seven lamps had to rest on something, so reason tells us that each of the seven branches had a flat top, on which a lamp was put. (A drawing of this lamp stand appears on page 25 of *The Keys of Revelation*.)

Zech. 4:3 And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.

Two olive trees were on either side of the bowl and the candlestick, one tree on the right side and one on the left side. The *olive* trees were sources of supply for the oil, which represented the Holy Spirit. By means of a pipe that went from each olive tree to the bowl, the oil flowed into the bowl. In other words, the two olive trees emptied their oil into the bowl, and exiting the bowl were seven pipes leading to the seven lamps.

The two olive trees represent the Old and New Testaments, and the seven lamps picture the seven stages of the gospel Church. What is the lesson? All of the oil comes from Jesus, our Head; the oil does not come to us direct. Therefore, we must be in covenant relationship with Christ in order to get the special anointing oil of the Holy Spirit in the sense intended in this picture. Initially, a lamp gets all the oil that is coming from Jesus.

We are reminded of another picture, namely, when the holy anointing oil was poured on the high priest’s head. In the type, the entire contents of the canister were emptied on Aaron’s

head. Psalm 133:2 reads, “It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments.” Thus we see that Jesus had the Holy Spirit *without measure*, whereas the Church gets the oil *in measure*; that is, the Church gets only *a measure* of the fullness of the oil (John 3:34).

Originally, Moses (picturing God) anointed Aaron (representing Jesus) as high priest. When a high priest died, a son was chosen as his replacement—preferably the oldest son unless he was banished from office because of a deformity (Lev. 21:17-21). Since Moses was off the scene, the Levites went through the motions that were representative of him. Similarly at baptism, the one doing the immersing represents the Lord Jesus; he lowers the candidate into the water and then raises him up. This present vision of the olive trees represents that the oil from God (His Word) goes first to Jesus, next to the seven messengers primarily, and then to the Church at large. The vision is giving a broad-stroke representation of God’s general method of dealing with His people.

Q: While the Church gets the oil from Jesus, wouldn’t he get some of his enlightenment directly from God, rather than from the Old and New Testaments? The Church gets its understanding from Jesus.

A: That is true. For example, when Jesus went up into a mountain and prayed during his earthly ministry, he was strengthened and given further information. Some of that information may not have been in the Word. In other words, he got extraneous, additional, supplemental information. However, basically speaking, the oil in the lamps that feeds the Church comes from the two olive trees through Jesus.

Zech. 4:4 So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord?

Zech. 4:5 Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord.

The clause “the angel that talked with me” (or a slight variation) is used multiple times in the Book of Zechariah (see Zech. 1:9,13,14,19; 2:3; 4:1,4,5; 5:5,10; 6:4). The fact that each time the expression was uttered with almost the same intonation and wording is a tie-in element of communication with the seven visions in chapters 1-6. The “angel of the LORD” spoke to Zechariah, who, after receiving the seven visions, first went to Zerubbabel, then to Joshua, and finally to the people and repeated to them what he had seen. The visions greatly encouraged the people who came back in the second year of Darius Hystaspes to continue building the Temple. This return was like a second going back from Babylon, whereas we usually think of the return when Cyrus issued his decree in 536 BC. The repetitive wording shows that this series of visions occurred one after the other in a short time sequence. The Lord used this same technique elsewhere in Scripture on other occasions.

Zechariah asked the angel (the Logos), “What is the meaning of this vision?” The angel replied, “Do you not know what you have seen and its significance?” Zechariah answered, “No, my lord.” Verses 4 and 5 are not very informative, but they are important because they show that a characteristic of the Heavenly Father in His communication with His people is to do things in a repetitive fashion. Zechariah was expected to say “no” to the angel’s question, and so it is with us. We have to admit that what we see does not in any sense originate with our own personal instruction and understanding. Only through God’s Holy Spirit are certain truths revealed, so we must guard against thinking we have discovered something on our own. The realization of this important lesson helps to keep us humble, especially when the vision or subject matter is very complicated. If we get an understanding of the meaning of a symbol, it is

not of our own doing.

Zech. 4:6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

Then the angel said to Zechariah, “This is the word of Jehovah unto Zerubbabel, ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by *my* spirit,’ saith the LORD of hosts.” When this vision was repeated and narrated the next day or so, it was logical that Zechariah would first go to Zerubbabel. After that, Zechariah certainly went to Joshua, the high priest, because the previous chapter dealt with him. (Zechariah would have informed Joshua of the portion that particularly applied to him as a personal message from God.) And then Zechariah went to the people and explained what he had seen. Thus the prophet repeated each vision three times. We should keep in mind not only that the visions all occurred on the same night but also that the telling, or repeating, of the visions took place in a very short period of time. The time setting was the eighth month of the second year of Darius Hystaspes. The dates have been recorded in the Bible so that in the future, when the nation of Israel returns to the Lord with a whole heart, all the written minutiae can be shown to them. As a result, the Jews will be *greatly humbled* before the Lord God. They will realize that He had these things recorded *for them, His own people*, yet they did not remember the visions and perhaps did not even study them. The Jews will be humbled by God’s wisdom and foreknowledge—His ability to foretell events long into the future and to discuss them as if they were past events, already fulfilled.

“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.” This humbling statement is addressed to *us* now, the *spiritual* Israel of God, as well as to *fleshly*, or *natural*, Israel in the future.

Verses 4-6 are telling us that unless we *hunger and thirst* for the understanding of God’s Word, we will not be rewarded in any depth. However, the hunger itself does not create the understanding. Rather, if it is the Lord’s *due time* to reveal the meaning, or significance, and *if we have this hunger and desire*, we are more apt to receive the benefit of that knowledge, which will come to us either direct from Jesus or through someone else. The promise is that those who are God’s children and who are in this attitude will all be taught of Him (Isa. 54:13). This is especially true with regard to prophecy, because we are prone to more continuously study and meditate on doctrine and the principles of righteousness. However, prophecy is one of the legs of the three-legged stool. We are told to “despise not prophesyings,” and that Scripture is not restricted to prophesying in a public-speaking sense (1 Thess. 5:20).

Comment: We are told, “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of *prophecy*” (Rev. 19:10).

Reply: Yes, prophecy comes from the Father through the Son to us, God willing.

Zech. 4:7 Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.

Much information—exciting information—is packed into each of these visions. “Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.” What “mountain” will become a plain? Spiritually speaking, Satan’s kingdom and mystic Babylon (Papacy) will be destroyed. From a literal standpoint—the real emphasis here—the Second Pyramid, which is next to the Great Pyramid will be leveled. The Second Pyramid has distracted mankind from the true Pyramid because (1) it has a top stone and (2) it is situated on higher ground, so to the casual observer, the Second Pyramid appears more majestic than, and superior to, the Great Pyramid. In reality, the measurements, design, and care that have been put into the Great Pyramid *dwarf* the significance of the Second Pyramid. The Second Pyramid, representative of

Satan's kingdom and particularly of Papacy, will be destroyed. The Third Pyramid, picturing Protestantism, will likewise be destroyed. Thus these structures on the Giza Plateau symbolize the true Church and the two false nominal Church systems.

“Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.” In the natural picture, the Second Pyramid will be dismantled and removed by an earthquake. In the spiritual picture, Papacy, the false Church, will be utterly removed forever, and the true Church will be exalted with Jesus beyond the veil. Incidentally, the true Church will be represented by 144,000 casing stones that are to be put on the Great Pyramid in the future. In other words, 36,000 stones will be on each side of the Pyramid, and these new casing stones will be a little larger than the original ones.

Q: Will the earthquake destruction of the Second and Third Pyramids coincide with the destruction of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem?

A: Yes. The structures will be flattened and removed, leaving a level ground, and of course the debris will be cleared from the area. The Sphinx will likewise be removed. How wonderful that all these events have been, are being, and will be recorded in minute detail from all angles and with great clarity! It will be seen how these three pyramids were built, who built them, and how two were destroyed. The movies of the future will be TRUTH, especially after the Kingdom Age. During the Kingdom Age, the emphasis will be on repentance, forsaking sin, and being made right to become in union with the Lord (at-one-ment), so the entertainment feature will not occur in the Kingdom Age except as it pertains to particular events that would be especially helpful to mankind at that time. However, in the ages of ages, all kinds of material that is stored in God's “library” will be seen. Many think these thoughts are fantasizing, but it would be very surprising if the Crucifixion, the Flood, the lives of Abraham and Moses, the Exodus, etc., were not recorded and preserved for posterity.

“He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.” Here is a prophecy that the “headstone” will be found and placed on the now topless Great Pyramid. At present, there is only a platform on the top of the Pyramid. Adam Rutherford suggested that when the Pyramid was being built, the top stone was one of the first items to be made. It was polished and finished and ready for placement on the top once the casing stones were all assembled and laid out on the desert plateau. Stairs, or ramps, were needed to put the stones in place. The techniques that were used in ancient times to build the Pyramid will be used again. It will be very instructional to see the future placing of the top stone.

Adam Rutherford also suggested that when the Great Pyramid is restored externally, it will be a larger structure than it was in the past. The top stone has already been engineered and finished, just as Christ was “engineered and finished” as the High Priest, having made his calling and election sure by dying faithfully on the Cross. As the Head of the Church, he was the first spiritual “Stone” to be completed.

At the time of construction, before the builders could place the top stone on the Great Pyramid, they saw that it was too large for the already-engineered casing stones. If they put the top stone on the Pyramid, it would be a monstrosity because the edges would overhang the finished, polished structure below. Therefore, the builders proceeded without the top stone and assembled the casing stones against the core stones all the way up to the flat top, which was left alone. Because of the immensity of the Pyramid, when the flat top is viewed from a distance, it appears to have a top stone. For this reason, Herodotus and another ancient historian wrote that they thought the Great Pyramid had a top stone at that time, but such was not the case. In fact, even in its imperfect state today with the present rough core masonry, which consists of broken-down stones of softer limestone that have been weathered by wind and sandstorms, the Pyramid appears to have a top stone when it is seen from ten or so miles away. However,

it is known that the structure does not have a top stone.

Because of its size, the large finished top stone became a stumbling block to the workers—it was always in the way. Out of frustration, they took the top stone and placed it behind the Pyramid. In time, sandstorms completely covered it with sand, and there it remains, out of sight, to the present time. (Sand will cover any obstacle in the desert that is not high enough, like a mountain.)

The angel was telling Zechariah that the top stone was there intact and that it will be found in God's due time. How appropriate spiritually! At present, we do not see Christ, the finished Top Stone, but we know he exists. In the future, the world will see that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah, and in the natural picture, the top stone will be found and put on the completed, restored core masonry of the Great Pyramid.

Verse 7 is telling us not only that the Second Pyramid will be leveled but also that it will be out of sight. The implication is that the false Muslim structures on the Temple Mount (Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aksa Mosque) will also be removed. These two false temples correspond, respectively, to the two "mountains" next to the Great Pyramid—the Second Pyramid (picturing the Roman Catholic Church) and the Third Pyramid (representing Protestant churches). There is a division in the Muslim religion between the Shiites and the Sunnis, and Dome of the Rock represents the larger of these two branches. Thus a counterfeit condition also exists in the Muslim world.

Q: Is the top stone made of a different material than the rest of the Pyramid?

A: It would be made of better material, but there is no record of what that material is. Some of the original casing stones still exist, and they were made not of granite but of a superior type of limestone that is harder than the core stones. The top stone is probably not too different, but there will be some distinction between it and the future refurbished casing stones underneath.

When the top stone is found, there will be some sort of celebration, perhaps a parade, as it is carried. The top stone is not as large as many people would think, so transporting it will be possible. Spiritually speaking, there will be a great festivity in Jerusalem when the world recognizes and sees that Jesus is the true Messiah, and also when Jehovah reveals, by miraculous events, that He is the true God, the God of Israel. It is logical to think that the occasion of the spiritual celebration will be when the Third Temple is finished. The Scriptures tell that Jehovah will enter that Temple as He did with the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple when those structures were finished (Ezek. 43:4,5; 44:4; Exod. 40:34,35; 1 Kings 8:10,11). With Solomon's Temple, there was a celebration, and a great prayer was offered. In both cases, a revelation of the Lord's glory filled the structure, and the Lord's glory will likewise fill the Third Temple for a short while. Zechariah will be *the book, the eye-opener*, to Israel because it pertains, in a special sense, to events that will conclude this Gospel Age. No prophet of Israel has so explicitly, and with such multiplicity, recorded events of the last time as the Book of Zechariah. Therefore, this book will be seen by the Jew as the eye-opener—just as the Book of Daniel has been the eye-opener of prophecy to the Christian during the Gospel Age.

Incidentally, the Great Pyramid will be rebuilt only externally, not internally. The interior of the structure will be closed forever, and new casing stones will be put on the outside. This requirement harmonizes with the Tabernacle picture. As a type, the Tabernacle will end, or fade out of existence, when the symbolism of the Temple supplants it. And Solomon's Temple becomes passé, for it will be supplanted by the Third Temple. The east gate of the Third Temple will be closed forever to mankind. Only the north and south gates will be used in the Kingdom.

The tomb of Zechariah can be seen in Jerusalem today outside the southeastern corner in the valley, and it is interesting that on top is a pyramid carved out of rock. The top stone of the Great Pyramid, which is a pyramid itself, pictures Christ. Just as the top stone is needed to perfect the Pyramid, so it is a beautiful picture of Christ with the Church underneath him. The exterior stones of the Pyramid represent the 144,000, with Christ as the top stone.

Zech. 4:8 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Zech. 4:9 The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you.

Verse 6 states, “This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel.” Now verse 9 speaks of “the hands of Zerubbabel.” In other words, back there this part of the vision was specifically addressed to Zerubbabel, but he represents Jesus in a special sense as a King, as a Prince, as a *civil* authority, administering the government of the Kingdom. In contrast, Joshua represents Jesus from the *clerical* aspect of the future government. Thus there will be two phases of rulership in the Kingdom Age. In Israel’s history, church and state were kept separate, and that is also the advice for the spiritual Church during the Gospel Age. In the nominal system, church and state were unlawfully combined, and through that grasping of power, it became the false Church. The true Church will not inherit kingship until after they have made their calling and election sure; then they will be both kings and priests for the world in the Kingdom Age. At that time, both the kingly and the priestly phases will be united. In the *civil* aspect of the Kingdom, Jesus will be the King, and the Church will be his Queen, his Bride. In the *spiritual* aspect of the Kingdom, Jesus will be the High Priest of the Melchisedec priesthood, and the Church will be the underpriests of that priesthood. The Church will have authority to rule, for the promise is that they will reign as kings with Christ. Not until the Kingdom Age can church and state *legitimately* be joined together in holy matrimony, as it were—the priestly and the civil aspects. The premature combination of church and state in the Gospel Age has been an unholy alliance. In this union, the false Church lost its virginity. In the Muslim religion also, the premature joining of the clerical and the kingly aspects has led to many problems.

Zerubbabel went back to Israel in 536 BC and began to build the Temple, and Joshua also returned at the same time. Subsequently the Jews stopped building the Temple for about 19 years because of discouragement over opposition. In Zechariah’s day, the great literal “mountain” to Zerubbabel was the neighbors who frustrated any further building of the Temple by sending messages to Cambyses, the Persian king. Then God used Darius Hystaspes, another heathen king, to give the Jews authority to go ahead and build the structure.

There are two applications for the last part of verse 9, “And thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent *me* unto you.” In the first application, Zechariah was talking to Zerubbabel back in his day: “You will know that God has sent me, as His spokesperson, to you, Zerubbabel. I am telling you what the Lord showed me in a vision. God told me to tell you to go ahead and build the Temple, for He will be your might and strength. This big mountain ahead of you will be leveled, and you will prosper at least in completing the work on the Temple.”

The second application, which is more important, is a mini-picture of what will happen at the end of the Gospel Age. At that time, the Holy Remnant will know that Jesus was the Prophet sent unto them to inaugurate the Kingdom down here. Thus verse 9 has two meanings—the natural application took place in the past, and the other application will take place in the near future when it is seen that Jehovah has sent Jesus as the Messiah to build the Third Temple.

Q: What is the relationship of Herod’s Temple to Zerubbabel’s Temple?

A: Herod enlarged and refurbished the Zerubbabel Temple. There has been confusion on this point, but Herod's Temple is actually Zerubbabel's Temple enlarged. The sequence of temples is Solomon's, Zerubbabel's, and Ezekiel's (the Third Temple).

Review of Zechariah 4:1-9

The candlestick was the fifth of seven visions that were given to Zechariah in a series of dreams on the same night. Thus far the visions were as follows:

1. Three kinds of horses of three different colors
2. Four horns and four carpenters
3. A man walking with a measuring line in his hand
4. A scene with Satan and Joshua, the high priest
5. A seven-branched candlestick

Each of these visions brings us down to the end time of the Gospel Age, but as we progress, we will be brought even a little further into the end time.

“Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord” (Zech. 4:5). This question pertains to the first four verses of chapter 4, in which Zechariah saw a golden candlestick with a bowl on top of, or over, the main stem (or branch). The bowl was a receptacle for the oil that came from two olive trees, one on the left and one on the right. The oil was channeled from the bowl through seven pipes to the seven branches of the lamp stand. The angel now asked Zechariah if he understood what the vision of the candlestick signified. Of course, the prophet answered in the negative.

As it was with Zechariah, so it is with us. When we come to a vision in Scripture that appears complicated, such as this one in the Book of Zechariah, the question is, How interested are we in understanding its significance? The prophet admitted that he did not know, but he was very interested in learning the meaning. He was given the details of what the candlestick looked like, and now the angel was about to explain to him the component parts of the vision.

“Then he [the angel] answered and spake unto me [Zechariah], saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel” (Zech. 4:6). Zerubbabel was suddenly brought into the picture. As one of those who had returned from Babylonian captivity, he was charged with the responsibility of rebuilding the Temple, which had been destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar more than 70 years earlier. It was now the second year of Darius Hystaspes, a Persian king. Zerubbabel was the governor, a *civil* servant, and Joshua, the high priest of that day, was charged with the *ecclesiastical* supervision of the services, ceremonies, and sacrifices that would eventually take place when the Temple was complete. When the work was finished, these two personalities would be very well attached to the Temple. Called Zerubbabel's Temple, this structure replaced Solomon's Temple. The candlestick vision will have more meaning if we understand some of the background—when it took place, what happened, and why it was recorded in Scripture.

The angel, who was talking to Zechariah, would now start to explain the signification of the vision. He was saying, “Jehovah has sent me, as his angel, to explain to you, Zechariah, what this vision means. When I am finished speaking with you, you are to go to Zerubbabel and tell him what you saw tonight in vision and explain the meaning.”

However, the next words seem to be extraneous information: “Not by might, nor by power [strength of arms], but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.” How are these words related to the candlestick vision in the first four verses of this chapter? The olive oil is the connection, for it signifies God's Holy Spirit. In other words, the angel wanted Zechariah to focus on the oil, on God's Holy Spirit. The angel was hinting—or almost teasing Zechariah—as if to say, “Do you want to know the meaning of the olive oil that starts with the trees? The meaning comes not

by might or power but by God's Spirit, which is the olive oil." Then, in verse 7, the angel said something else that seemed to be completely irrelevant or extraneous.

"Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it" (Zech. 4:7). What "great mountain" was "before Zerubbabel"? It was the Second Pyramid in Egypt. Even today this structure is mistaken by many for the Great Pyramid because it has a capstone and is a little higher. The Second Pyramid is actually smaller than the Great Pyramid, but at first glance, it appears to be more spectacular because it is built on higher ground. However, upon examination, the Second Pyramid is seen to contain numerous flaws and faults. This structure distracts and diverts attention from the Great Pyramid, the *true* Pyramid. Therefore, if the Great Pyramid is the *true* Pyramid, the Second Pyramid is the *false* Pyramid. Satan's kingdom includes the Second and Third Pyramids, that is, Roman Catholicism (the Papacy in particular, the crowning feature) and Protestantism, respectively. Both of these systems have claimed to be the true Church, but they are not recognized by God, for His true Kingdom is a "little flock" of humble people who are considered relative nobodies from the world's perspective (Luke 12:32). The world is impressed by numbers, and the Roman Catholic Church is especially prominent because of the Papacy and the pope, the man of sin over the woman (or mother) Catholic Church (2 Thess. 2:3,4; Rev. 17:5). Her daughters, represented by the Third Pyramid, are the Protestant denominations. This symbolism might seem rather far-fetched, but that is not the case when we examine the matter further.

"Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain" (Zech. 4:7). In the antitype, Zerubbabel is Jesus Christ, and the time setting is the end of the Gospel Age. Verse 7 is telling us that when the Kingdom of Christ is set up, one of the works will be the destruction of the Second Pyramid—this "great mountain" will be leveled, dismantled, and made as a plain. Moreover, the Great Pyramid will be rebuilt and reshaped with the re-laying of new casing stones according to the proper dimensions, slant, and standard. When refurbished, the Great Pyramid will stand resplendently for all to behold.

And Zerubbabel (Jesus) "shall bring forth the headstone thereof [of the Great Pyramid] with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it." The top stone of the Great Pyramid will be placed on the externally rebuilt and refurbished structure. Down through the centuries, the Great Pyramid has been devoid of a top stone and missing its casing stones except for about three fragments. The structure will be rebuilt because it represents the Kingdom of God.

Another great work will also be taking place in the Kingdom Age, namely, the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. Contemporary with the rebuilding of the Great Pyramid will be a rebuilding in Israel of the Temple that is described in the Book of Ezekiel. These structures will be *outward manifestations* of a change of venue from the kingdoms of this world to the Kingdom of Christ (Zerubbabel).

The "headstone," the top stone, is the Lord Jesus, the antitypical Zerubbabel (Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10,11; Luke 20:17,18; 1 Pet. 2:6-8). Just as the top stone was literally a stone of stumbling to the builders in ancient times, so Jesus has been a stone of stumbling to the nation of Israel.

The top stone will be brought forth by Jesus with great acclamation, as indicated by the shouts and cries of "Grace, grace unto it." The account is saying that the top stone of the Great Pyramid *exists now* in Egypt, but it has not been found. It is buried beneath the sand in proximity to the Great Pyramid. When the sand is removed, the top stone will be brought forth as a complete stone, which was quarried and prepared way back in the period of 2170 to 2140 BC. During those 30 years, the Great Pyramid was constructed—long before Christ's First Advent. This stone has been preserved in the sand inviolate in its pristine beauty so that it can

be brought forth and placed on the top of the refurbished Pyramid.

Acclamations of “grace” will accompany this event because at that time, the top stone will be recognized as representing Christ himself. In the New Testament, the top stone is called “the stone which the builders rejected,” “the head of the corner,” “a chief corner stone, elect, precious,” “the stone which the builders disallowed,” and “a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.” It represented the Jews’ stumbling over Christ at the First Advent. The scribes and Pharisees stumbled over him for two reasons: (1) he was bigger and greater than they were, and (2) they were jealous of him. They reasoned that if his popularity was not checked, he would receive the chief attention, and they would be put on the sidelines. Thus the religious leaders of Israel conspired to have Jesus put to death. When Judas sought to betray Christ into their hands for a sum of money, they considered his offer providential. Based on what had happened on prior occasions, Judas did not think Jesus would be apprehended. Since Judas thought Jesus would use his power to circumvent being arrested, we can imagine his surprise when he heard that Jesus was being taken for crucifixion. However, the fact that Judas did not intend such a result does not excuse him one bit, because he had arranged the betrayal—and for money. When Judas saw that he had betrayed a just man, he tried to return the money to the priests, but they rejected it. Judas then went out and committed suicide.

“Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you” (Zech. 4:8,9). How had Zerubbabel’s hands “laid the foundation of this house”? Jesus is the beginner and the finisher of the Christian’s faith. When he died on the Cross, he provided the redemption price, and the Ransom is the foundation of the Christian’s hope; it is the gospel foundation “stone” to the Pyramid. The foundation of the Pyramid is the top stone up in heaven, whereas the foundation of the Temple is underneath the structure. Christ is the foundation in both senses. In fact, he is the foundation of three structures: the Great Pyramid, the future Temple of Ezekiel, and the Temple in the Book of Revelation—all are viewed from different perspectives but teach the same lesson.

The “hands of Zerubbabel [Jesus] ... laid the foundation of this house” at his First Advent. “His hands shall also finish it” at his Second Advent. The angel continued to speak: “And thou [Zechariah] shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me [as his angel] unto you.” Then Zechariah was to transmit this information to Zerubbabel. Although Zerubbabel laid the literal foundation of the second Temple, which replaced the Temple of Solomon, that was only the type, and Jesus is the antitype of a much greater Temple building—whether we consider it as literal or spiritual. The spiritual house comprises the 144,000 with Jesus as the top stone, the Head, the beginner and finisher of the work in the Gospel Age. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?” (1 Cor. 3:16). All of this information is compacted into the tiny picture here in the Book of Zechariah.

This review will help us as we continue to study the fifth vision, for some details will now stand out a little more clearly. In order to understand the vision, we need to know who the personages are in both type and antitype.

Zech. 4:10 For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

As already explained, Zerubbabel represents Christ, who will be doing this work, and many other works, when he begins to establish his Kingdom at his Second Advent. Among other things, he will direct the rebuilding of the Great Pyramid and the Third Temple.

What “small things” are being “despised”? One answer is the gospel Church, which is not recognized. True Christians are nonentities in the present life. In the Song of Solomon, they are pictured as a woman, a virgin, who went to other women (the nominal systems) to try to get understanding about where Jesus is. When she asked where she could find him, the religious leadership replied, “Look for the footprints.” She followed the footprints and eventually found the Bridegroom. Thus we find that the information which directs the Lord’s people to Christ is the Word of God itself. The oil is not just the letter of the Word but also the spirit, or the understanding, of that Word. To repeat, the oil is the understanding and the appreciation of what the Word of God teaches. The oil is *deep* within the Word. Most people read the Bible externally, giving a certain respect from the historical standpoint that it is the oldest book, but that is not enough. Its message is not based upon might or power or lineage (we do not inherit the Kingdom because of who our forebears were). Rather, its message is given on an *individual* basis to those who follow the Lord Jesus and feast upon the Word. It is given to those who wholly commit themselves and their lives to obey and recognize Jesus Christ personally as the Head of the true Church of God that is being called in this age.

Another of the “small things” is Jesus, the “headstone,” the stumbling stone that was rejected. The literal top stone was taken out of the way and cast behind the Pyramid. In time, it was covered with sand from the storms and has not been found subsequently.

From another standpoint, the “small things” include numerous disappointments in the time factor. It is now 2,000 years since the AD reckoning began, and there does not seem to have been much progress. Likewise, not much progress had been made when Zerubbabel started to rebuild the Temple. The harassment and distractions that occurred discouraged the Israelites and put them in a stupor, as it were. As a counterpart at the end of the Gospel Age, the wise and foolish virgins fell asleep. Thus a number of things have delayed the completion of this picture. Even the true saints have fallen asleep with regard to a fervent expectancy of being with Jesus and need to be awakened from their slumber.

“Who hath despised the day of small things [and small beginnings]? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel.” Spiritually speaking, Jesus assembles and builds the Church, among other things. In 1878, he awakened the sleeping saints from their sleep in death. They have been up in earth’s atmosphere ever since, receiving instruction on how to judge the billions of humanity who will be awakened from the tomb. Thus a great work is taking place not in God’s heaven but in earth’s atmosphere. Ever since 1878, the few individuals who are selected and are faithful to become part of the Little Flock are being caught up individually when they die to join the others and the Lord in the air. Eventually, when the last gleanings are finished and the Church is complete, they will all go as a group up to the heavenly throne to meet the Heavenly Father. The marriage of the Lamb will then take place. Afterward the Great Company will be dealt with.

Among the dear brethren, we are not sure whether we ourselves will be members of the Little Flock. We are running the race and trying desperately to be more than overcomers. We hope, by the Lord’s grace, to be recognized as such, but it has taken a long time to gather the last members because they are few and far between. The knowledge of the truth in itself is not what makes our calling and election sure. It is necessary, yes, but *obedience* is the determining factor. He who *does the will of the Father* will be part of the Bride of Christ.

With the “plummet” being in the hand of Zerubbabel (Jesus), we get further insight into the third vision. When Zechariah saw a man with a measuring line and a plummet, it was as if the angel asked, “Do you know who just walked by?” Then Zechariah was introduced to the man who was holding the line for measuring the city of Jerusalem. Spiritually speaking, the line is the measure of one who is to become a man of Christ, one who is to be in the image of Christ,

one who is to be perfected. We cannot be perfect in ourselves, but with the robe of Christ's righteousness, God can recognize the intensity of our desire. If our fervor and intent are pure enough, we will make our calling and election sure. Therefore, the measuring line is the standard for the Christian, and that standard is to be a copy of God's dear Son.

A plummet is the lead weight at the bottom of a line; it comes to a point and shows true verticality. When something is perpendicular, it is perfectly upright, and the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel determines by gravity the proper right angle of righteousness. Christ is the standard-bearer.

"They ... shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth." The "seven" are the channels, or pipes, to the seven branches of the candlestick; that is, they are the seven messengers to the seven churches down through the Gospel Age. The seven "eyes," "horns," and "Spirits" of God that "run to and fro through the whole earth" are mentioned in the Book of Revelation (Rev. 5:6).

The seven Spirits represent the seven phases of the Church down through the Gospel Age. God addresses His people in each stage of the Church through a prominent dispensational messenger. The first messenger was the Apostle Paul. The second messenger, after Paul died, was the Apostle John, to whom the Book of Revelation was given in vision. The third messenger was Arius, considered by the nominal Church to be the greatest heretic who ever lived. To the contrary, Arius was a very holy man—so much so that no one could falsely accuse him, even though 300 women (virgins) assisted him in his ministry. Even his dread enemy Athanasius, who spoke violently against Arius, could not accuse him of anything immoral. History records little about Arius, but we know about him indirectly—his doctrines as well as his character—through the mouths of his enemies. Arius was poisoned to death in his old age. Succeeding messengers were Waldo, Wycliffe, Luther, and Russell. Dispensational messages have been sent through the seven messengers down through the Gospel Age, one at a time.

The rejoicing will take place when the picture is complete. The path of the just shines as a light that grows brighter and brighter unto the perfect day (Prov. 4:18). We are nearing the completion, but we have not yet come to the perfect day. When we do, if we are of the very elect, we will see the completion. Then the seven messages will all have a *full* fulfillment.

Zech. 4:11 Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof?

Zech. 4:12 And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves?

Zech. 4:13 And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord.

Zech. 4:14 Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

Zechariah was now getting interested. Instead of the angel prompting him with questions such as "Zechariah, do you know what this means?" the prophet asked his own questions. "What are the two olive trees that I saw on the right and left sides of the candlestick?" Verse 14 gives the answer: "These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." The two "anointed [or holy] ones" are the Old and New Testaments, the *source* of the oil that comes to the candlestick. The two olive trees empty their oil into the bowl that is over the main stem

of the candlestick. From the bowl, seven pipes conduct the oil to the seven branches of the candlestick. In the final analysis, all seven pipes will have received their portion of oil.

The two olive trees show the principle that out of the mouth of two (or three) witnesses is a thing established (Deut. 19:15; Matt. 18:16). Also, in Revelation 11:3,4, the Word of God is called “two witnesses,” “two olive trees,” and “two candlesticks.” In God’s sight, the Old and New Testaments were complete long ago, so they cannot be separated from each other. The method of sacrificing a bird illustrated this principle; namely, the wings of a bird could be fractured (or folded), but they could not be completely severed because they pictured the Old and New Testaments (Lev. 1:14-17). In addition, the two tables of stone containing the Ten Commandments, which were put in the sacred Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy of the Tabernacle, were called the two “witness” tables in the Hebrew.

Zechariah asked again, “What are the two olive branches [trees] through which the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves?” The angel answered that the two olive trees were “the two anointed ones” (the Old and New Testaments), for one golden pipe led from the tree on the right side to the bowl over the main stem of the candlestick, and the other golden pipe led from the tree on the left side to the bowl. The top of each of the seven branches of the candlestick, or lamp stand, was a flat “table” on which the seven lamps sat. The branches themselves were solid gold.

The pipes were “golden” because the source of the oil (the enlightenment, the Holy Spirit) is the Father. The oil comes from the Father *directly* to the Son. Jesus received the whole Word—in its *fullness*. In contrast, the Christian gets only a *portion* of the oil, and that oil comes *indirectly* from the Father through the Son (and through prayer, faith, and obedience) through God’s dispensational servant of the particular stage of the Church the Christian is living in. We are directed to the channel and are fed accordingly. Moreover, the oil comes to us *individually*, and what we do with it determines our future.

As with the preceding four visions, this vision brings us down to the end of the Gospel Age, so it is an end-time picture. Chapter 3, pertaining to Joshua, ended with the words “In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree.” That text takes us right into the Kingdom, and chapter 4 brings us into the spiritual Kingdom. When we interpret Zerubbabel from the standpoint of the literal application down here on planet Earth, chapter 4 takes us to the refurbishing of the Great Pyramid and the building of the Third Temple, that is, a little way into the earthly phase of the Kingdom.

Zech. 5:1 Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a flying roll.

Zech. 5:2 And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits.

Zech. 5:3 Then said he unto me, This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side according to it.

Zech. 5:4 I will bring it forth, saith the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.

Verses 1-4 are one unit. Zechariah would now have his sixth vision, or experience. In this case, he saw a “*flying* roll [or scroll],” which contained a message. And even stranger, the scroll was seen to be rectilinear with specific dimensions: 20 cubits long and 10 cubits wide. The

measurements indicate a relationship to the Holy of the Tabernacle. (The Holy was 20 by 10 cubits, and the Most Holy was 10 by 10 cubits.) Combining the two thoughts—the dimensions of the Holy of the Tabernacle and the scroll being a message—suggests the judgment of a class not in favor with the Lord. And the scroll was not stationary in the Tabernacle but was *flying*; in fact, it traveled “over the face of the whole earth.”

The association with the Holy suggests that the message is, first, to the true Church. Therefore, not only does the time element pertain to the Gospel Age, but also the “flying” aspect indicates that the scroll travels *throughout* the age, from beginning to end, with a very searching and penetrating message. The Scriptures teach a certain principle in connection with this judgment; namely, the true Church, including both the Little Flock and the Great Company, is on trial first. Presented from a negative standpoint, the judgment message goes into every dwelling on the “face of the whole earth” to do a soul-searching examination. The purpose of the judgment is to weed out the unfaithful who profess Christianity. “Every one that stealeth ... and every one that sweareth shall be cut off.” In the Old Testament, the term “cut off” means to be cut off in death. When this scroll gets near the terminus, or the end time of its travel, other Scriptures intensify the message. For instance, 1 Peter 4:17 states, “Judgment must begin at the house of God,” meaning that judgment will start with those who have made a consecration vow to serve the Lord. Such individuals have a greater responsibility but also a much, much greater reward for faithfulness.

The Book of Revelation shows there will be two harvests: (1) the harvest of the wheat and (2) the harvest of the tares. The wheat class are garnered into the barn (heaven), but the tares (falsely professing Christians) will be burned up in the following sense. Never having made a real personal commitment by wholly submitting their wills to the Lord, they will see in the Time of Trouble that it is expedient to cease their profession of Christianity lest they suffer violence.

Certain pictures in the Scriptures show that, unlike those who falsely profess Christianity in the nominal Church, the Great Company will escape suffering for perhaps a period of three years or a little less. (1) One such picture shows that after Elijah is taken up by a whirlwind, the sons of the prophets of Israel will question Elisha and search in vain for Elijah’s body for three years. (2) The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins also shows a time period. When the wise virgins go in the door to the marriage, having made their calling and election sure, the foolish virgins will be in the marketplace securing oil. Upon their return, the foolish virgins will find out that the door to the marriage is shut. (3) A third picture, Leviticus 16, speaks of two goats: the Lord’s goat and the scapegoat (Satan’s goat, the goat for Azazel). First, the inner organs of the bullock, representing Jesus, were burned on the Brazen Altar, and the blood of the animal was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy. Next the inner organs of the Lord’s goat were sacrificed on the altar, and its blood was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat. After these two events, the high priest sprinkled the Brazen Altar in the court with the remaining blood of both the bullock and the Lord’s goat. Following these activities, the scapegoat was sent into the wilderness, suggesting a period of time after the Little Flock is gone. (4) In the Song of Solomon, both sisters leave the bed to go out to meet the Savior, but the Bride goes earlier of her own volition, whereas the little sister needs encouragement.

There are other pictures as well, but these four indicate a period of judgment on the consecrated. After the completion of the Little Flock, which is the primary application, the nominal system will be destroyed through a series of events under the Lord’s providence and direction. However, the Great Company class will be delivered out of Babylon before the fall. In fact, the fall of Babylon will be a sign that the door is closed and the high calling has ceased. At this time, the Lord will tell the Great Company, “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matt. 7:23). The Great Company will realize that they were not honored as part

of the Little Flock but that the Lord has delivered them so that they can wash their robes in the great tribulation and make them white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:14); the washing will take time.

The sequence with the consecrated seems to be (1) the Little Flock goes off the earthly scene first, before the fall of Babylon; (2) the Second Death class is dealt with; and (3) those of the Great Company class wash their robes. Other events will follow, but the fall of Babylon will precede the death of the Great Company and the demise of the Second Death class. When all the pictures are collated, we get a three-dimensional perspective of events yet future.

The Little Flock will be cut off in the middle of the hour of power of the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet. The last half hour of the hour of power will end with the dissolving of the nominal Church system. With violence, mystic Babylon will be cast into the sea like a millstone (Rev. 18:21). However, the Great Company will be delivered from that destruction. As several pictures show, they will be noticed and spared death during the period of the destruction of the nominal Church. Certain events will happen whereby those in the nominal Church will be so angry at the system for its corruption, great injustices, persecutions, and inconsistencies with the profession of Christianity that they will tear it down with violence, but at the same time, the Great Company, sincere Christians, will be spared that experience as a class. With regard to that class, there seems to be a connection between the two angels who yanked Lot out of Sodom and the two spies whom Rahab hid (Gen. 19:15,16; Josh. 2:1-6). Rahab was in Jericho but did not have the spirit of the city (the nominal system in the antitype). If only that portion of the type is considered as a unit—with no elaboration before or after—then that slice of time corresponds with the deliverance of the Great Company out of mystic Babylon—just as Rahab was delivered out of Jericho.

Q: Please explain the representation of the two spies in the antitype.

A: They are angels who will be sent to protect the Great Company as a class in the fall of Babylon. The holy angels, who have been underneath Jesus' supervision all down the Gospel Age as "ministering spirits" to the consecrated, will finish this work (Heb. 1:14). They have been involved in the selection and development of the true Church. When the feet members die as a class in the middle of the hour of power, they will be instantaneously resurrected and caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Then Jesus and the complete Church will go as a group to the Father for the "marriage of the Lamb" (Rev. 19:7). After the marriage, Jesus and the Bride will say, "We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?" (Song 8:8). They will be *indirectly* involved in the salvation of the Great Company left behind, for how that class will be dealt with and saved has been prepared in advance. At that juncture of time—up to the very end of the selection of the Great Company class who do not die previously of old age, sickness, accident, etc.—Jesus and the Church will be involved in their salvation. We believe that salvation will be done in regard to the action taken to bind Satan and destroy the materialized fallen angels. This is a big subject with many strands, and we are digressing far from the fifth chapter of Zechariah. In a nutshell, this chapter shows that the flying scroll, or the examination of professed Christians throughout the earth, will separate out the false, leaving just the true in the Lord's house, or arrangement.

"I will bring it forth, saith the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof." In other words, the destruction of the *Second Death class* will be eternal, and the destruction of the *false Church* is symbolized by Second Death, for never again will there be a false nominal system, even at the end of the Kingdom Age. The deception in the Little Season will be along another line (Rev. 20:3,7-10). When mystic Babylon is cast into the sea, when it is burned up, the smoke of that

burning will be everlasting (Rev. 18:7-9,18; 19:1-3). The destruction will be final and eternal.

Zech. 5:5 Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth.

Zech. 5:6 And I said, What is it? And he said, This is an ephah that goeth forth. He said moreover, This is their resemblance through all the earth.

Zech. 5:7 And, behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead: and this is a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah.

Zech. 5:8 And he said, This is wickedness. And he cast it into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof.

Zech. 5:9 Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came out two women, and the wind was in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork: and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven.

Zech. 5:10 Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah?

Zech. 5:11 And he said unto me, To build it an house in the land of Shinar: and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base.

We do not list verses 5-11 as a separate vision because although different symbols are used, the scene is really a supplement to the sixth vision. Therefore, rather than a total of eight visions, we would understand the total to be seven, of which the sixth vision consists of two closely related component parts. The seven visions are separated by statements such as “I lifted up mine eyes” or “I turned.” Here the auxiliary part of the sixth vision starts with the clause “Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth.”

Earlier Zechariah saw a flying scroll, and now the center of attention was an ephah, a vessel. Depending on the contents, a vessel might be made of wicker—for example, a bushel basket, which is a quantified measure. An ephah can also be metal, wood, or another material. The point is that an ephah is a *measuring* container. Therefore, the suggestion is that a judgment was to occur.

When Zechariah saw the object going forth and asked, “What is it?” the angel replied, “An ephah ... goeth forth.... This is their resemblance through all the earth.” A transitional picture was taking place. The measuring ephah was what we sometimes call Christendom, that is, the nominal system, or arrangement. However, instead of expressing it in the singular, the angel used the plural pronoun “their”—“This is *their* resemblance through all the earth.” In other words, there was a *plurality* to this system.

What happened next? “Behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead: and this is a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah.” This wording is a little ambiguous unless we understand the purpose of the vision. Thus far the components are a vessel, a woman, and a class. Just as with the *flying scroll*, Zechariah was seeing a *motion* picture. As the flying scroll came out of the Holy, it was seen rolled up with two curled ends. Now the prophet was looking at an ephah, or measuring container, when a woman suddenly appeared. However, she was described in the plural, for she was a *class*, that is, the Catholic Church membership. The mother Church is a class of believers that includes a pope and certain doctrines (church canon law).

What is the thought of the woman's sitting *in the midst* of the ephah? Like a queen, she controls and domineers those in the system—the church hierarchy under the pope (cardinals, bishops, priests, etc.) as well as the communicants. “This is their resemblance”; that is, they are pictured as this woman. The woman (church doctrine) domineers, but without realizing it, she herself was about to be domineered. From a position of authority that filled the container, she would be made a prisoner in her own system. When this dramatic picture is shown in the future with utmost clarity and perfection, the historic lesson will very convincingly show the significance of the events that introduce the Kingdom Age.

The angel said, “This [woman] is wickedness. And he cast it [her] into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof.” The woman had been rising up, but then the angel thrust her down, slamming the lid. To portray wickedness, she must have looked like a harlot, possibly wearing seductive apparel.

A “talent of lead” weighs close to 100 pounds. This “talent,” the lid of the ephah, will cover, or imprison, the woman in the container. The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares shows that false Christians will be gathered, or bound, and then burned as tares (Matt. 13:30,40,41). Another picture shows the system being lifted up like a great millstone, a solidified mass, and cast into the sea to drown forever (Rev. 18:21,22). Thus the singular woman represents a *class*, a plurality, who swear falsely concerning their profession of faith (Zech. 5:3).

The vision is telling about the fate that will befall falsely professing Christians. The Great Company, who are truly consecrated, will not have this same experience—except for those who do not leave Babylon. Any of the consecrated who compromise and want to remain in the nominal system will not be yanked out. However, there are not many pictures on this element, for the main focus is on the nominal system itself.

When the lid is lifted up, what will bind the nominal system? The exposure of truth concerning the false claim of the false Church will do the binding. We see a tiny degree of this exposure with the acceptance of homosexuality in the nominal Church here in America and also with the exposure of pedophilia. As a result, some communicants are beginning to see that the nominal system does not want to change. Even when the Catholic hierarchy claims to be trying to overcome this discomfiture and to restore the prestige of the church, the efforts are in vain because priests are judging priests. An independent outside group should be used instead of allowing the hierarchy to hide behind the cloak of the ministry, using it as a protective shield.

Therefore, truth itself will expose the falseness. In the Tabernacle picture, sockets of silver (truth) held the boards, representing the true Church. The comparison between what a saint should do in the current life and what pretending Christians actually do is in itself a condemnation. The truth is a sickle that not only separates the true from the false but also eventually separates the more-than-overcomers into the heavenly barn and the false into a bundle or bundles (plural) depending on the picture.

The talent of lead that held down the woman was heavy, for it will cause the nominal Church and even the pope to swallow their words. For example, the pope professes that his words are infallible, and he makes all kinds of statements. Eventually the communicants will have their eyes opened to the fact that it is not just the priests who have erred but also the entire system. That which separates one class unto salvation will separate another class unto destruction. The dividing work, which will take place after the true Church is complete, will be climactic.

After the heavy lead cover was cast on the mouth of the ephah, Zechariah lifted up his eyes “and looked, and, behold, there came out *two women*” in spite of the weight of the cover. The *moving picture* continued. First, the prophet saw a container, then a woman in the container,

and next a lead cover being put on the ephah. Then, all of a sudden, two women came out of the container. The second woman pictures Protestantism. The falsity of Papacy and the Catholic Church will be seen first. Next the falsity of the Protestant churches will be seen in the mother-daughter relationship. Both are guilty, for the Catholic Church is the mother of harlot daughters, that is, all the Protestant systems (Rev. 17:5).

Chapter 5 ends on a mysterious note. “And the wind was in their [the women’s] wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork: and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven.” The arms of the women resembled the wings of a stork, which are almost like sails on a boat, billowing out to catch the wind. Zechariah then asked, “Where are the women taking the ephah?” The angel answered, “To build it an house in the land of Shinar: and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base.” Hence the two women took the ephah to the land of Shinar (Babylon), where it would be established and set upon its own base, or pedestal. The moving picture continued. In spite of the lead cover, the two women momentarily escaped from the ephah and took their sectarianism to the land of Babylon.

Traditionally, the stork has been associated with birth, and mystic Babylon has produced many illegitimate children. Also, with the stork being an unclean bird, its wings represent the misapplication of Scripture. In contrast, the wings of an eagle (the Old and New Testaments, the Word of God) carried the true Church into the wilderness, where she was nourished for a period of 1,260 years (Rev. 12:14).

The best clue to see that Shinar is Babylon is Daniel 1:2, “And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his [King Nebuchadnezzar’s] hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god.” While Shinar had an early beginning back in the kingdom of Nimrod (Gen. 10:10), the mention in Daniel was a later application to Babylon.

What is the vision telling us? Out of the first constriction, which seemed to be inescapable captivity, the woman miraculously escaped to another location, and there she was set up on a base. In the antitype, this activity represents the setting up of the image of the beast on its “base,” which is particularly Europe since the beast, the Papacy, will be destroyed in its own heartland. Protestantism will be involved because with the downfall of Papacy, the whole setup will be seen as wrong. The Scriptures are silent as far as giving much particularity about the United States, but presumably the image of the beast, the evangelical system, will have momentary persecuting power here. In Europe, the Catholic Church and Papacy will be the persecuting force. In other lands—in Africa and Asia—the dragon, civil power, will persecute Christians. Persecution is already taking place in outer perimeters such as Sudan and Indonesia, but this is only the beginning. We are in the end-time situation, but it has not reached the climax where great decisions will have to be made. In fact, right now, probably tomorrow or the next day, an order will be sent, as the Pastor predicted in the *Second Volume*, enforcing ordinances for a dossier to be on the computer for every person in the United States. Not only was Big Brother in Russia in the past, but also, with the tremendous advance in technology, it will soon be here and in Europe as well. Those in government will know everything about us if they so desire, and they will be able to find the information very quickly.

The “wind” represents catering to and listening to the desires of the public. The nominal system has prospered because it has brought the ideals of truth down to the level of human thinking and desires. “Do as you please, and then go to Confession” is the attitude. The phrase “between the earth and the heaven” signifies mixing earthly and heavenly ideas, having false professions, and not adhering to the Scriptures.

In the natural picture in Zechariah’s day, the two women were Israel and Judah, who were

taken to the land of Babylon because of wickedness. Of the larger remnant in captivity, a small remnant learned the lesson.

The talent of *lead* (the cover), which was lifted up to reveal a woman sitting in the midst of the ephah, was worthless. In contrast, the Tabernacle candlestick, which weighed one talent of *gold*, was valuable. A talent, a lead weight used on a scale for buying and selling, implies judgment of the woman. The candlestick, which was made of *beaten* gold, represents the persecution of the true Church by the false Church; it also indicates that retribution will come upon the class that is responsible for the persecution. Lead and gold are both heavy and malleable; hence the lead is a counterfeit. We are reminded of the image in the second chapter of Daniel, where the stone was the true Church and the clay was *imitation* stone (Dan. 2:31,33,34).

The woman was the wickedness that was cast into the ephah. Her temporary escape from the ephah will be the time when the nominal Church systems bind themselves together. The true Christian is told not to say “A confederacy, to all them to whom this [nominal] people shall say, A confederacy; neither [is the true Christian to] fear ... their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread” (Isa. 8:12,13). Instead of capital and labor being the opposing forces, as the Pastor predicted, the Muslim threat will drive Papacy and Protestantism to coalesce in the hour of power. From a human standpoint, unity, surveillance, and the suppression of liberties and human rights will seem reasonable for survival. Thus Catholics and Protestants will be bound together by fear, and the Muslims will be bound together by hatred of the common enemy. As Christians, we will be in between the two, for our consecration and dedication are to Jesus Christ, and our hope is in Jehovah, the Heavenly Father. Our citizenship is in heaven, but we abide by the laws of the land while we are in the flesh *as long as they do not conflict with conscience and obedience to God*.

Zech. 6:1 And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of brass.

Zech. 6:2 In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses;

Zech. 6:3 And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses.

Zech. 6:4 Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these, my lord?

In this seventh vision, two definitions are needed right away. A “horse” (a doctrine) draws a “chariot” (a vehicle). Hence a vehicle is affected by doctrine. Words are sometimes called “vehicles of expression”; that is, words convey, or carry, thought.

When we think of a chariot being drawn by horses, we anticipate that someone is driving or sitting in the chariot. Although the vision does not mention people or riders, it is understood that the horses and chariots are vehicles for carrying those in the chariots to a destination. The chariots would be going in a logical direction.

Verse 1 mentions “two mountains” of brass (bronze or copper in some translations). With a present-truth background, we are familiar with the thought that copper pertains to humanity. Therefore, these horse-driven chariots are vehicles to draw individuals to a destination. The question would be, What destinations? But first, we will discuss the two brass, or copper, mountains. One mountain represents the kingdom of Adam before he sinned, for copper is a symbol of either perfect humanity or imputed perfection. Thus copper represents not only something down here on earth but also a form of justification. As a perfect being before he

sinned, Adam was in communication with God. In that condition, he did not sense any nakedness, estrangement, or fear. There was friendship with God, as it were.

The second copper mountain represents the Kingdom under Christ. Obviously, something has been happening in the interim between Adam's day and the inauguration of the Kingdom, and that "something" is the permission of evil, which has filled the hiatus, or gap. With these definitions, we are in a position to begin to understand the vision.

As stated in verses 1-3, Zechariah turned and looked up and saw, in vision, "four chariots [coming] out from between two mountains ... of brass" and different-colored horses pulling the four chariots. "In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses." What is the signification? Doctrines (plural) went forth to the various parts of earth. No matter what age is involved—in whatever time period—the call of the Holy Spirit goes out to different people inhabiting the globe down here. As the mountains were seen above in the heavens and the horses and chariots were on the earth, so "the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (2 Chron. 16:9). Zechariah himself said, "The eyes of the LORD ... run to and fro through the whole earth" (Zech. 4:10). The horses are good doctrines, for they are "the four spirits of the heavens," and a sequence of development is involved, as will be seen (Zech. 6:5).

First, we will consider the red horses. The color "red" has a number of meanings. For example, it can represent sin, as in the text "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18). Red also pictures the blood of Christ, the blood of redemption, which makes us whole. It is interesting that under certain circumstances, red against red makes white. Here the red horse (doctrine, or teaching) developed, indoctrinated, and/or influenced a class of people, namely, the Ancient Worthies. (This interpretation is based on the precedent of the red heifer in the type.) The first chariot, drawn by red horses, came forth to develop the class of Ancient Worthies in the Middle East, mostly in Israel and Egypt.

The second chariot to come forth from between the two copper mountains was pulled by black horses. Likewise, the color "black" has several meanings. Although black can picture negative qualities such as sin, ignorance, and darkness, it can also have a good representation, as here. The black doctrine develops the Church, the Little Flock, but what are some scriptural proofs for this interpretation? The Bride class says, "I am black, but comely" (Song 1:5); the Tabernacle was covered with a black seal-skin curtain (Exod. 36:19); and Moses' wife, Zipporah, was black. In addition, the black epaulette stones on the shoulders of the high priest, who represents Jesus, were engraved with the names of the tribes of Israel. These stones indicate that favor was shown to individuals who previously were in darkness (Exod. 28:9-12). Also, black, being the color of humus, pictures humility and meekness. Called out of the mire of sin, the Church class is humble, meek, and teachable.

The white horses in the third chariot are also favorable. White represents purity, spiritual virginity, and justification, or righteousness. In the type, a leper who was covered entirely with whiteness—that is, he was white all over the surface of his body—was considered clean. In the antitype, such a leper pictures a very depraved sinner who repents and openly and unabashedly confesses his sins, holding nothing back. This confession covers him wholly because it is like an admission that he was entirely beset with sin. The white horses, or doctrines, develop the Great Company class.

The fourth chariot was drawn by "grisled and bay horses." In other words, horses of two different colors pulled this chariot. All four chariots come out from between the two copper

mountains, but the destinations differ. Accordingly, the classes that are developed by the different-colored horses are not entirely confined to either the Jewish Age or the Gospel Age but can, under certain circumstances, enter into the Kingdom Age. And that is the case with the grisled and the bay horses. When mankind come forth from the tomb at that time, each person will have had a prior life on earth. Therefore, the individuals of all four classes had experiences during their own lifetime, no matter what period of time they lived in. When people are awakened from the sleep of death in the Kingdom, they will be in a different situation.

The horses are described in the footnote on pages 154-155 of *The Keys of Revelation*. In the final analysis, the grisled horses represent the saved world of mankind, whereas the bay horses picture the Second Death class in the Kingdom Age. When we give this representation of the bay horses, we seem to contradict the earlier statement that all of the horses are seen in a favorable light. However, this statement is still true, for generally speaking, Jesus Christ died for all mankind (Heb. 2:9). All will have an *opportunity* to walk up the highway of holiness in the Kingdom Age, but for an individual to actually attain the destination of life, he will have to change. Otherwise, he will die the Second Death, which is a perpetual sleep.

In verse 4, Zechariah said to the angel who talked with him, "What are these, my lord?" Seeing the vision, the prophet knew that the horses and chariots had an important representation. Zechariah's question shows that in proportion to our interest in prophecy as Christians, the Lord will bless us with understanding. Of course a time period is also involved, for nothing can unlock truth until it is the due time for understanding. When that time comes, the Lord is pleased to reward those who are hungering, and He gives them a sufficiency of understanding to reinvigorate their Christian walk. These deep visions need to be prayerfully studied.

Zech. 6:5 And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth.

Zech. 6:6 The black horses which are therein go forth into the north country; and the white go forth after them; and the grisled go forth toward the south country.

Zech. 6:7 And the bay went forth, and sought to go that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and he said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth.

Zech. 6:8 Then cried he upon me, and spake unto me, saying, Behold, these that go toward the north country have quieted my spirit in the north country.

First, we will consider verses 6 and 8. The angel continued to give explanations to Zechariah. In regard to the black-horse doctrine, the one hope of the high calling goes forth for the very elect, and those who are faithful end up in the "north country." "These that go toward the north country" and quiet God's "spirit" are the complete Church, the more-than-overcomers, who have received their reward in this seventh vision (Rom. 8:37). The purpose of the initial call in the Gospel Age was to attain 144,000 such individuals, and the Little Flock are the most important class in the Lord's sight.

Now we will treat verse 5. "These [the different-colored horses involved in pulling four chariots between the two mountains] are the four spirits [doctrines] of the heavens." A proof text for "spirits" to represent doctrines is 1 John 4:1, "Beloved, believe not every spirit [doctrine], but try the spirits [doctrines] whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." Another proof text is 1 Timothy 4:1, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." In other words, the doctrine, the teaching of the Lord, reveals

certain admonitions, and the understanding has an effect on us. The initial source of the calling and development of the four classes is from the heaven of heavens, and the intent is for a good purpose.

The four “spirits [doctrines] ... go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth.” Here “the Lord” could be either Jehovah or Jesus, but God is the *Author* of the four spirits, the One who sends them forth. Thus there is a chain of command. (1) God Himself, who is a jealous God, is the Supreme Being, whom we are to honor to the utmost. (2) The Holy Spirit, the actual Word of God that comes from His own mouth in a most special sense, is second in command. (3) Next is the Logos, the Word who was made flesh, becoming Jesus. (4) The apostles are fourth for Christians in the Gospel Age and for the world of mankind in the Kingdom Age. Beyond the Kingdom Age, in the ages to come, there may be changes in the fourth category.

“The black horses [the Little Flock] which are therein go forth into the north country; and the white [the Great Company] go forth after them.” The destination of the Great Company class, who are bridesmaids, is a secondary spirit resurrection. When Jesus said of the Little Flock, “I go to prepare a place for you,” it is very likely that the Great Company will end up in that mansion too or around it (John 14:2). It is logical that in the north country, they will remain in some type of close communication and fellowship with the Little Flock but not in the intimate sense of walking in fellowship with God and Jesus. The fact there are both black horses and white horses shows that differences exist not only in sin but also in righteousness and in glory. The pearl that the Savior bought represents primarily the Little Flock (Matt. 13:45,46).

“And the grisled [horses] go forth toward the south country [picturing earthly restitution, a destiny of life here on earth].” When the Mount of Olives is split by an earthquake in the near future in connection with the deliverance of the Holy Remnant, the spiritual explanation given in the *Volumes* is that the north half of the mountain represents the spirit realm and the south portion pictures restitution, an earthly destiny and life.

“The bay [horses] went forth, and sought to go that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and he [the angel] said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they [the bay horses] walked to and fro through the earth.” The Hebrew word *amutstsim*, translated “bay,” means “strong.” From the standpoint of color, “bay” is a deep red, indicating that this class is deeply stained with sin. Hence those of this class reap a destiny of Second Death, and there are various reasons for such a conclusion. A disquieted class that walks to and fro, these individuals are strong-willed, proud, haughty, and high-minded. The Apostle Jude called the Second Death class “*wandering stars*” (Jude 13). In fact, Satan himself had the spirit of disquietude, and it worked harm. Although he did not actually, or outwardly, sin until he deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden, he previously entertained wrong thoughts and ambitions. With regard to Second Death, it is not just the impure and evil thoughts that are harbored but the *habitual enactment* of those thoughts that results in such a destiny. Thus a “wandering” spirit is very dangerous. Originally the bay horses were in a chariot, but they wanted to get out of that chariot. The “grisled” (the speckled, or hailstone) type of individuals of different nationalities, who represent the saved world of mankind, remained in the chariot, but the bay horses, wanting to roam, felt shackled by the chariot. They wanted complete liberty.

There is a danger in trying to be too independent. On the one hand, we do not want to be fettered by false doctrine or false institutions, but on the other hand, one has to be very careful in espousing such freedom that he does not wander off into oblivion and darkness. The Lord expects all whom He calls to be *governed by His principles*, the principles that emanate from His Word. As long as we are underneath that governance, we are in safe parameters of thought. The King James reads, “The bay [horses] went forth, and sought to go that they might walk to and fro through the earth,” but the literal Hebrew is stronger; namely, the bay horses

“strained” to go.

Comment: The classes developed by the red, black, white, and grided horses have direction in their life; they are going toward a destiny. The bay horses just wander.

Comment: As pointed out in previous studies, the horses are listed in the sequence of their development as they appeared on the earthly scene: (1) Ancient Worthies, (2) Little Flock, (3) Great Company, and (4) mankind.

Zech. 6:9 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Zech. 6:10 Take of them of the captivity, even of Heldai, of Tobijah, and of Jedaiah, which are come from Babylon, and come thou the same day, and go into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah;

Zech. 6:11 Then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest;

Zechariah was to take three individuals—Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah—to the house of Josiah, who was the son of Zephaniah. It is interesting that Zechariah and two other prophets were contemporary in succession, one after the other. Zechariah was the first, Ezra was the second, and Nehemiah was the third. It takes many years of reading the Old Testament to realize that these prophets were relatively contemporaneous. The second chapter of Ezra and the seventh chapter of Nehemiah furnish a little information on Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah. While not much light is cast on their backgrounds, these chapters do provide some meager clues that are helpful.

Zechariah was instructed to make crowns of silver and gold foil and set them on the head of Joshua. He hastily cut the silver and gold foil into strips and a triangular shape with a little space in between to make a facsimile of a diadem. As a princess wears around her head what looks like turrets on a band, so Zechariah made two turrets, one of gold and one of silver, to symbolize a lesson that was about to be performed. These two makeshift crowns were hurriedly designed on the same day.

But why did Zechariah go to the house of Josiah? He was to take the rather heavy crowns of silver and gold foil to Josiah’s house to perform a ceremony. When he arrived with Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, he found that Josiah and Joshua were both there and that a ceremony was about to take place. Several other individuals would also have been present. Everyone there had returned from Babylonian captivity, but the reason for the presence of Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah was a little different. As visiting messengers, they had come from Babylonian captivity not with the intention of living in Jerusalem but with the purpose of getting information to answer a certain question that the Jews still in Babylon had asked.

Q: With Joshua being the name Jesus, was he a king-priest like Melchisedec?

A: Yes, that was the purpose behind the ceremony.

The silver and gold strips were interlaced and put around the head of Joshua, but in what sequence did Zechariah place the two crowns on Joshua’s head? The clue is in verse 13, as we will see. First, the gold crown, or tiara, was placed on Joshua’s head. Then Zechariah put the silver crown on top of the gold crown. Verse 11 might seem to indicate the opposite order, but a clue is later furnished that the gold crown preceded the silver crown.

Zech. 6:12 And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD:

As Zechariah placed the crowns, he was to say to Joshua, who was a type of Jesus, “Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH.” Zechariah continued to speak to Joshua: “He shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD.” The “temple” can be considered from several perspectives. Sometimes the Church is likened to the house of God, and at other times, it is pictured as the house of Jesus. From this spiritual standpoint, a “temple” is being built during the Gospel Age. Jesus said, “That thou art Peter [a rock], and upon this [mass of] rock [that is, the truth that I am the Christ, the Savior] I will build my church” (Matt. 16:18). However, when the Father is considered the builder of the Church, Jesus becomes a master foreman or workman, the one who builds the Church but under the supervision, instruction, and specifications of the Father. For instance, the Father selects the stones and does the calling. Then He uses Jesus to announce the call to the individual. The Christian is begotten of the Word of God (James 1:18). From that perspective, God is our Father, and Jesus is our brother. Thus both are involved in building the spiritual Temple.

Hebrews 3:5,6 is a text that shows Jesus over the Church: “And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” Paul was comparing the two houses: the house of *servants* under Moses and the house of *sons* with Jesus as the Head. Also, Matthew 21:42 reads, “The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner.”

However, Zechariah’s contemporaries who heard his statement construed it as a reference to Zerubbabel’s Temple, that is, the natural second Temple. And for their benefit and enthusiasm, the Lord wanted them to conclude that the emphasis was on the rebuilding of the Temple in their day. The purpose of Haggai’s and Zechariah’s ministries was to get the Jews to resume and finish the work on the Temple.

But there is also an application to the Third Temple yet future. In the Kingdom Age, Jesus will see to the building of that Temple. Just as Solomon built David’s Temple, so Jesus will make sure that the Third Temple is built according to the proper specifications—not necessarily as a master foreman but as the one who gives instructions verbally, as it were. Someone else, whose identity will be revealed in the future, will be on the scene down here to see that the stones are quarried and put in place properly. Of course Ezekiel was given the prophetic vision of the Temple with its dimensions, but whether he will have the privilege of supervising the construction in the Kingdom remains to be seen.

“The BRANCH [Jesus] ... shall grow up out of his place.” Zechariah 3:8 also mentioned “the BRANCH.” “Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.” In each case, the Hebrew word for “BRANCH” is *tsemach*. That same word is used in three other Scriptures, as follows. “In that day shall the *branch* of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel [the Holy Remnant]” (Isa. 4:2). This reference is an end-time prophecy, to be fulfilled in the near future. “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous *Branch*, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth” (Jer. 23:5). “In those days, and at that time, will I cause the *Branch* of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land” (Jer. 33:15).

Comment: Isaiah 11:1 also mentions a “Branch”: “And there shall come forth a rod out of the

stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.”

Reply: The Hebrew word *netser* is used in that text, for the reference is to a different type of development. Out of Jesse, the father of David, came a twig that grew into a *tender* branch, and the tender branch grew into a *strong* branch. That same development is hinted at in the verse we are studying here in Zechariah: Jesus would “grow up out of his place.”

The earliest symbolic indication of a “branch” is Genesis 8:11, “And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.” God’s peace branch started with this little twig.

Zech. 6:13 Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

In the Kingdom, every knee will have to bow and every tongue must confess that Jesus is the Lord and King of that age. That particular honor belongs to Jesus alone, even though the Church will receive praise, for they will come up in glory from another perspective.

Jesus “shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both [that is, between the two crowns].” Although the civil and the religious aspects will be separate in the Kingdom Age, they will blend together in harmony. The “prince” of the Third Temple will be the office of the Ancient Worthies (Ezek. 44:3; 45:7,16,22; 46:2,4,8,10,12,16-18; 48:21,22). The priesthood of the Third Temple will be the Zadok line of the Levites. This selectivity is retribution for what Aaron did when he and Miriam spoke against Moses (Num. 12:1-10). Because of his position as high priest, it would not have been proper for Aaron to receive a specific reprimand at the time, but that judgment hung over his head. Therefore, instead of his having the distinction of being a priest in the Kingdom Age, that honor will be given to Zadok. These principles are taught in the Law, so there were reasons why only Miriam was singled out for punishment on that occasion and not Aaron.

Now we can see the order of the crowns. The statement “he shall be a *priest upon his throne*” proves that the gold crown was underneath the silver crown on Joshua’s head. The throne was associated with kingship, so the priesthood was founded on the throne, the gold. The Melchisedec priesthood is being pictured here, but the foundation, or base, of Jesus’ authority is his Kingship. Jesus is both King and Priest, which is an oddity, for the King had to be of Judah and a priest had to be a Levite of Aaron. We believe it will be proven in the future that Jesus came from both lineages. The Book of Zechariah is very informative.

Zech. 6:14 And the crowns shall be to Helem, and to Tobijah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the temple of the LORD.

Of the three names listed in verse 10, Helem corresponds with Heldai, and Hen is Josiah, the son of Zephaniah. The latter correspondency might be disputed, but, for example, it was quite common for kings of the Old Testament to have three names.

The ceremony with the crowns was done “for a memorial in the temple of the LORD.” But how could that be when the ceremony took place in the house of Josiah? The two temporary tiaras were later taken off the head of Joshua and placed in the Temple as a memorial. We believe the crowns are among other artifacts that were hidden but will someday be found. A number of artifacts, including Jeremiah’s deed, are stored and preserved in God’s library down here to shut men’s mouths in the Kingdom and shame those who have said the Bible accounts are fables.

Zech. 6:15 And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the LORD, and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. And this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.

“And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the LORD, and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me [Zechariah] unto you.” The Jews back there thought the prophet was saying, “The Temple of Zerubbabel will come to pass if you will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.” That interpretation was allowable, for the Holy Bible was written to be a blessing upon, and a stimulus to, those who were merely the types back there. Seeing that the real fulfillment is soon to come in our day is an encouragement to us.

Zech. 7:1 And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius, that the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah in the fourth day of the ninth month, even in Chisleu;

The following vision was given to Zechariah in the fourth year of Darius Hystaspes, specifically in the fourth day of Chisleu, the ninth month. By piecing together scattered information in Scripture, we know each month of both the Hebrew year and the so-called civil year.

Zech. 7:2 When they had sent unto the house of God Sherezer and Regem-melech, and their men, to pray before the LORD,

Two individuals, Sherezer and Regem-melech, and their associates were sent from Babylon to pray before the Lord, but they had something else in mind, as we will see. These men were sent by Jews who had remained in Babylon, choosing not to return to the homeland to build the Temple when Cyrus issued his decree. They were still under captivity, but the situation was more liberal under the Persians, even though Daniel and the three Hebrews had occupied a high office while in Babylonian captivity. Most of the Jews stayed behind because they were comfortably settled there with houses, children, and temporal means. Those without faith weighed the matter and decided not to leave and go to Israel. Instead they sent these two representatives.

Comment: The modern Jew today, especially in this country, does not move to Israel for the same reason.

Zech. 7:3 And to speak unto the priests which were in the house of the LORD of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years?

Sherezer and Regem-melech were to speak to the priests (plural) who were in the Temple. The high priests were Joshua and an unnamed alternate in case of sickness, sudden death, or some other emergency. Sherezer and Regem-melech were to ask the priests, “Should I [we] weep in the fifth month, separating myself [ourselves], as I [we] have done these so many years?”

Zech. 7:4 Then came the word of the LORD of hosts unto me, saying,

Zech. 7:5 Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?

The word of Jehovah came unto Zechariah, instructing him to say to all the people and the priests, “When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?” What had happened to initiate the custom of

fasting in the fifth and seventh months? There were two separate incidents.

The first incident is recorded in 2 Kings 25:8,9, “And in the *fifth month*, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem: And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king’s house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man’s house burnt he with fire.” The outstanding event was the burning of Solomon’s Temple with fire.

The second incident is given in 2 Kings 25:25, “But it came to pass in the *seventh month*, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah.” Gedaliah was assassinated at Mizpah, along with Jews who were associated with him and Chaldeans who had been left there. In 606 BC, after Jerusalem and the Temple had been destroyed, Gedaliah was left in the land of Israel with vinedressers to keep the land from getting fallow. Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians were infuriated that after they showed this crumb of favor, other Jews killed the Chaldeans stationed there. The vinedressers quickly fled to Egypt out of fear of the king of Babylon. The summary result was the utter desolation of the land, leaving Israel without any inhabitants for 70 years.

Therefore, the Jews fasted and mourned in the fifth month in remembrance of the burning of the Temple, and they fasted and mourned in the seventh month in remembrance of Gedaliah’s assassination. Thus the 70 years of desolation commenced with the assassination of Gedaliah, which occurred in the same year. In other words, all three events took place in 606 BC—the destruction of Jerusalem, the burning of the Temple, and the murder of Gedaliah—putting the nails in the coffin for the beginning of the 70 years of desolation of the land.

In the fourth year of King Jehoiakim, Jeremiah predicted that the land would be made desolate for 70 years (Jer. 25:1,8-11). But that prophecy was not fulfilled until 606 BC, which was 19 years later. It is important to understand this point because of the chronology changes that are taking place, altering the chronology as presented by the Pastor in the *Second Volume*. It is wrongly claimed that the land was desolate for only 51 years because Jews were taken captive 19 years earlier. But only a handful of people were taken captive at that time: Daniel, the three Hebrews, and a few others.

2 Chronicles 36:19-21 further confirms that the desolation began with the destruction of Jerusalem in 606 BC, and not earlier. “And they [the Babylonians] burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he [King Nebuchadnezzar] away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.” To fulfill those 70 years, the land had to be *desolate* for 70 years. The Hebrew is clear on this point, but some translations are so wed to the chronology of 587 BC (instead of 606 BC) that the translators have altered the text. In order for the land to fulfill its sabbaths and the word of the Lord, it had to lie desolate for 70 years, not for 51 years.

Q: These two fasts were not instructed by the Lord or by the prophets. Did the people just observe them of their own volition while in Babylonian captivity?

A: Yes, the fasts were self-initiated.

Zech. 7:6 And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourselves, and

drink for yourselves?

Zech. 7:7 Should ye not hear the words which the LORD hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when men inhabited the south and the plain?

When the city and the Temple were destroyed and the land was left desolate at the time of Gedaliah's assassination, the people who survived suffered and mourned, but the fasting and mourning were a *subsequent* practice. As the years went by, they became more a perfunctory custom. Instead of mourning before the Lord and saying they *deserved* the experience because of their sins, the people mourned *for themselves*. And as more time passed, even that mourning became less sincere.

Comment: The lack of sincerity is somewhat surprising because, generally speaking, the survivors were the cream of the crop.

Reply: Jeremiah had told the Jews of Judah that if they wanted to live, they should surrender to the enemy and allow themselves to be taken captive to Babylon. Hence the survivors not only had to believe that Jeremiah was a true prophet but also had to have faith that if they hearkened to his advice, the Lord would spare their lives. Thus those who obeyed exercised faith, much as the Holy Remnant will do in the holocaust of Jacob's Trouble at the end of this age. Gog and Magog will come down, and those who exercise faith in the message that will be announced to the nation through the Great Company—those who respond favorably *prior to* the invasion—will no doubt be spared, their names having been “written in the book” (Isa. 4:3; Dan. 12:1). Incidentally, the “south” in verse 7 is the Negev desert, which was part of Judah.

Zech. 7:8 And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying,

Zech. 7:9 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother:

Zech. 7:10 And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.

Zech. 7:11 But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.

In verse 11, we can almost see the motion of an individual pulling away his shoulder, but the verse also shows that the Lord, in reasoning with the Jews, more or less put His hand on their shoulder to give them a message of comfort. “If you do such and such, I will be merciful to you,” but no, they “pulled away the shoulder.”

Comment: The prophets had been preaching this same message all along, even prior to the Jews' captivity in Babylon.

Reply: That is true, as verse 7 shows. “Should ye not hear the words which the LORD hath cried by the *former prophets*, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity...?” The reason for the punishment was that when God gave the Jews a way out, they would not obey. Consequently, Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed. But now the Lord was giving them another opportunity. The returned Jews were building the Temple again, but the work halted for a while. They started with the altar and then completed the Temple, but the walls of the outer court still had to be finished. By inference, God was saying, “Do what your forefathers failed to do; obey these simple requirements. (1) Execute true judgment, and show mercy and

compassion to your brother. (2) Do not oppress the fatherless, the stranger, or the poor. (3) Do not imagine evil against your brother in your heart.” These instructions were an easy way out. A lenient condition had been placed upon previous generations, but they would not listen. And now again, the Lord was pleading with the Jews, but they refused to hearken. The inference is that they would even get Jerusalem back and that the problems with their neighbors would cease. The neighbors, who were half Jew and half Gentile through intermarriage, were afraid to inhabit the waste city, but they dwelled up near the border and were troublesome to the returned Jews.

Consider the *simple* requirement that was given to Adam and Eve. God said, “You can eat freely of *all* the trees in the garden but not of this *one* kind of tree.” Similarly here, a lenient and merciful governance was being exercised, but the people would not tolerate it. To use a common expression, the people wanted to do “their own thing.” “They refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears [by figuratively—and perhaps even literally with some—sticking a finger in each ear], that they should not hear.”

In witnessing, many of us fail to mention the *leniency* God showed in His judgment of Israel. Yes, the land was laid desolate, but the requirements were not burdensome to perform.

Comment: A King James marginal note for verse 9 is Micah 6:8, “He hath shown thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”

Reply: Yes, isn’t that a simple requirement? The Law was much more pointed with many details of what to do and what not to do, but here and in Micah, God was merely asking the people to change their attitude.

Comment: A parallel is what Jesus said at his First Advent when he was asked, “Which is the great commandment in the law?” He replied, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matt. 22:36-40).

Reply: The people were willing to go through the *perfunctory* ceremony, which might cost them an animal, but they did not want to obey from the heart, which was the *inward* cleansing.

Zech. 7:12 Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts.

The tenor of these verses reminds us of our experience in making a decision to consecrate. We heard the invitation “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:28-30). God promises to ease the burden and refresh the mourners who come to Him through Jesus, but the old man, the old nature, reasons, “Yes, that sounds good, but if I make the commitment, I will have to give up many things.” However, the requirements are very reasonable (Rom. 12:1). Jesus gave the advice to sit down first and count the cost, and all he asks is that we make up our mind and be *definite* and *mean what we say* (Luke 14:28). The old man fears that once the commitment is made, he will have to live like a puritan, and he will lose his friends. Just as the individual is tested in the Gospel Age, so the nation of Israel was tested back there.

To most people, consecration is an insurmountable step. That is why the Lord appreciates each

individual who makes the commitment. Very few give their little all to please God. Of course a greater commitment is required in the Gospel Age, but God has promised not to try us above what we are able (1 Cor. 10:13). This is particularly true with regard to the Christian who cannot, in the final analysis, be a more-than-overcomer, for God shows mercy to the Great Company class as well. He simply requires each Christian to do what he is able. If we should have the blessing of making our calling and election sure, we will be rewarded with more than we deserve, and the joys will be a hundredfold greater than anything we might have previously anticipated. In short, faith can surmount any barrier the old man might put forth.

Comment: We have fertile imaginations, yet the Apostle Paul said, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Cor. 2:9).

Reply: Yes, our imaginations are not fertile enough to go as high as what the Lord has in reservation for those who truly love Him.

Zech. 7:13 Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts:

“Therefore it is come to pass, that as he [Jehovah] cried [back there through the mouth of the former prophets, whose message was to repent and change their ways], and they [the Jews] would not hear; so they [the Jews] cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts.” This response was natural. Even in Old Testament times, God stooped down and humbled Himself to deal with fallen man, but the Jews would not hear. Yet when they cried, they expected God to answer. Today, in spite of their history, the Jews do not cry to the Lord as a nation. Isn’t that surprising? There is no national fast. Jesus said, “The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented [and fasted] at the preaching of Jonas [Jonah]; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here” (Matt. 12:41). The Ninevites, who were God’s enemies at one time, repented.

Zech. 7:14 But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate.

Anyone traveling through Israel during the 70 years of desolation saw the pitiful condition of the land. Not only were the cities in ruins, but it was almost as if a curse was on the land itself. Strangers couldn’t wait until they got back to their homeland with its trees and herbage. They did not think of taking up residency in the desolate Promised Land during those 70 years.

Chapter 7 was more or less a lecture or a tongue-lashing, showing why the Jews had their former experience. God was saying, “Learn from the past. Now you know why I scattered you like a whirlwind among other nations and why the land was so desolate.” Hearing this review should have been the basis for their taking a favorable step. The Lord prospered the building of the Temple but not the city at this time. The Jews did finish Zerubbabel’s Temple. Thus the Book of Haggai and the preceding six chapters of the Book of Zechariah were very encouraging. No doubt young Zechariah spoke enthusiastically in those chapters, but now, in this seventh chapter, he was speaking soberly. The words from the Lord were common sense.

Comment: It is interesting and providential that Dome of the Rock is on the Temple Mount, for without this impediment, the Jews would have tried to build the Third Temple. God has purposed that the Temple will be built *after* Jacob’s Trouble and according to *His* specifications.

Reply: Yes, the current experiences are conditioning the Jewish people. Some are developing a

character that will not respond, so it will be necessary for them to die in Jacob's Trouble. The Kingdom will be inaugurated and the Temple will be built with a righteous nucleus of Jews, a pure and holy lump. The others will come forth later in the general resurrection and have an opportunity to walk up the highway of holiness (Isa. 35:8). The Kingdom will start fresh with no Canaanite in the Temple of the Lord or, by implication, in the land (Zech. 14:21).

Zech. 8:1 Again the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying,

Zech. 8:2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury.

The cross-reference for verse 2 is Nahum 1:2, "God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies." The occasion for God's jealousy was His visitation of judgment upon Babylon. The 70-year captivity and desolation of the land ended with the fall of Babylon, which occurred when Cyrus captured the city by going under the gates. That judgment broke the back of Babylon the Great. The time setting was now about 20 years later. In other words, the judgment had occurred a couple of decades before this statement came to Zechariah, telling how, in the past, God was jealous (or zealous) for His people because of the indignities that were inflicted on them, let alone on Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple. When the 70 years expired, God visited them with favor, but to do that, Babylon first had to be conquered. Two years later Cyrus issued a decree allowing the Jews to go back to their homeland and even rebuild the Temple with some modifications. Therefore, God said, "I was jealous for Zion [my people] with great jealousy, and ... with great fury." He had visited great fury (1) when He permitted the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple because of the Jews' wrongdoing and (2) when Babylon, the enemy of the Jews, was conquered by the Medes and the Persians. Nebuchadnezzar, a Gentile king, accomplished the first judgment, and now, after the 70 years of trial for the Jews in captivity, God was zealous for them because of the indignities and the reproaches they had suffered as captives. The ensuing message would be favorable because while trouble might come on the Jews, God always mixed in with the trouble the fact that He would recompense them with His mercy and goodness.

Zech. 8:3 Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain.

A question immediately comes to mind as to when verse 3 will be fulfilled. We know that Jerusalem will not be called the "city of truth" in a real sense and the "mountain of the LORD of hosts" will not be the "holy mountain" until the inauguration of the Kingdom. But what about the Jews who went back to Israel at the end of the 70-year captivity and started to build Zerubbabel's Temple? The work began, starting with the altar, and then stopped for a while. Later on, after encouragement from Haggai and Zechariah, a house of worship was finally erected, for out of the mouth of two witnesses came strengthening messages to continue the building. In the meantime, the city was still laid waste with broken-down walls, yet God said, through Zechariah, "I will dwell in Jerusalem." In other words, the city would be rebuilt, but God did not say when. Nevertheless, the message was encouraging. Of course the Lord knew that thousands of years would pass before Jerusalem would be the "city of truth" and an emblem of righteousness with the Temple and the Ancient Worthies.

When the returned Jews heard these words from Zechariah, they assumed this condition would transpire soon. Not too many years later the walls of the city were built, providing protection for the Temple, and the people began to reinhabit and build up Jerusalem again. As a result, they thought Zerubbabel's Temple was the real Temple, whereas actually it was only

the second Temple. The Scriptures show that the Third Temple will be built in the Kingdom in our day in the near future, but in order not to dishearten the people, the Lord did not reveal the time interval of 2,500 or so years. Thus the Jews were encouraged back in Zechariah's day because they assumed the fulfillment was occurring at that time. With this encouragement, they began to prosper for a while.

Prophecy is intentionally worded so that it is a blessing to the contemporary generation, but as centuries go by, the details become a little clearer. We now recognize by prophecy that we are in an end-time period and that the trouble and setting up of the Kingdom cannot be too far off because Jerusalem is "a burdensome stone" to all nations, as prophesied by Zechariah long, long ago (Zech. 12:3).

Zech. 8:4 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age.

Zech. 8:5 And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.

When the Jews heard these words or read the scroll, they felt there would be at least a relative period of growth and prosperity wherein young people would grow to old age and not die in battle. Hence they read this prophecy a little differently from its true fulfillment. God gave crumbs of promise and encouragement back there, but the real depth of fulfillment is future.

Q: Do verses 4 and 5 refer to the awakening from the tomb in the general resurrection?

A: All who are in their graves will come forth as they were when they died. For example, infants will come back as infants, and those who died at age 100 will come back at that age, for "where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Eccl. 11:3). A person will come forth whole and with the measure of health to enable him to bow the knee to Messiah in the Kingdom. Yes, all who previously died will come forth, and Jerusalem and the land will prosper and become filled with inhabitants, as many Scriptures so indicate.

However, verses 4 and 5 are speaking especially of the Holy Remnant, who are mentioned many times in God's Word, especially in the Book of Isaiah. The rescue of the Holy Remnant will take place down here; that is, it is not a rescue from the tomb because, their names having been written in the book of life, they will not die in Jacob's Trouble. Those who comprise this class will be of various ages—old men and young men, old women and young women, and their children. In His mercy, God will spare some of the loved ones, the family members (particularly the young), of the Holy Remnant. After Israel is purged in Jacob's Trouble, the spared Holy Remnant will be honored, for they will manifest a proper heart condition.

When God rescues the Holy Remnant and they come forth after Jacob's Trouble—when He visits and honors His people by fighting for them as He did in the days of old—there will be great rejoicing. The Holy Remnant will see that all of Israel's enemies have been destroyed. In the tremendous exultation that follows, they will praise and bless the Lord for their deliverance.

Zechariah was sent as a firebrand of enthusiasm to the Jews who returned to Jerusalem under Cyrus' decree but were discouraged by their experiences in the homeland. The statement "there shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age" was interpreted as pertaining to a soon-to-come rescue of Jerusalem. However, the real fulfillment is future. Similarly, Joel 2:28,29 revived the hopes and encouraged the people back there, but the prophecy applies to the near future: "And it shall

come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.”

Zech. 8:6 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the LORD of hosts.

“If it be marvellous in the eyes of the [holy] remnant of this people in these days, should it [not] also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the LORD of hosts.” The message continues to be enthusiastic, and God did do wondrous things for the Jews back there. However, verse 6 is particularly a prophecy of the future Holy Remnant. The deliverance will include both old and young—all who are trying to please the Lord and have faith in Him and in His promises. A large portion of the Messianic Jews in Israel today, as well as some Orthodox Jews, think very much on God’s promises to Israel, but they are a minority as far as the general populace of Israel is concerned.

Zech. 8:7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country;

Zech. 8:8 And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.

Verses 7 and 8 are a prophecy of the future. The Lord made this true statement, knowing the Jews back there would misconstrue the fulfillment as being in their day. Psalm 97:11 reads, “Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.” Truth is sown for the righteous, but the benefit *grows* as time goes by. During the past two generations, Jews have been going back to Israel from Europe and also from America. Many of them will be on hand during Jacob’s Trouble, and those who are of the Holy Remnant will ultimately be delivered.

Zechariah was saying that of the last regathering, which will take place after Jacob’s Trouble, God would dwell with those Jews in a very real sense. They would come “from the east” (Asia) and “from the west” (Europe and the United States). The prophecies indicate that there are two regatherings in our day, one before and one after Jacob’s Trouble. The first regathering has been going on ever since 1878 and still continues today. Most of the Jews in this regathering have been from the Western Hemisphere. After Jacob’s Trouble, all surviving Jews in whatever land they are living will be encouraged to go back to the Promised Land, and the Gentiles will assist in providing transportation. This second regathering will occur after God manifests His anger against His enemies and delivers His people. At that time, there will be a gathering of the entire Holy Remnant—of Jews already resident in Israel as well as Jews in Gentile lands. They will want to return when they realize that God is the God *of Israel*. There are many wonderful promises to the natural kingdom, to natural Israelites who are faithful in trying to serve God to the extent of their knowledge and capability. The surviving Jews “shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.”

Zech. 8:9 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets, which were in the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built.

What “day” is referred to here? “Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets, which were in the *day* that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid.” Zechariah spoke these words in 518 BC “in the *fourth year* of king Darius ... in the fourth day of the ninth month, even in Chisleu” (Zech. 7:1). Two years earlier,

in the *second year* of Darius, Haggai recorded the specific date in which Zerubbabel's Temple "was laid" (the court, the altar, etc.), namely, the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month (Hag. 2:10,18). Haggai's short ministry took place in the second year of Darius, and Zechariah's ministry was in the second and fourth years of Darius, as recorded in chapters 1-6 and 7-14, respectively. The mention of dates and circumstances will eventually lead up to a grand climax in Zechariah's prophecies.

Zech. 8:10 For before these days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction: for I set all men every one against his neighbour.

When the Jews first came back from Babylon, there was a period of no employment. They had brought back some of their goods and possessions and the vessels of the Lord. They started to build the Temple but then felt they needed houses for themselves. Meanwhile, there was no place to purchase produce, so they were in real straits and had to live from hand to mouth on a daily basis. In addition, God allowed the hostile neighbors to be a problem. Not only did the Jews need employment and food to feed hungry mouths, but also they had trouble warding off these enemies, who were continually doing mischief. God said, "I set all men every one against his neighbour." In other words, God was responsible for the problem. He allowed this situation to awaken the Jews to see that they had to finish building His house. Both Haggai and Zechariah pronounced this message. The Jews needed to associate the trouble with their cessation of work on the Temple and the resultant period of quiet. If they would get busy and complete the work in the full sense of the word, God would take care of the problem and furnish their daily bread. Sure enough, when the Jews resumed work on the Temple, other encouragements came. For example, Ezra and Nehemiah were raised up, in addition to Haggai and Zechariah. The Jews began to prosper materially.

Zech. 8:11 But now I will not be unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith the LORD of hosts.

Zech. 8:12 For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things.

These blessings occurred as a miniature experience and picture of that which will come in a larger sense at the end of the Gospel Age in the near future. In addition to Ezra and Nehemiah, there came on the scene, not too far distant, two other individuals who were not front stage at first, namely, Mordecai and Esther, who eventually emerged as prominent personalities. Hence there were *two* prophets (Haggai and Zechariah), *two* principal men (Zerubbabel and Joshua), *two* individuals (Ezra the priest and Nehemiah the cupbearer), and *two* prominent Jews (Mordecai and Esther, who became queen). Therefore, in the midst of turmoil and threatening conditions, the Jews began to develop, prosper, and grow—until the holocaust of AD 69-73 scattered them in Diaspora. They were being developed as a people in preparation for Jesus' First Advent. Even though Jesus "came unto his own" and the nation did not receive him, a holy remnant class of apostles was developed (John 1:11). Not only were the apostles specially selected, but several of them were family members. Thus, unbeknownst to the Jews, they were being developed and were getting the fruitage of spiritual blessings. It is wonderful to see the providences of the Lord, but of course we have hindsight on the records of history.

Zech. 8:13 And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong.

Zech. 8:14 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the LORD of hosts, and I repented not:

Zech. 8:15 So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not.

Verses 13-15 applied to Zechariah's day. Just as surely as Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple were destroyed in 606 BC as punishment for the Jews' disobedience, so now God would "do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah." Therefore, the advice was, "Fear ye not [the hostility of your neighbors]." There was a reversal of fortunes.

Zech. 8:16 These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates:

Zech. 8:17 And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD.

Zechariah was speaking to two groups of Jews: (1) to former exiles in Babylon who had returned to the Promised Land after the decree of Cyrus and (2) to those Ezra brought back later. Verses 16 and 17 are the instructions that God charged Zechariah to speak to these Jews who were back in the homeland. "Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD." These instructions were simple and easy to understand. It was as if God were saying, "These commands should be your motivation. Now that you are back in your homeland, you should talk and act like people in the Holy Land in dealing with one another."

Zech. 8:18 And the word of the LORD of hosts came unto me, saying,

Zech. 8:19 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace.

The fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months were to be "to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts." Therefore, the Jews were to "love the truth and peace." Because they were back in their homeland and Jerusalem was being rebuilt, the fasts in these four months were no longer to be times of mourning but were to be occasions of joy. What did these four fasts commemorate?

The fast in the fourth month pertained to famine. 2 Kings 25:3,4 reads, "And on the ninth day of the *fourth month* the *famine* prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land. And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees were against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain." The famine and the breaking up of Jerusalem both occurred at that time. Without food, the people no longer had any resistance, so the city was breached, broken up, and entered.

The fast in the fifth month commemorated the burning of the Temple and the houses in the city. The fast in the seventh month called to remembrance the assassination of Gedaliah. The seventh chapter mentioned only the fasts of the fifth and the seventh months (Zech. 7:5).

2 Kings 25:1 mentions the tenth month: "And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the *tenth month*, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he,

and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about.” Hence the fast in the tenth month pertained to the siege King Nebuchadnezzar put around Jerusalem. In the chronological sequence in which the events originally occurred, the tenth month was actually in the preceding year and, therefore, was the first event. The order was the tenth month, the fourth month, the fifth month, and the seventh month. The famine came about as a result of the siege.

Verse 19, then, was just mentioning the sequence of fasts that occurred in a calendar year in commemoration of what had happened previously. God was saying, “If you behave yourselves, if you renew your vows to me and obey, then these fasts should be changed into festivities of joy. The fasts of mourning should be forgotten, relatively speaking, because you are back in the land. See what I have done for you. Get busy and complete the work.”

Zech. 8:20 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities:

God continued to speak through Zechariah, saying in effect, “Moreover, it shall come to pass that people will come to Jerusalem, and the land will be populated more and more with cities as time goes on. Do what I tell you, and conditions will be entirely changed.”

An analysis of Zechariah’s prophecies throughout the book shows the emphasis to be on deliverance. Yes, the historical events that had brought sadness, concern, and trouble were discussed, but the prophet ended each time with the theme of deliverance. In chapter 8, the people were back in the land, and the message to them was, “Good things will happen, but you should do what you refused to do previously.”

Zech. 8:21 And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also.

Zech. 8:22 Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD.

Zech. 8:23 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.

Verses 21-23 are plainly stated, but since hindsight shows us that these conditions did not occur in the past, we consider them to have a fulfillment yet future. However, the Jews back there understood these verses to mean that if they obeyed the Lord, these events would happen to them as stated. And it is true that if the Jews had obeyed the Lord, these things would have occurred in the past, but the people did not comply with the relatively simple requirements.

The Temple of Zerubbabel met with misfortunes, but it was not totally destroyed. Just before the First Advent, Herod enlarged and restored the Temple that already existed, added some colonnades, and built the Wailing Wall. In reality, then, the Herodian Temple was the second Temple. The Third Temple, yet to be built, is the Temple of future prophecy.

When Zechariah spoke to the Jews along this line—that ten men would take hold of the skirt of a Jew—it was simple for him to say, “If you listen to me, my people, and do what I say, this is what will happen.” God was not remiss in making this statement, even though He knew the people would not obey. Thank God that, in His mercy, He will go ahead with this promise and will accomplish it in His own way and time! Thus prophecy has always been helpful, even though it has not been fully fulfilled in the past. Seeing this wonderful picture as happening in

the future does not minimize the grand view of what will occur, for God's Word is an "amen" to His covenant. Zechariah, a young man, was quite enthusiastic about the promises, and no doubt when he mentioned them, he did it with an encouraging voice. Unlike Jeremiah, who wept and got angry with righteous indignation at times because the people paid no attention to the warnings and were so dull of hearing, Zechariah referred to the promises. He said in effect, "The Lord has brought you back to the homeland. Doesn't that show He has had mercy on you? The very fact you are here and I am speaking to you proves the Lord will do things for you, so hearken and obey!" The tone of Zechariah's message was different from the tone of some of the other prophets.

Q: In verse 23, is the reference to "ten men" a general statement, or can it be equated with the ten toes of the image?

A: The number 10 shows temporal completion in a general sense. The "ten men" refer to the nations, or peoples, starting with the ten nations of Europe, the ten toes of the image (Dan. 2:41,42). The picture of the image is basically the Roman Empire, which still exists; the image has not been destroyed. However, it also embraces America because this country was populated with people who fled from persecution in the Old Country.

Zech. 9:1 The burden of the word of the LORD in the land of Hadrach, and Damascus shall be the rest thereof: when the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, shall be toward the LORD.

Zech. 9:2 And Hamath also shall border thereby; Tyrus, and Zidon, though it be very wise.

Zech. 9:3 And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets.

Zech. 9:4 Behold, the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea; and she shall be devoured with fire.

Verses 1-4 are talking about Hadrach, Damascus, Tyre, and Sidon. Zechariah was prophetically describing a calamity that would come upon these peoples a generation or two after his day. His ministry took place during the Persian Empire, and this prophecy was more or less accomplished by King Alexander the Great of the Grecian Empire, the belly and thighs of brass on the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2:32). Zechariah prophesied in regard to the troublemakers in his day, the surrounding hostile neighbors, who frustrated the work on the Temple. The Lord was saying, "Not only will nations come to Jerusalem in the future with ten men taking hold of the skirt of a Jew, but also these people who are irritants in a more local sense will be cast out." (Tyre and Sidon were in Lebanon, and Damascus was in Syria.)

However, we see a larger picture in this experience. Because of disobedience, verses 1-4 are describing what will happen again. In other words, this prophecy has a double fulfillment. Starting with Zechariah 8:20, these verses are an end-time prophecy—the Third Temple will be built, nations will recognize Jerusalem, etc. Moreover, chapter 9 tells of a judgment that will come on Lebanon in the near future. Iran is currently shipping money and goods to Syria, and Syria is the power that enables terrorists in Lebanon to inflict misery on Israel.

God "will smite her [Tyre's] power in the sea [through Alexander the Great]; and she shall be devoured with fire." Long before Zechariah came on the scene, King Nebuchadnezzar wrought judgment on Tyre, Israel, Egypt, etc. After Tyre was destroyed at his hand, the people, realizing the vulnerability of the present location, enlarged an island just off the coast, made it a fortress, and moved the city to that spot. The populace of the new Tyre felt secure,

thinking that any enemies who came down would not have boats or the means to attack the rebuilt city from the mainland. However, Alexander bulldozed rubble from the old city into the sea, making a causeway, and invaded the new city on the island. Thus Tyre was destroyed a second time. In the near future, there will be a third fulfillment of this prophecy of destruction.

This portion of Zechariah is historical. To understand the prophetic significance in the past, we need a little knowledge of history. Now the prophecy is building up and coming to our day. As the stage is being set, the prophecy is telling us in plain language what will happen.

Zech. 9:5 Ashkelon shall see it, and fear; Gaza also shall see it, and be very sorrowful, and Ekron; for her expectation shall be ashamed; and the king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.

Zech. 9:6 And a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.

Zech. 9:7 And I will take away his blood out of his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth: but he that remaineth, even he, shall be for our God, and he shall be as a governor in Judah, and Ekron as a Jebusite.

In reading the names of these towns—Gaza, Ekron, Ashkelon, and Ashdod—plus the mention of the Philistines, we see that verses 5-7 have not had a past fulfillment. Hence the emphasis is on a *future* fulfillment. Ashkelon and Ashdod are in what we now call the Gaza Strip, for even though the name Ashdod does not exist today, the town is embedded in that area. Zechariah was speaking about the Gaza Strip, which occupies a small area. Lebanon is also a small area but larger than the Gaza Strip. With towns in Israel today that are called Gaza and Ashkelon, this prophecy tells what will happen to them in the near future.

Back in the prophet's day, the people in this area were irritants, so the Jews thought these verses would have a more immediate fulfillment. The Jewish captives who returned from Babylon thought that all the surrounding neighbors—to the north, east, and south—would be dealt with as enemies of Israel. They expected a severe judgment to solve the problem, but that judgment is yet future in our day.

Q: Weren't there five Philistine cities?

A: Yes, but the Gaza Strip today is a little smaller than it was in Zechariah's day.

The captives first went back to Judah, for most of them were from the two tribes. The ten-tribe kingdom was taken captive much earlier, so those Jews were in exile for about 200 years, and few returned in 536 BC. In fact, the ten tribes are called "the lost tribes of Israel" because they were dispersed into various lands, including England. Hence much of the Anglo-Israelite theory is true, but we would disagree in some prophetic matters. Based on happenings in different countries, the evidences that are used are reasonably justified historically. In fact, the understanding is quite advanced, and that is why so many deep Bible scholars have been in Scotland. They have a wealth of Biblical understanding that we do not appreciate today because we live in our own little world and feel quite self-sufficient with the *Volumes*, multiple Bible translations, concordances, etc. Unfortunately, many of those deep scholars got off on a tangent in thinking too much on just the history. With the Anglo-Saxon race, there is an affinity in prophecy between England and the United States. However, the emphasis for the Christian should be on the hope of the high calling and running for the prize. We are interested in prophecy so that we might be better prepared for what will happen in the future. The point is that we must guard against being too prideful. Because of the attitude of being too satisfied, full, and in need of nothing, present truth is going to India, parts of Africa, and Romania, for

example (Rev. 3:17). As a group, we tend to apply the Laodicean attitude to the nominal Church, but a lot of it applies to us as a warning. Even in everyday life, United States citizens tend to think of themselves as having the most and the best of everything, but that is not the case. Other countries surpass us in education and understanding. Wondrous information is available here, but there is not the hunger for it.

“Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.” Although the details cannot be discussed at this time, we think events will happen in the Middle East in the near future. Psalm 83 will have a fulfillment that will take care of the Arab countries immediately surrounding Israel. But the final trouble will occur when Gog and Magog come down from the north in Jacob’s Trouble. Thus two main events involving Israel are yet future in that part of the world with an easement period in between. We believe Israel will be forced to use nuclear power because that nation is so small and the other nations are advancing in arms. Certainly Israel has nuclear capability. In time of crisis, the United States could not get its forces over there in time, so Israel will be on its own. In the Gog and Magog setting—but not earlier—God will manifest that *He alone* is the Deliverer.

“And a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod.” We do not know who that “bastard” is, but his identity will be revealed in due time. When prophecy is nearing fulfillment, it begins to be unveiled. Verse 6 is talking about an unnamed *individual*. As we get deeper and deeper into the trouble that we see before us, things will become more and more apparent.

“And I will take away his blood out of his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth.” The “mouth” is speaking “blood,” that is, *terror*.

“I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.” Incidentally, “Philistines” is the word “Palestinians,” for the vowels are supplied for pronunciation. The consonants are essentially the same, as “ph” is the letter “p,” which can be pronounced two different ways. Since we are now living in the end time, details become clearer and clearer—and especially if we are watching as the Lord instructed. We are to be alert and to watch what is happening.

“But he that remaineth, even he, shall be for our God.” In other words, the Arabs will be converted to a belief in the God of Israel. Among the Palestinians, a *remnant* of the same ethnicity will become believers.

“And he shall be as a governor in Judah, and Ekron as a Jebusite.” Earlier, way back in history, Shem was the governor of Jerusalem. After that, the Jebusites, a Gentile power, controlled Jerusalem, and they still occupied the city in David’s day. Therefore, in the near future, those of the Palestinians who survive will be a remnant in God’s sight. They will not necessarily be handpicked or named as individuals like the Holy Remnant of Israel, but to the Palestinian survivors, it will be obvious who the real God is. In the Kingdom, one of their own people, a Palestinian, will be appointed governor—someone who has been converted to the Judaic belief in the God of Israel and is humble and recognizes the true situation.

The prophecies in the Book of Zechariah are exciting reading. As we continue to go into the book, it becomes more and more enlightening. We are living in the end time but not in the *end* of the end-time period. We are approaching closer and closer, like a telescopic lens, where details begin to focus and become clearer. The brotherhood all know the meaning of Zechariah 8:23, which says that “ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.” In addition to a converted remnant in the Gaza Strip, the conversion will become a worldwide situation with those who survive the great Time of Trouble. People in the Gentile nations will bow the knee, taking hold of the skirt of a Jew. This natural prophecy will be fulfilled in the not-too-distant future.

Q: Does Amos 1:3–2:3 also pertain to the Psalm 83 setting?

A: Yes. Some of the Amos end-time prophecies are almost word for word the same as those of Isaiah. They were contemporaneous prophets.

Zech. 9:8 And I will encamp about mine house because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth: and no oppressor shall pass through them any more: for now have I seen with mine eyes.

God has, as it were, turned His face away and allowed various calamities to happen to Israel—even now. The Jews have repeatedly wondered, “Why is this happening? Why does God permit these troubles?” But when God turns His face of favor toward Israel in this sense, the anger will begin to build and come up into His face against Israel’s enemies (Ezek. 38:18). At that time, Michael will stand up (Dan. 12:1).

Comment: The Revised Standard reads, “Then I will encamp at my house as a guard, so that none shall march to and fro; no oppressor shall again overrun them, for now I see with my own eyes.”

Verse 8 is a prophecy of the destruction of Gog and Magog and the saving of Israel out of Jacob’s Trouble, which will take place after the false peace. Then God Himself will fight for His people with earthquake, plague, hailstones, etc.—supernatural manifestations. First, Judah will fight on the outskirts of Jerusalem more in the nature of a successful armed conflict, and then will follow God’s deliverance of the Holy Remnant. The two events will not be immediately contemporaneous, but the second event will be contingent upon the first; that is, it will follow the first. Thus verse 8 is talking about the great horde that will come down from the north to encompass the land up “to the neck,” that is, up to Jerusalem (Isa. 8:8; 30:28). With such a “giant” attacking, it will take a miracle to deliver Israel, and that is exactly what will happen. A series of miracles will deliver the faithful Holy Remnant.

God’s cloud of protection over Israel will become manifest to all. “And the LORD will create upon every dwellingplace of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a *cloud* and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence” (Isa. 4:5). All will see that God is Israel’s Protector.

Zech. 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

When verses 9 and 10 are read together, they sound incongruous, but that is not the case, as we will see. First, we will consider verse 9, which was fulfilled at the First Advent (Matt. 21:5). Notice the enthusiasm: “*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.*” Zechariah’s prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on “a colt the foal of an ass” five days before his crucifixion. This event is called the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem.

Comment: The Jews living at the First Advent overlooked this prediction that the Messiah would be lowly and would come riding on the foal of an ass.

Reply: Yes, the Jews avoided many such texts in the Major and Minor Prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures and focused only on the first five books of Moses. That way they did not have to

discuss these Scriptures with Christians and were not subjected to hearing Christian reasoning.

Comment: The judges of Old Testament times customarily rode on white asses.

Reply: Yes, when judges visited various towns, they rode on white asses, which (1) were emblematic of who they were, (2) gave credence to their judgeship, and (3) provided a look of authority that received proper respect. The Jews were quite familiar with the role of one who rode in such a manner.

In addition to Jesus' riding into Jerusalem on a white ass, what had just happened? Shortly before his entry into Jerusalem, Jesus had raised Lazarus from death. Many eyewitnesses could testify that they were on hand and had actually seen Lazarus appear at the opening of the tomb, and they had witnessed the grave clothing being unwound from him. They were wild with joy, for this startling miracle was indeed a sign of the coming of the true Messiah.

While verse 9 is identified with the fulfillment at the First Advent, it also has an application in regard to the inauguration of the Kingdom at the Second Advent. When the circumstance is considered, who does Lazarus represent in antitype? He pictures the Jewish nation, and that nation's resurrection from the dead can be equated with any salvation that comes to Israel under the present circumstance. The more dire and hopeless the situation becomes, the more the Jews will look upon any deliverance as truly miraculous. In other words, this will be the reaction of the Holy Remnant when the hordes of Gog and Magog come down. Zechariah also spoke of this event, which is recorded in Ezekiel 38 and 39, but he stated that those forces will be victorious at first. "The city [of Jerusalem] shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity" (Zech. 14:2). It is *God's* deliverance of Israel *after* their defeat by the hordes of Gog and Magog that will be truly miraculous and will be like a resurrection from the dead. At that time, God will fight for His people as He did in the days of old (Zech. 14:3). Therefore, verse 9 had a *literal* fulfillment at the First Advent, and it will have a *figurative* or *antitypical* application at the Second Advent with the inauguration of the Kingdom when God delivers Jacob out of its trouble (Jer. 30:7).

Zech. 9:10 And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.

"I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim [the ten tribes, the northern sector of Israel], and the horse from [the city of] Jerusalem [that is, from Judah], and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen." The fulfillment of verse 10 will take place when God delivers the Holy Remnant from Jacob's Trouble. Thus the real fulfillment of verse 10 will occur when the Kingdom is inaugurated *with power*, and the result of that power and salvation will be *great rejoicing*. Therefore, verses 9 and 10 are connected, for out of the depths of *woe* will come *salvation*. Stated another way, the *woe* is like a backdrop to make more acute the *joy* that will result from the predicament that is to face Israel in the not-too-distant future.

Verse 9 gives a reason for the great joy and salvation to come, for in back of this salvation will be the humble Messiah, who originally entered Jerusalem. In the future Gog and Magog setting, he will be present in connection with the deliverance of the Holy Remnant. "And saviours [plural] shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD'S" (Obadiah 21).

"He [Jesus] shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." This second half of verse 10 is saying that there will be universal peace from that time forward.

Q: How will the chariot be cut off from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem?

A: When the enemy hordes come in, not only will they capture Jerusalem, rape the women, and plunder the city, but they will do these things in the northern kingdom as well. The Scriptures indicate that when the forces come down, they will pillage the land and empty the storehouses of food, for they will have traveled from a distance. As Napoleon said, “An army marches on its stomach.” However, while the enemy forces will be successful initially, they will eventually be cut off, and the term “cut off” usually means the demise of those involved.

Q: Then do the “chariot” and the “horse” pertain to the enemy?

A: In the language of Zechariah’s day, they are the vehicles that will transport the enemy down to Israel. The “chariot” and the “horse” are comparable today to tanks, jeeps, and any other kind of traveling arrangement. So many people will come down from the north that there will be all sorts of conveyances—perhaps even wagons driven by literal horses or tractors. A *tremendous* horde will comprise Gog and Magog—well over a million people.

Zech. 9:11 As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.

“As for thee [the daughter of Zion, the daughter of Jerusalem] also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.” In the Wilderness of Sinai, blood was sprinkled on the people after Moses read the Law. As a result of hearing the word of God, the people made a covenant and promised to do all that He commanded. Moses then “took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words” (Exod. 24:7,8). In other words, the blood sealed, or guaranteed, the covenant between the two parties: God and the nation of Israel. From another standpoint, Jesus’ blood secured the New Covenant. Thus verse 11 is a promise of future reconciliation.

“I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.” This statement is an allusion to what happened to Joseph when his brothers sold him. First, they put him in a dry pit, a deep cistern (Gen. 37:23,24). When the hordes of Gog and Magog come down, Israel will be in an allegorical pit, or situation, with no “water,” no hope. The very destiny of the nation will be at stake. Israel will be under such peril that the nation could become extinct at any moment. Therefore, this simile is very appropriate, but the Holy Remnant will eventually be delivered.

The custom in Old Testament times was to cast prisoners into a pit. For example, Jeremiah was put in a miry pit, or cistern (Jer. 38:6). In the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, the rich man (the nation of Israel) was thirsty for water (Luke 16:22-24). Ezekiel 37 tells of the “dry bones” condition of Israel. The point is that all of these instances stress *dryness*.

Hence the “prisoners” in the pit are not only those in the tomb but also Jews who have been in a dry condition without hope or water (truth). Since 1948, the nation of Israel has been successful in warfare and agriculture, but in the near future, they will be threatened with *utter extinction* and thus will be without hope. At that time, this prophecy will encourage the Holy Remnant to believe that the Messiah will rescue them.

The Jews will have only one shred of hope, and those who plead for it will comprise the Holy Remnant. Being informed in advance of the holocaust to come, the Holy Remnant will be quite aware of Ezekiel 38 and 39 and the promised deliverance to the right-hearted. Therefore, they

will *previously* put their hope in that promise and then *act* on it and *try to conform* their behavior to be in harmony with such a hope. And so, when Romans 11:26 says “all Israel shall be saved,” only the Holy Remnant will be saved; the others will be purged out. The only ones promised survival—the only ones who cannot die—are “written in the book” (Isa. 4:3; Dan. 12:1). During earlier experiences, God is screening the nation to identify the element that He is pleased to start the Kingdom with as an earthly remnant. Ezekiel 20:37 shows He will prove them like a tithe. Just as the nation gave one tenth of their crops and flocks to the Lord, so only one tenth of the Jews will be spared allegorically. By the time Jerusalem is taken *and destroyed by the earthquake*, the ungodly element will have been dealt with, leaving the Holy Remnant. *All of the Holy Remnant, plus family members God feels can be associated with them, will be spared.* Therefore, what seems to be a contradiction between a “remnant” and “all” will not be a contradiction under those circumstances. From this perspective, the terms are synonymous.

Zech. 9:12 Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even today do I declare that I will render double unto thee;

Notice the term “prisoners of *hope*.” “Turn you [the Holy Remnant] to the strong hold [the Messiah], ye prisoners of hope: even today do I declare that I will render double [Hebrew *mishneh*] unto thee.” The usual “double” of 1,845 years of favor followed by 1,845 years of disfavor is not the double here in Zechariah. This prophecy was given about 520 BC, whereas Isaiah prophesied earlier. The double of favor ended in AD 33, for God dealt favorably with Israel from Jacob’s death in 1813 BC until Jesus’ crucifixion in AD 33.

As an illustration, after Joseph died, the Israelites were in hard bondage, but they were still under favor because God was dealing with them. The experiences were instructional and beneficial to those who were rightly exercised, the purpose being to prepare them to recognize Messiah at the First Advent. The point is that in Israel’s time of favor, there were fluctuating experiences—periods of great joy and also periods of sorrow and hardship. The Israelites were even under Gentile rule at times, and they were in Babylonian captivity for 70 years. During the Period of the Judges, they were oppressed by various peoples in Israel. Solomon’s day was one of pride, prosperity, and no war. Not only was the Temple built, but it was also destroyed. And then came the greatest time of favor: Jesus’ coming at the First Advent. Messiah was born in their land, and the Israelites had the opportunity to accept him.

The period of disfavor followed, extending from AD 33 to 1878. Shortly after AD 33, Herod’s Temple was destroyed, and the Diaspora occurred. Since 1878, there has again been a time of favor with fluctuating experiences. But God is dealing with the Jews and guiding them to accept Messiah. The Holy Remnant will respond.

Here in verse 12, the word “double” is being used as a term of reference for how in the past and *again now*, God is giving the Jews mixed experiences of chastisement and joy. These experiences will be condensed now into a shorter time period. In other words, just as in the past, there was a broad experience of favor mixed with discipline and trouble (but having God’s presence near), so now, since 1878, the Jews will have condensed similar experiences of great recognition and favor, followed by trouble and despair, followed by the rescue of the Holy Remnant.

Therefore, the “double” of verse 12 is not the 1,845-year double but a prophecy, or lesson, for the Holy Remnant class. Probably God already knows who the remnant class will be, and some very young Jews may be in the Holy Remnant, their recognition by God coming through the right-hearted parent. Thus the lessons and experiences of the long 1,845-year double will be miniaturized—much as, in reverse, the French Revolution was a miniature picture of the great Time of Trouble yet future.

The declaration of verse 12 is made to the Holy Remnant, but of course back in Zechariah's day, the Jews who returned from Babylon to Israel thought it referred to them. That application was helpful, for it encouraged them to build Zerubbabel's Temple. In other words, the Lord allowed them to infer that application, but the real intent is its application down here at this end of the age.

In summary, the deliverance from the "pit" of verse 11 has not yet occurred. The application of the "double" here in Zechariah 9:12 is more along the lines of a literal application. Just as the Holy Remnant will be delivered from an actual (not a figurative) enemy down here—just as the chariot and the battle bow will come down from the north—so God is saying, "I will erase with a blessing all the grief and fear you are experiencing; I will compensate you." We feel that this is a more proper application for verse 12 because it is yet to be fulfilled. If we try to make the application a mathematical double, problems exist. What the Holy Remnant will go through is like the birth of a child. The woman may have untold agony, especially when there are complications, but if a healthy child is the result of the labor pains, then she forgets what she went through. But she certainly does not forget while she is going through the labor pains. The joy of the after-experience appropriately negates the pain.

Comment: The Holy Remnant is getting light and will have a miraculous delivery.

Zech. 9:13 When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man.

Here are two opposites again—in a confrontation. Most of verse 13 is in the affirmative, the plus side being Ephraim and Zion. This verse really goes back to verse 9, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." On one side of this confrontation is Israel, and on the other side is "Greece," the enemy. Even though all translations have "Greece," we think that rendering is wrong—that something is overlooked. The Hebrew word is *yavan*, or *Javan*. Javan does refer to Greece, but some Bible dictionaries and concordances give a secondary application, namely, that Javan is referred to in the prophecy of Ezekiel 27:19. Greece was a large power in the past, but the "Javan" that was so insignificant back there is what looms so large today.

Let us consider the context of Ezekiel 27:19, starting with verse 15: "The men of Dedan were thy merchants." "Syria was thy merchant" (verse 16). "Judah, and the land of Israel ... were thy merchants" (verse 17). "Damascus was thy merchant" (verse 18). Then comes verse 19: "Dan also and Javan going to and fro occupied in thy fairs." The translators realized that if they said, "Dan also and Greece," verse 19 would not make sense. Like the expression "thine only" in Genesis 22:2,12,16, which has been misunderstood and should read "thy darling" or "thy beloved," the Javan of verse 19 is quite different, and certain clues show that it does not refer to Greece.

Verse 19 reads in entirety, "Dan also and Javan going to and fro occupied in thy fairs: bright iron, cassia, and calamus, were in thy market." Thus the going to and fro pertains to iron, cassia, and calamus (the latter two being an incense), and they were "in thy market." Verse 20 has, "Dedan was thy merchant," but this Dedan is in the area of Saudi Arabia. Verse 21 continues, "Arabia, and all the princes of Kedar ... [were] thy merchants." Verse 22 speaks of "the merchants of Sheba [in the Arabian Peninsula] and Raamah ... with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones, and gold." Notice that spices, precious stones, and gold are mentioned, and these exist in Saudi Arabia. Verse 23 speaks of Haran, Canneh, and Eden down in the Arabian Peninsula. (Incidentally, because there is an Eden in this location, some erroneously

think the Garden of Eden is in Saudi Arabia.) What we are trying to say is that the setting of Javan in Ezekiel 27:19 refers to *Islam*. Now we will reason another way to show the same thing.

In the Hebrew, “j” is often considered as a “z,” and it is sometimes pronounced as a “y”—*Zudah* or *Yudah* instead of *Judah*. 1 Chronicles 1:42 reads, “The sons of Ezer; Bilhan, and Zavan, and Jakan. The sons of Dishan; Uz, and Aran.” Hebrew writers understand this “Zavan” with the “Javan” of Ezekiel 27:19. If we try to determine whose son Javan was, the lineage is very confusing, but it can be done with study. The bottom line is that sometimes the easiest way to figure out the lineage is to go back to 1 Chronicles 1:34, which reads, “And Abraham begat Isaac. The sons of Isaac; Esau and Israel.” From verse 35 to verse 54, the end of the chapter, these individuals are all of the lineage of Esau, and Esau was the enemy of Israel. Therefore, we do not have to go into all the nitty-gritty, and even the most astute scholars have great difficulty following this lineage.

The point is that here in Zechariah, verse 13 identifies the enemy of Israel in Jacob’s Trouble, when the Holy Remnant will be miraculously delivered, and that enemy is styled “O Greece.” In other words, there is a connection between those of the Islamic faith and those who are associated with Gog and Magog, who will come down from the north; that is, Islamic forces will be confederate with Russia. Russia will supply the munitions and armaments, but the Islamic nations will supply the manpower. Together, they will go down to take and capture booty, a prize, in the Holy Land. Therefore, those who are confederate with Russia will be of the Islamic faith and nations. There will be a relationship between them and the sons of Esau in the Arabian Peninsula.

Incidentally, the term “Javan” has an ancient association with a city that we now call Yemen. Yemen is a little province way over on the far side of the coast of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Also, Javan is the name of a town in that location. Therefore, the use of the word “Javan” is a way of telling us that the Islamic religion will be the real enemy of Israel in the future. Adherents of that religion will come down to destroy Israel. These confederates will make up the manpower, but Russia will be the leader because the Russians will have the know-how and the instruments of destruction.

Comment: The mission, or goal, of Islam is to convert the world and to destroy all non-Islamic religions. Thus it makes sense that the Muslims will first visit Rome. Then, through their burning hatred for Israel, hooks will be put in their jaws to pull them back, and they will go down and try to wipe out that nation as well (Ezek. 38:4).

Reply: While the Muslims will go into Europe with the motive of destruction, they will have a change of mind because they will see that the work has already been done by the ten horns within Christendom itself. The ten horns will hate, turn against, and destroy the harlot (Rev. 17:16). Therefore, the Muslims will go to Europe to destroy and pillage, but when they find that another enemy is already doing them a favor by causing the destruction, they will go with hatred against the second enemy, which is Israel. It is interesting that the leading sheikh of the Muslim faith has written a treatise saying their primary objective, before America and before Israel, is Europe—because if they get Europe, they will have the world.

Q: Will the Lord’s great army that comes against Israel be Muslim?

A: Yes, the army will be mostly Muslim because the land distance from Europe is too far to come. The Muslims have weapons. We have always felt that the ones who go down to Israel will be terrorists, for they are a marauding band. They will be a relatively disorganized host, but they will be organized in the sense of their hatred. The Muslims have violent differences even among themselves, but their hatred of the common enemy will bind them together.

In summary, then, we feel that “Greece” in verse 13 should be “Javan” (or “Yavan”) in the Hebrew, with an application to Islam. The corrected rendering is, “When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O *Javan*, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man.” Gog and Magog and associates will come down from the north—even from Iraq and Iran. On a proper map, those two countries are east of Israel, but rather than cross the large, arid desert to conquer Israel, Muslims from those countries will go north on the Fertile Crescent. They will go way up north, make a circle, and then come down south. Therefore, whichever way we think of the situation—whether we think of those who will come down from Russia or of other participants who are due east of Israel—they will have to come down from the north in order to travel expeditiously and not die of hunger and thirst.

Q: The stage is being set with hatred in the Muslim world toward the West and the United States for going against Muslims in Afghanistan and Iraq. Will the current action by our country be like the kick start of the fuse?

A: Yes, it will bind the Muslims in a common hatred.

Verses 9-13 are an end-time picture showing the deliverance of Israel by God through the Messiah. What will at first seem to be an utter defeat will ultimately be a grand victory for Israel. If we understand the picture correctly, verses 9-13 do not refer to the immediate situation. A false peace will precede Jacob’s Trouble, and Zechariah particularly focuses on the *final* holocaust and deliverance. The remaining chapters are very explicit as to what will occur.

Zech. 9:14 **And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south.**

We took a little time on verse 13 to identify “O Greece” and to show that we personally feel that translation gives the wrong impression. Even though Javan may occasionally be thought of as Greece, we believe that is not the case in this context. Certainly verses 14-16 are the end-time picture, the time when Jehovah will deliver Israel, “the flock of his people” (verse 16).

The invading host, Gog and Magog, will come down from the north against Israel for various reasons, among which are greed and the desire to take a spoil, occupy the land, and obtain nourishment. In addition, animosity will be involved. Today with the Muslim faith, we can see this animosity more clearly. The hosts that are confederate with Gog will be determined to wipe Israel off the face of the earth. Other details will be seen in chapters 12 and 14.

“The LORD shall be seen over them [Israel].” Verse 13 identifies Israel as Judah and Ephraim, that is, the two-tribe and the ten-tribe kingdoms, the seed of both houses of Israel.

“His [God’s] arrow shall go forth as the lightning.” Lightning sometimes appears very much like an arrow. In connection with protecting and delivering the natural house of Israel, God will use elements of nature to destroy the invading host. At a convention in Israel a few years back, we spoke on this subject and gave about a dozen different types of pictures to show how God will deliver the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble. Many phenomena will be supernatural events where *nature* is used in a miraculous form to deliver Israel: earthquake, hailstones, deluge, pestilence, etc. God will use *natural* armor instead of steel tanks and airplanes. The elements of nature will be His servants, for He is the “LORD of hosts.” It is interesting that the Book of Zechariah uses the expression “LORD of hosts” more than 50 times. Apparently, it was a favorite expression of the prophet.

“The Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet.” When the old Law Covenant was proclaimed on Mount Sinai, the mountain shook violently, and the Israelites could feel the trembling. Also, there was the literal sound of a tremendous trumpet, like a war trumpet, in the heavens; that is, from heaven came the awesome sound of a war trumpet accompanied by phenomena of nature.

“The Lord GOD ... shall go with whirlwinds of the south.” The suggestion is that there will be a great windstorm—perhaps even a sandstorm—from the south. This storm in the Negev will be a tremendous wind. Whether it will be the hot, debilitating sirocco wind that evaporates one’s strength, a sandstorm, or both, God will use the very elements of nature to cause utter confusion, especially in the midst of the invading enemy host from the north. Lightning, the sound of a trumpet, and wind will all be part of the defense of natural Israel. Many elements will be involved. With ten or more unusual things happening, such as great hailstones coming down and the earth swallowing up people, the enemy will know that the *God of nature—Jehovah Himself*—is defending the very ones they were trying to wipe off the face of the earth. The events on the invading enemy will be impressive—and so much so that five sixths of the enemy will die. Stated another way, only one sixth of the enemy will survive Jacob’s Trouble.

Zech. 9:15 The LORD of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour, and subdue with sling stones; and they shall drink, and make a noise as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar.

“The LORD of hosts shall defend them [Israel]; and they shall devour.” Right away we want to know how Israel will “devour.” If the subsequent word “and” is changed to “even,” which the Hebrew allows, we can see more clearly that the nation of Israel will “subdue with sling stones,” meaning *ordinary* stones. These will be so effective that when the people try to defend themselves with a stick, a stone, or some other crude implement which is not at all comparable to the weapons of the enemy, the contrast will be seen. Even with children and the weak, each stone will find its mark and be effective in slaying the enemy. Zechariah 12:8 expresses this same thought: “He that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David.” Ordinary Jews with nothing but a stone and a stick, as it were, shall “devour” like a lion. This remarkable success will occur because of what happens *just prior to this event*; namely, Israel will be *defeated* by the host of Gog and Magog. It will seem that Israel’s cause is utterly lost and that everything is against that tiny nation. When Gog comes down, the army will leave a tremendous heap of rubble. Although the entire city of Jerusalem will be taken, God will protect the Holy Remnant—those who have been marked for survival (Zech. 14:2).

“They shall drink, and make a noise as through wine.” How does this statement fit in with the subduing and the devouring? The Holy Remnant will be happy and will rejoice. They will be victorious because the Lord will operate on their behalf, delivering them from what appears to be a hopeless situation. They will see convulsions of nature taking place all around them, but not one of them will die. Not only will they see the defeat of the enemy, but also the rest of the Jews—the majority—will die in the trouble. For the Holy Remnant to realize they were miraculously rescued will fill them with great joy because it will mean that God is for them.

The noise of this celebration is likened to the loosing of the tongue through the imbibing of wine. “And they [the Holy Remnant] shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar.” In other words, they will experience *overflowing joy*.

Zech. 9:16 And the LORD their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land.

“The LORD their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people.” A parallel text is Zechariah 14:3, “Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.” These verses are usually given a symbolic interpretation, but they are describing the *literal* action that will take place in Jacob’s Trouble as regards natural Israel. To the contrary, Malachi 3:17 is *spiritual*: “And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.” Faithful Christians will be mounted as jewels in the antitypical breastplate. But here verse 16 is telling of a miraculous *natural* salvation. Those who survive Jacob’s Trouble will be recognized as part of the nucleus of the Kingdom of God, which will be established in Jerusalem, the capital of the world.

The Holy Remnant “shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his [God’s] land.” They will be considered God’s people down here on earth, and as such, they will become a banner or an advertisement to the Gentile nations, who will hear what has transpired in Israel. Gentiles will take notice that indeed the Jew, instead of being wiped off the face of the earth, was marked for salvation. The Jews who are purged out as unfit to be representatives of the new government and the channel of blessing under the New Covenant will come up later in the general resurrection and be dealt with on another basis, like the world.

Zech. 9:17 For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty! corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids.

After Jacob’s Trouble, God will feed His people along natural lines. In the coming turbulent times, the invading host will spoil the harvest, taking the entire reserve of food in the larder. Other Scriptures describe the enemy going from city to city, taking the spoil as they approach and then capture Jerusalem. When everything looks hopeless, the Lord will step in.

“Corn shall make the young men cheerful.” One reason Gog and Magog will come down from the north is that a great famine will prevail, and they will devour the “cattle and goods” in Israel (Ezek. 38:12). However, God will miraculously supply Israel with provender along natural lines. The Holy Remnant will also be greatly benefited along spiritual lines because the Ancient Worthies will be on the scene at this time, giving instruction.

Incidentally, the Ancient Worthies will be apprised in advance about what is going on in the current generation. They would have to be informed somewhat before they appear on the scene, for otherwise they would be completely puzzled by all the modern contrivances. They will be instructed earlier so that they are in a position to comfort Israel and give sound advice. The instruction will prepare and empower them to bring great happiness from the ashes of seeming defeat.

From the spiritual standpoint, the “corn” will be the Ancient Worthies, the specially developed natural seed of Abraham, who are to be the mouthpieces of the heavenly seed. The Christ in glory will instruct the Ancient Worthies down here on what to do and say and will give them the necessary power, and the Great Company will be the messengers in between. In other words, the Great Company will be ministers of communication, going back and forth between the heavenly and the earthly phases of the Kingdom. Thus the “new wine” is the spiritual instruction that will come down from heaven. The Holy Remnant will be benefited not only physically and materially but also spiritually. They will be imbued with zeal and enthusiasm that will produce singing and dancing. With His Holy Spirit, the Lord will even speak through the mouth of some of the Jews (Joel 2:28). He will anoint some of the Holy Remnant, endowing them with visible encouragement. Just as tongues of flame came upon the heads of the apostles at Pentecost, endowing them with mysterious and miraculous powers of speaking different languages and having the gift of the Spirit along various lines, so the Scriptures suggest that an

anointing will happen to the natural seed of Israel in the inauguration phase of the Kingdom.

Q: Will Joel 3:18 be fulfilled at the same time? “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim.”

A: Yes. The Book of Joel provides a lot of helpful information, telling of the invading host as well as of blessings to come. There are multiple witnesses to all these events.

Comment: Amos 9:14 reads, “And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.”

Reply: Yes. Every man will sit under his own vine and fig tree, and none shall make him afraid. The books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, Joel, and other Minor Prophets all contain detailed prophecies. There is a dearth of information on these prophecies in the *Reprints*. Some Scriptures have clarified since the Pastor’s day, and full answers are yet to be revealed on other Scriptures.

Zech. 10:1 Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.

Zechariah gave instructions to pray for rain. From a natural standpoint, when the nation was in God’s favor in the past and the Israelites asked for needed rain, the Lord quickly responded, giving both the early and the latter rain. Seeing a dark cloud and lightning in the distance and faintly hearing the sound of thunder, they knew rain was coming. God blessed the nation with an inundation of “showers of rain” and gave “to every one grass in the field.” In other words, every blade of grass in the field received rain. Verse 1 is telling how wonderful the conditions will be when the Kingdom is inaugurated; it will start with a bang.

The Lord has been quiet for thousands of years, relatively speaking. Many have even doubted His existence and have felt that if He did exist, He was not responsive. However, in the near future, it will be seen that there is one true God, *the God of Israel*. Natural favor will be with the nation.

Q: Is Deuteronomy 11:13,14 pertinent? “And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.”

A: Yes. Speaking for the Lord, Zechariah was saying, “Pray for rain, and I will give you a favorable answer. To get rain, you must ask for it.” The problem with Jewry today is that they do not proclaim a national fast, rending their garments and girding themselves in sackcloth and ashes. The nation needs to pray as a whole. Instead the Jews are trusting in their armaments and in the United States in these trying days. From a natural standpoint, this reaction would be understandable, but as people of the Holy Scriptures, the Jews are supposed to know what to do. They should be asking *their God*. The Holy Remnant class already exist and are praying, but not the nation as a whole. There is no heartfelt repentance because the majority are not real believers, especially among the leadership.

Of course the setting of verse 1 is *after* the deliverance of the Holy Remnant. At that time, the

message to the Jews will be, “Ask, and you will receive.” Jesus gave similar advice to Christians, who are to ask for wisdom and more of the Holy Spirit; that is, they are to make proper requests. The Master reasoned, “Would a father give a stone to a child who asked for bread?” (Matt. 7:7-11). The point is that the Jews will have to ask in the proper fashion. God will deliver the Holy Remnant when they have no hope and are drowning, as it were, but after the deliverance, when they are rejoicing, they are to pray for blessings.

Zech. 10:2 For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain: therefore they went their way as a flock, they were troubled, because there was no shepherd.

Verse 2, an abrupt change, is a flashback to conditions prior to the deliverance of the Holy Remnant and the inauguration of the Kingdom. Attention is focused on diviners, false dreamers, and the lack of a *true* shepherd. False shepherds were abundant, and there was no true shepherd. Notice that past tense is used: “For the idols *have spoken* vanity, and the diviners *have seen* a lie, and *have told* false dreams.” Israel’s comfort was in vain; therefore, the flock without a shepherd was leaderless and troubled. The people went hither and yon for information, but there was no proper counsel.

Other Scriptures show that there will be *false prophets* in Israel at the end of the age. When the predicted calamities start to happen, devout Jews will seek information from their rabbis and renowned teachers, but they will receive false answers. However, the situation will change radically.

The Pastor’s comments usually apply these verses to the false shepherds of Christendom, and that is a true statement, for false teachers exist at the present time who mix truth with error. Stated another way, there is confusion in Babylon because the spiritual food is tainted, especially with regard to prophecy—for example, the interpretation of the man of sin, the rapture, and the building of the Third Temple. There is confusion among the priests and the ministers (those who are supposed to be the instructors of Christendom), let alone in Jewry itself. When it is seen that the false diviners gave the wrong comfort, Israel will go “their way as a flock.” As was stated with regard to natural Israel in the Period of the Judges, “every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judg. 17:6; 21:25). The same principle will apply when the people find that the advice they are receiving is not really viable or meaningful.

After the Holy Remnant have been spared, the Lord will do what they could not do, and then He will ask them to do what they can do. Similarly, when Peter was in prison and chained to a guard on each side, the Lord loosed the chains through an angel, but then the angel instructed Peter to put on his clothes. Next the locked prison doors and the iron city gate opened miraculously. In other words, Peter had to do for himself what he was capable of doing (Acts 12:5-10). This principle operates in both the spirit and the natural realm.

Zech. 10:3 Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats: for the LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle.

God’s anger will be “kindled against the shepherds,” and He will punish “the goats.” The “shepherds” are the religious leaders, and the “goats” are other leaders.

“For the LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle.” Judah will be made God’s “goodly horse” in the future end-time battle. We are reminded of another text in this same book; namely, “The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first” (Zech. 12:7). This coming end-time judgment will be visited upon the

“house of Judah,” that is, upon God’s own people.

Many frequently picture the end-time experiences of Israel in such wonderful terms that it seems only good things will occur, but verse 3 shows there is to be a purging. A cleansing work will sort out those who are unfit to be the nucleus of the Kingdom underneath the guidance of the Ancient Worthies and the priesthood to be instituted at that time. (Of course all of the latter are really underling shepherds of The Christ above, who will use them as instruments of blessing in the Kingdom Age.) Verse 3 shows that the *result* of the cleansing in this end-time experience will prepare Judah to be a “goodly horse.”

Zech. 10:4 Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the nail, out of him the battle bow, out of him every oppressor together.

“Out of him [Judah] came forth the corner[stone], ... the nail, ... the battle bow, ... [and] every oppressor [ruler] together.” It is important to get the correct thought, for based on the previous verse, the expression “out of him” can be considered as a cleansing, or it can be thought of from a favorable standpoint, that is, as an opposite of the preceding verse. Of the two possibilities, verse 4 indicates a very favorable situation. The NIV is a good rendering, as follows: “From Judah will come the cornerstone, from him the tent peg, from him the battle bow, from him every ruler.”

The “corner” is the clue that all of these are favorable, for the cornerstone is definitely a reference to Jesus. He is the top stone, the “head of the corner,” the Lord over his body, i.e., the Church (Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:11). He will be the King who governs the Kingdom Age—the mighty God, the age-lasting Father, the Wonderful Counselor, the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6).

The “nail” is a tent peg. Isaiah 22:23-25 reads, “And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father’s house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father’s house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the LORD hath spoken it.” The terms “corner” and “nail” are fraught with meaning. Jesus’ being *nailed* to the Cross is a *surety* of victory and hope for Israel and the world. His becoming man’s Ransom *guarantees* that restitution and the good things promised in Scripture will come to pass. Stated succinctly, the nail becomes a surety of promise.

The ancient tent peg was the mainstay, or support, upon which armor and precious things were hung. Accordingly, Jesus, the mainstay, will be recognized as coming from Judah, and the fallen tent will again be erected (Amos 9:11). Jesus was nailed to the Cross and then removed and buried, but he arose and, in his resurrection and glory, will be the mainstay of Israel.

The “battle bow” is related to the coming victory in the battle of Armageddon, which God is arranging (Zech. 9:13). Marvelous things are to come.

The word “oppressor” in the King James gives a wrong slant. The correct thought is “ruler,” which is favorable in this context. When Jesus reigns in the Kingdom Age, the government will be a dictatorship, a theocracy under God, and every knee will have to bow to him. Disobedience will not be permitted unless there is some recourse to handle the matter. We can thank God that Jesus will be the King of the new order, for a strong and just government is needed to bring order out of anarchy. The corner, the nail, the battle bow, and every ruler are all hints of a better outcome.

Zech. 10:5 And they shall be as mighty men, which tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle: and they shall fight, because the LORD is with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded.

Judah “shall be as mighty men, which tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle.” Judah “shall fight, because the LORD is with them.” A second witness is Zechariah 12:7; namely, God “shall save the tents of Judah first.” Not only will the Lord see that the outcome is favorable, but “the riders on [other] horses shall be confounded.” The stage of deliverance will be centered primarily in Jerusalem, which is in the tribe of Judah. Therefore, the saving of the “tents of Judah” means that remarkable things will happen *outside* the city but *in the province of Judah*. In addition, as later chapters show, there will be remarkable happenings *inside* the city. The favorable outcome to the prayer of Psalm 83 and subsequent quietness will occur in the near future, bringing a solution to the conflict with Israel’s immediate Arab neighbors. However, the solution to the Muslim situation awaits the time—to occur a little later—when saviors come out of Mount Zion to deliver Israel (Obadiah 21). This victory will be manifested in God’s representatives down here, namely, in the Ancient Worthies, who will exercise a powerful influence in their rule in connection with The Christ. The Holy Remnant, in a secondary role, will be in harmony with the Ancient Worthies. Thus the nucleus of the earthly Jerusalem will be holy, and this remnant, or lump, which starts the Kingdom, will grow and grow until it fills the whole earth. Stated another way, the stone that smites the image will be the Church in glory. That stone will grow from the nucleus remnant down here, for all other nations will have to become Israelitish in order to come into the New Covenant, which God will make with the house of Israel and Judah (Dan. 2:34,35; Jer. 31:31-34). The Scriptures harmonize beautifully in the final analysis.

Zech. 10:6 And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I am the LORD their God, and will hear them.

God “will strengthen the house of Judah [the two-tribe kingdom], and ... save the house of Joseph [the ten-tribe kingdom].” This prophecy started out emphasizing Judah, but now it is saying that the ten tribes will be favored too. The Lord is not excluding the northern kingdom; rather, He will save the tents of Judah first—and then the ten tribes. Verse 6 is an assurance that the blessing, the fruits of victory and the joy, will be to the *whole* nation.

“I [God] will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off.” While the setting is basically Jerusalem, Judah, etc., the prophecy focuses on the *nation* of Israel. The point is that there will be a regathering of Jews from other lands—a *second* regathering. The regathering that takes place *before* Israel is delivered out of Jacob’s Trouble is to be followed by a regathering of Jews from other lands *after* the Kingdom is established. God will have a place for those who return from other lands in the second regathering, for they will be part of the Holy Remnant. Thus there will be a Holy Remnant both in Israel itself and also among the Gentiles.

When this second regathering takes place, it will be as though God “had not cast them off.” This statement alludes to the fact that when God called Israel out of Egypt, the Egyptians were so frightened because of the ten plagues that they gave the Israelites jewelry, flocks, and goods and said, “Get out of our land, lest we all perish.” Instead of the Israelites’ being in bondage, exactly the opposite now occurred, for they were showered with gifts to go back to their homeland. In the future, the principle will be the same with the Gentiles, although it will be viewed from a different perspective. After the magnificent deliverance of the Holy Remnant from Jacob’s Trouble, the attitude of the Gentiles toward the Jews will be, “We have heard that God is with you.” Not only will the Gentiles hold onto the skirt of the Jew, but they will want

to do all they can to come into harmony and friendship with the Kingdom arrangement. The joy of Ephraim will be so full that the Jews will be “drunk” with happiness as through wine.

Even the Red Sea miraculously opened for the fleeing Israelites in the Exodus, and when they arrived on the other side and looked back, they saw the destruction of the enemy as the waters closed over the Egyptians and their chariots. Not only did the Israelites have an abundance of good gifts in their possession, but no harm came to any of them. So great was their initial joy that it was as if they had never been slaves in Egypt. The joy of the double, as it were, of a good experience more than compensated for their previous experiences in the furnace of affliction (Exod. 3:7; Deut. 4:20).

Of course the *real* fulfillment of that picture will not take place until the *end* of the Kingdom Age, but a foretaste will occur at the end of the Gospel Age. The Apostle Paul, and even Jesus, gave many Scriptures that pertain to the Kingdom Age a *partial* fulfillment during the Gospel dispensation, but the *full* fulfillment is still future. Time is needed for maturity so that we can begin to make sense out of much detail that is confusing when we are initially exposed to it.

“For I am the LORD their God, and will hear them.” God will hear the prayers of the Holy Remnant because they will pray *from the heart* for the Lord’s guidance when conditions are really desperate. They will undergo a *thorough* reformation and experience, whereas in the past, God turned a deaf ear to Israel when the people pleaded for mercy because of their inveterate abuse of the prophets and their hypocritical and perfunctory prayers.

Zech. 10:7 And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine: yea, their children shall see it, and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in the LORD.

“And they of Ephraim [that is, the ten tribes] shall be like a mighty man, and ... their heart shall rejoice in the LORD.” After Jacob’s Trouble, both houses of Israel will inherit the blessing that is stated here. Many thoughts are compacted together, but when we rightly divide the Word of truth, there is enough information, based on other Scriptures, to help us sort out a meaningful interpretation.

Zech. 10:8 I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased.

God “will hiss [whistle] for them, and gather them.” To hear a favorable whistle in the distance and know it is meant for us gives a sense of joyous familiarity and anticipation. Even in the animal realm, a pet dog out in the field will respond eagerly to a whistle and return with his tail wagging. Depending on the perspective of the experience, we, as humans, also do this. Generally speaking, the Jews in exile during the Gospel Age have not wanted to go back to the Promised Land because a return meant sacrifice. Even those with the right heart condition sometimes have tender ties that they do not want to leave. For example, loved ones may be sick and have health needs, or parental obligations and duties may tie one to his country of exile, especially if one is married. But when the Lord whistles for the Holy Remnant in different countries after Jacob’s Trouble, calling them back to Israel, they will return rich and happy. Not only will Gentiles assist the Jews in their return, but they will actually help in the rebuilding work, as stated in late chapters in the Book of Isaiah.

“I will hiss for them, ... for I have redeemed them.” At this point, the Kingdom will have been inaugurated, but it will be in a baby stage; that is, the Third Temple will not yet exist. But when surviving Jews comprising the Holy Remnant in other lands see what is happening, they will all want to go back to Israel. Accordingly, the whistle will go forth to Jews who are in the distance,

beckoning them home.

Zech. 10:9 And I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and turn again.

Verse 9 is saying that God placed part of the Holy Remnant in foreign lands for a particular reason. “They shall live with their children, and [re]turn again” to the Holy Land. In other words, God *previously* deals with this class of Jewry and their children who will live through the great Time of Trouble, and they will return to Israel when the Kingdom is inaugurated. Of course God is dealing primarily with the parents, but the children are covered by the faith of the parents. The same principle applies in the Gospel Age, for as the Apostle Paul said of the consecrated, “The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy” (1 Cor. 7:14). If at least one parent is consecrated, the Lord’s providence is exercised on the other family members.

Zech. 10:10 I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them.

“I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt.” According to statistics, very few Jews are left in Egypt, but based on observation and the Scriptures, we believe a lot of Jews are still there. However, they lived in such isolated pockets that they were not given recognition when the time came for Jews to come out of that land; it was as if they did not exist, for they were not in the public view.

“I will ... gather them out of Assyria.” Present-day Syria is relatively small compared to the Assyrian Empire of the past, which existed prior to the Babylonian Empire.

“I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them.” The returning Jews will be so numerous that the land of Israel will be congested for a while. However, there will be a displacement of some and an occupation by Jewry in the land of Lebanon, which is now occupied by Arabs, Syrians, and others. There will be some discomfort in this period of adjustment because of the sudden crowded conditions. This sudden crowding will not take place in Judah, for Israel proper will already be packed with inhabitants. However, some changes will take place, particularly at the end of the Kingdom Age for those who live beyond the Little Season into the ages of ages, into the “world without end” (Isa. 45:17; Eph. 3:21). Certain Scriptures hint at other developments.

Gilead is east of the Jordan River, extending quite far north. The expression “place shall not be found for them” is like using a slang term of exaggeration to emphasize a point. The fulfillment will be so remarkable that there will be confusion for a little while, but it will conclude with a very happy ending.

Q: As a representation of spiritual classes, Reuben, Gad, and one half of Manasse had territory on the far side of the Jordan. But in the Kingdom, God will bring the Jews into Gilead and Lebanon, and “place shall not be found for them.” What is the thought?

A: There are two interpretations, both of which are favorable. (1) The people who are there now will be displaced; that is, no place will be found for them because the land will be reoccupied by returned Jews coming from Egypt, Assyria, etc. (2) Even when the Jews go into Gilead, for instance, they will feel as if they are in a straitjacket. The initial coming in will be a period of momentary discomfort in which the Jews will have to adjust themselves.

Zech. 10:11 And he shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up: and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away.

God will use strange phenomena of nature to bring the nations immediately surrounding Israel to their senses and wake them up. Verse 11 is hinting that the river Nile will dry up to a certain extent, at least temporarily. The same will be true of the river Euphrates, which courses through not only Iraq but also Syria, Jordan, and Israel. However, we think the reference is to the offshoots of these main rivers. Such judgments will bring the people to their knees, as it were. Isaiah 11:15 speaks of this same time with regard to the Nile: “And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod.”

The “pride of Assyria” will be brought low. “The sceptre [rulership] of Egypt shall depart away.”

Zech. 10:12 And I will strengthen them in the LORD; and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the LORD.

Verse 12 tells the happy ending: “I [God] will strengthen them in the LORD; and they shall walk up and down in his name” with no fear and with thorough security.

Isaiah 19:23-25 speaks of a later time period in the Kingdom Age. “In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.” Israel will be between Assyria and Egypt, and all three will be blessed. Israel will be the special inheritance, but blessing will also be on Assyria and Egypt.

Q: Will Israel be enlarged?

A: Yes. The boundaries will extend northward into Lebanon where the Euphrates River, for a short distance, will mark the upper end of the land. Most people understand that Scripture to mean that Israel will occupy all the land the Euphrates touches, but we think the meaning is otherwise, for the parameters of the Holy Land are given very specifically in the books of Ezekiel and Joshua. The boundaries will be something like they were of old except that they will extend a tiny bit farther up to Tripoli in the northern sector of Lebanon.

The Arabs are related to Jewry, for in a broad sense, they are brothers. God was spoken of as the God of Nahor, not just the God of Abraham (Gen. 31:53). A kinship exists through Terah, their father (Gen. 11:26).

Zech. 11:1 Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars.

Zech. 11:2 Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen; because the mighty are spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; for the forest of the vintage is come down.

Chapter 11 is perhaps the most difficult chapter to explain in the Book of Zechariah. We are not in a position to know all the details, but we will suggest clues that lead in the proper direction. Notice that verse 2 is in the past tense. Verses 1 and 2 indicate the geography where this prophecy is centered. Lebanon became part of northern Israel under the reign of King

Solomon. At that time, Israel extended to the north up to the Euphrates River, and a corner of northern Lebanon is bordered by the Euphrates. Therefore, as far as the Period of the Kings is concerned, Lebanon was part of Israel. Eventually, that land was taken away, and the borders of Israel were limited.

Verses 1 and 2 are saying that “fire,” symbolic of destruction, would be visited on Lebanon. That nation was renowned for its cedars. The cedars of Lebanon were noted in history for their extreme height. In fact, Hiram, king of Tyre, cut down trees of Lebanon and furnished them for the building of Solomon’s Temple.

In the Kingdom, the Land of Promise will definitely include Lebanon. When Moses viewed the Promised Land from Mount Pisgah just before his death, the northern extremity was to include Lebanon, with the river Euphrates as its northern boundary. However, the land of Israel will not follow the river all the way down on the right side because to do so would mean the inclusion of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Only the northeastern corner of Israel will be bordered by the Euphrates for a little distance.

In summary, verses 1 and 2 indicate that a despoliation, a change, would occur in Lebanon. This nation, which was proud of its cedars, would be destroyed and become nonexistent. The climate is being set for what is to follow.

Comment: A note from a 1992 study says that Lebanon pictures the nominal Church.

Reply: That is true if chapter 11 is spiritualized along that line. However, the chapter also has a natural fulfillment. The “shepherds,” mentioned subsequently, can pertain to both nominal spiritual Israel and nominal fleshly Israel.

Zech. 11:3 There is a voice of the howling of the shepherds; for their glory is spoiled: a voice of the roaring of young lions; for the pride of Jordan is spoiled.

In olden times, the Jordan was sometimes noted for harboring lions because the territory in this area to the north was not habitable in the normal sense. The terrain is not conducive to habitation, but it has considerable verdure and trees. The cedars of Lebanon farther north were extremely large. An author who wrote a book about the river Jordan described the landscape as he rode down the river in a rubber raft. When the lions got hungry, they left their habitat and went into the civilized area of northern Israel, where they killed sheep and goats in the pastures. Sometimes even the people were threatened by the lions.

In the natural picture, verse 3 describes the habitat of young lions that were roaring for food, which the lioness brought. The mood introduction continues in connection with a wasting that took place in the past.

Zech. 11:4 Thus saith the LORD my God; Feed the flock of the slaughter;

“Feed the flock of the slaughter.” The flock was headed for slaughter. Instead of shepherding the flock, the leadership led the people to slaughter.

Zech. 11:5 Whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty: and they that sell them say, Blessed be the LORD; for I am rich: and their own shepherds pity them not.

In the spiritual application, those who rise to leadership positions in the nominal Church exploit the congregation. Sometimes their demands are outrageous, and they feed themselves with the contributions and revenues they receive from the people, the poor of the flock. This wrong

principle also applied to the spiritual leaders of natural Israel in Zechariah's day.

Zech. 11:6 For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD: but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbour's hand, and into the hand of his king: and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver them.

Verse 6 has a future application in addition to an application to the king of Assyria, who despoiled the ten-tribe kingdom in the past.

Zech. 11:7 And I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock.

"I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock." In spite of the despoiling of the land, the leadership, and the people in general, a poor and humble element in Israel would be leaning on the Lord. In that dire situation, He would feed them, in spite of the confusion and destruction wherein the people devoured themselves with lust and greed. In time, an outside enemy came in and took the people into captivity. In addition to the fulfillment in the past, there will be a future fulfillment.

Comment: Song 4:8 mentions lions in that area: "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards."

Reply: Yes, there are two mountain ranges: Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, one being a little lower than the other. Both literally and figuratively, a despoiling was taking place. The natural picture provides a backdrop for what was happening; namely, there was corruption in the land itself. The land, the leadership, and the people were all involved except for a remnant that the Lord would sufficiently feed during this period of time. Just as Zechariah was instructed to figuratively feed the flock by giving this message to natural Israel, so he represented faithful shepherds who would properly feed the flock in the future. From time to time, God raised up, at a propitious moment, those who fed the flock lest the people perish for lack of food. That has been true spiritually during the Gospel Age, and it was true figuratively with natural Israel.

Now comes a strange picture about two "staves," or staffs. "And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock." Zechariah had two staffs in his hand. The name of one staff was Beauty; the name of the other was Bands. The NIV calls them, respectively, Favor and Union.

Zech. 11:8 Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me.

Zech. 11:9 Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another.

Who were the "three shepherds"? With natural Israel, they were (1) Annas, the father-in-law and alternate high priest; (2) Caiaphas, the chief high priest; and (3) Pilate, the governor, the civil representative. When these three were "cut off in one month," anarchy occurred, as shown in verse 9: "What is to die, let it die; what is to be destroyed, let it be destroyed; and let those that are left devour the flesh of one another" (RSV).

Another "shepherd" was Herod, a religious civil leader with a practical mind. From that standpoint, there were three segments: the Herodians, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees, who were sticklers for the Law.

At any rate, the three shepherds would disappear “in one month,” that is, in the 30 or 31 days of one month. With the principle of a day for a year, this 30-year time period began in AD 36, the end of the 70 weeks of Daniel 9:24-27, when the period of exclusive favor to Israel ceased, and it ended in AD 66, when the siege of Jerusalem began under Vespasian. Jerusalem was captured in AD 69, and the last fortress fell in AD 73. To all practical purposes, the backbone of the nation was broken in AD 69-70, when Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed. Within that time period, there was anarchy with the Jews in disagreement among themselves. When the Romans besieged Jerusalem, the Jews could have held off for a much longer period of time if factionalism had not taken place. We see that characteristic in Jewry even today with the Intifada and economic turmoil. The Jews are so biased in their opinions that the nation does not understand the situation it is in. If the Arabs cut off their nose to spite their face, the Jews do the same thing, to a certain extent, in their factionalism.

“Let the rest eat every one the flesh of another.” In the siege of AD 69-70, the Jews ate the flesh of their children, as described in Leviticus 26:29. (This same extremity took place earlier, in the siege of 606 BC.)

Zech. 11:10 And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people.

Prior to the breaking, Beauty and Bands (Union) were both staffs of favor, each along a different line (see verse 14). “I [God] took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my [Law] covenant which I had made with all the people [of Israel].” When the staffs of favor were broken, there were consequences.

Zech. 11:11 And it was broken in that day: and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it was the word of the LORD.

Zech. 11:12 And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.

Zech. 11:13 And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.

“And it [the staff called Beauty] was broken in that day [which was a little period of time].” To the *believing* Jew, the Law was nailed to the Cross, but the *unbelieving* Jew is still under the obligations of the Law Covenant. The covenant of favor to natural Israel was broken. God said of Israel in the period of favor, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth” (Amos 3:2). In AD 36, God turned His favor to the Gentiles, and from then through today, because of the Jews’ own doing and desire, Gentiles have comprised the bulk of the Church.

Comment: Scofield wrote, “The scene belongs to the first advent. Beauty and Bands—literally ‘graciousness and union’; the first signifying God’s attitude toward His people Israel, in sending His Son, the second, His purpose to reunite Judah and Ephraim. Christ, at His first advent came with grace to offer union and was sold for thirty pieces of silver. ‘Beauty’ (i.e. graciousness) was ‘cut in sunder,’ signifying that Judah was abandoned to the destruction foretold in Zechariah 11:1-6 and fulfilled A.D. 70. After the betrayal of the Lord for thirty pieces of silver, ‘Bands’ (i.e. union) was broken, signifying the abandonment, for the time, of the purpose to reunite Judah and Israel. The order of Zech. 11 is, (1) the wrath against the land, fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem after the rejection of Christ; (2) the cause of that wrath in the sale and rejection of Christ vs.; (3) the rise of the ‘idol shepherd,’ and the Beast and his destruction.”

Reply: Scofield based his comments on the clue in verses 12 and 13 with regard to the “thirty pieces of silver.” We would explain these verses in a somewhat similar fashion.

The setting of verses 7-14 is the First Advent. These verses are separate, being like a scene within a scene. During that time, Jesus was sold by Judas for 30 pieces of silver. When Judas saw that Jesus, a just man, had actually been apprehended and was about to be executed, he took the money back to the Temple area and tried to return it to the chief priests and elders, but they declined to take it. When Judas threw the money on the floor and left, they used the money to buy “potter’s field” (Matt. 27:3-8). Verses 7-14 show that the fulcrum of chapter 11, the focus of attention, was the time of our Lord’s First Advent. The application of this portion of the chapter can be more readily seen than some of the other parts.

Zech. 11:14 Then I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

What is the distinction between the breaking of the two staffs, Beauty and Bands? The breaking of Beauty was the breaking of the period of favor to the Jews. Jesus “came unto his own,” but “his own received him not” (John 1:11). As John the Baptist predicted, there came a baptism of “fire” on the nation (Luke 3:16). The baptism of the Holy Spirit came on the waiting disciples at Pentecost in AD 33, and the baptism of fire was fulfilled in the despoiling of the nation in AD 69-70, when the staff called Bands was broken. In other words, after the Crucifixion of Jesus in AD 33, the middle of the seventieth week of Daniel 9, there remained a period of 3 1/2 years, which ended in AD 36 with the termination of God’s exclusive favor to the Jews. At that time, God’s favor turned to the Gentiles.

Zech. 11:15 And the LORD said unto me, Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd.

Zech. 11:16 For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces.

Zech. 11:17 Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.

These three verses, a break in thought, are a prophecy. If verses 15-17 are considered from the standpoint of the First Advent, the “foolish shepherd” was Judas. He kept the money bag, dipped into the till, and tried to sell Jesus for 30 pieces of silver (John 12:6; Matt. 26:14-16). In addition, he thought Mary’s anointing of Jesus’ feet with costly spikenard, which was worth a year’s salary, was a waste of money (John 12:3-5). He hypocritically professed to think of the poor, whereas he really wanted the money for himself. Many today think that money equals power, and both were the motivation of Judas. Evidently, Judas was brilliant, and he sat in one of the chief seats at the Last Supper. The fact that after his betrayal of Jesus, the Apostle Paul took his place indicates the latent talent and possibility that Judas inherently had.

Judas was both a “foolish shepherd” and an “idol shepherd” because he lost a right-hand position with Jesus. Acts 1:20 states, “For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another [Paul] take.”

Comment: Verse 17, where God is speaking of Judas, is strong in the NIV: “Woe to the worthless shepherd, who deserts the flock! May the sword strike his arm and his right eye!”

May his arm be completely withered, his right eye totally blinded!” This is an example of “perfect hatred,” which David spoke of in Psalm 139:22.

The antitypical “foolish” or “idol” shepherd is Papacy, the false Church, the man of sin (2 Thess. 2:3). The people worshipped and revered the false system and not the risen Lord.

Comment: From one standpoint, chapter 11 began with a spiritual application of Lebanon’s being the nominal Church and a condemnation of false shepherds (plural)—the false religious leadership. This chapter also seems to end with a spiritual application, but now it singles out the chief of the false shepherds, which is Papacy. In between, information and prophecy about natural Israel are sandwiched in.

There is another way to view these three verses. At the end of the age, there will be a religious leader who is endorsed by and somehow related to Papacy. Verses 15-17 probably furnish clues regarding this individual. For example, the Herod who beheaded John the Baptist and abused Jesus just prior to his crucifixion died of a *sudden* cancer in *one* night. This horrible death was recognized as a judgment for his past sins.

A false “shepherd” will be connected with the deception at the end of the age. Nahum 1:11 reads, “There is one come out of thee, that imagineth evil against the LORD, a wicked counsellor.” With the lying signs and wonders, one individual may deceive the whole world. There will be a prominent personality in connection with the Judas class, one personality involved in the deception of nominal Christians, and even possibly an individual who deceives Israel in a different sense. However, verses 15-17 apply particularly to the First Advent.

Back in the type in Zechariah’s day, a chief personality opposed the restoration of the Temple. This one individual, who is mentioned by name and lasted up until Nehemiah’s day, was able to rally the force because he was in the priesthood.

As a sidelight, let us consider the following. Having personally consecrated our life to the Lord, we should ask ourselves, If Jesus were sitting next to us and explaining something, would we recognize him? Hopefully, we would. Many heard Jesus at the First Advent and got some benefit. They knew he was different—his elocution, knowledge, power, nobility of stature, etc.—but with regard to his message, they seized on a facet they liked but did not go on to consecrate. Think of the prophets, for example, Jeremiah. If he were living in the Gospel Age, wouldn’t he be likely to accept present truth? He would be a strong personality, and he would be opinionated because he was emotional. Just as Jeremiah’s temperament was along one line, and another prophet’s was along another line, so there is variety in the body of Christ. All Christians accept Jesus as the Messiah and all are trying to be as much like him as possible, but they each have different personality traits. It is hard for a bubbly, effervescent Christian to see a very serious Christian, and vice versa, but both are Christians who may be equally beloved by God. The bottom line is *loyalty* to God and *obedience*, so temperament is simply variety, or the outside of an individual, whereas God looks on the inside core of a person. He does not look on the outward appearance, which includes not only good looks but also personality. For instance, some with nice personalities do not have truth and can even be enemies of the truth, so the bottom line is obedience. Faith is obedience based on consecration to do God’s will.

Zech. 12:1 The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.

Chapter 12 is a synopsis of events that will occur in Israel at the end of the age. Before we start to consider the chapter verse by verse, notice the opening words: “The *burden* of the word of

the LORD for Israel”; that is, “The burden of *Israel* in the end-time period.” Notice, too, that the result of the whole chapter, as indicated in the closing verses, is the *conversion* of Israel to the Messiah and the saving of the Holy Remnant. The in-between verses are a condensation of many events, and those events start *before* Jacob’s Trouble, for there are hints about Psalm 83. Therefore, two main events will soon happen: (1) Israel will experience a *temporary false peace*, and (2) Jacob’s Trouble, which is the *real* end-time experience, will result in the *deliverance of the Holy Remnant*.

“The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD [Jehovah], which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.” Why does chapter 12 open with these words? Why did God call attention to Himself and the prerogatives that He possesses? He said in effect, “I am the Creator, the One who made not only the heaven and the earth down here but also *the* heavens. In addition, I created man. Yes, there is a burden, but the solution is in *my* hands.” In other words, *ultimate victory is assured because the God of Israel is the Creator*. Thus the chapter opens as though to say, “When you hear about the details and the experiences to occur in Israel at the end of the age, you will know that the ultimate outcome will be to *Jehovah’s name and glory* as well as to *Israel’s salvation*.”

Zech. 12:2 Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem.

Verse 2 starts the end-time scenario. In this short verse, several points stand out. Jerusalem will be a “cup of trembling unto all the people round about.” The term “all the people” applies to all who will gather against Israel. The Scriptures show that the forces of Gog and Magog, who will come down from the north in Jacob’s Trouble, will be Muslims, alienated kinsmen of Israel, and with them and helping them will be “Rosh,” who is of a Gentile background. (For “chief prince” in Ezekiel 38:2, an NIV footnote has “prince of Rosh [Russia]” as an alternative.) Thus a *mixed* multitude will come against Israel at that time. The prayer of Psalm 83 refers to an earlier war in which the Arab nations immediately surrounding Israel will be engaged in a conflict with that nation. Incidentally, Arabs are a particular type of Muslim, whereas the Muslims in Russia are a mixed people of a different nationality.

Historically, the Arabs are more of a wandering, bedouin-type of Muslim. The Old Testament reveals that as a people, they engaged in plunder and did not plant and harvest food. For example, they stole the flocks of others. The point is that the Arabs were not farmers, and even in the wilderness, they plundered the goods of others in order to survive. To the contrary, Muslims in the far regions of the north, through their experiences and environment, are not bedouins but are settled in the various countries such as Tajikistan and Afghanistan. To repeat, the Arabs are the nations immediately surrounding Israel, and they are Muslim by faith.

The “cup of trembling,” which is in Israel, is like a mixed drink of wine. In this wine is a potion that stupefies those who partake. In the final result, it is the Lord who will give this cup to the people to drink.

Verse 2 suggests that the land of Israel is like a cup, or a *bowl*, and the nations that come down will be intent on consuming little Israel. However, as the other nations get deeply involved, they will find they are in a stupor. The result of drinking the cup will be a trembling fear that eventually means their defeat. Thus Israel is pictured as a bowl to which the nations will gather, and their involvement will result in very untoward experiences that are far from their initial purpose. They will come to vent their anger and their spleen upon Israel, but the final result will be to the glory of Israel—and to the glory of the Heavenly Father and Jesus, who are superintending the outcome.

“Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege *both against Judah and against Jerusalem.*” Jerusalem, the capital, is in Judah, the southern half of Israel. Although Jerusalem will be the main focal point, events will occur both outside and inside the city. What will happen outside the city is in the two-tribe kingdom of Benjamin and Judah, but the account also brings in the ten-tribe kingdom. Although Judah and Jerusalem will be the main stage, the nations will be gathered against all Israel.

The word “siege” indicates a period of time, that is, not just one event but several events. In that experience, Israel will be victimized, for the others will eventually assault her. Thus there are two parts to this drama: the besiegers and the one being besieged.

The siege is not taking place yet, but we do see preliminary phases. What about Europe? There is an anti-Semitic feeling in Europe as well as among the Arabs (including the Palestinians) and the Muslims in the north. For example, Iraq was funding the Palestinian terrorists, and even money from Europe went to Arafat. Thus there is a general anti-Semitic hatred of the Jew—and some in the United States also harbor these ill feelings. To date, however, the anti-Semitism is not concentrated against Judah and Jerusalem but is against the Jews as a whole. Hence the siege of verse 2 will occur at the very end of the age at the hands of Gog and Magog.

Zech. 12:3 And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

Verse 3 also pertains to the end-time experience, but now the focus is only on Jerusalem, not on Judah and Jerusalem. What is a “burdensome stone”? As an illustration, in Massachusetts during World War II, we were assigned to make a reservoir of water, a deep pool about 30 feet in diameter. The site for the reservoir was arbitrarily selected in the woods, and of course trees had to be cut down, roots pulled out, and the hole dug. During the digging, large stones were encountered that could not be removed with a shovel. Wedged into the earth, the stones became a great burden that had to be removed with dynamite. The point is that a “burdensome stone” is wedged in the earth to a certain extent. Not a loose stone that can be rolled out of the way, it has to be dug out.

In the near future, Jerusalem will be a burdensome stone to all nations. For those who are immediately involved in situ, or on the site, Jerusalem will be a particularly burdensome stone. The city is a burdensome stone to all nations today but not to the degree referred to in verse 3, for the situation will get increasingly worse. There will be a partial solution, and then the problem will come right back again but with greater intensity. Verses 2 and 3 are describing the final picture when Gog and Magog come down from the north, and two illustrations are used for Jerusalem: (1) a cup of trembling and (2) a burdensome stone.

Zech. 12:4 In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness.

In that day, God will “smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness.” The “riders” will be almost drunk with confusion, and the “horses” will be smitten with blindness. In this context, a “horse” is a conveyance, a vehicle, with a “rider,” an operator. The vocabulary of verse 4 is describing what we would call an armored tank or an armed vehicle. It is interesting that tanks and vehicles, such as an automobile, are usually rated according to *horsepower*. Thus there is a relationship between the horse in the past and modern vehicles.

How does a vehicle run? In the past, engine and mechanical problems were relatively simple to

repair, but that is not the case today, for everything is run electronically. Cars, and especially tanks, are being computerized more and more. Yes, fuel is required, but the smiting of every horse “with blindness” means that the electronic controls will go awry, and the malfunctioning of just one little part can immobilize a great big tank. God will see to it that mass electrical and mechanical failures occur so that armored vehicles will not operate as the driver wants. As a result, the drivers themselves will become alarmed and confused. In the confusion, much of the slaughter will be caused by every man’s hand being against his neighbor, for the forces of Gog will look upon one another as the enemy. With anarchy being created among the invaders, everything will be paralyzed as far as being effective instruments of warfare.

Comment: Ezekiel 38:4 says of Gog, “I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords.”

Reply: The original primary target of the host of Gog and Magog will be Europe. In fact, it was discovered not too long ago that the Muslim manifesto is to conquer Europe first, before the United States. Because this country is too far away to be effectively defeated, Muslims are emigrating to this country and coming in across the borders. They are constructing mosques and building up a ferment in the United States. And there are other reasons why they do not obliterate America. If they caused all kinds of problems, they would frustrate what they really want to do. For instance, if they put the United States out of commission tomorrow, what would happen? There would be no more money. The banks would all crash, both in Europe and in Asia, and they would not have the finances to buy food. The Muslims are as clever as we are—and perhaps even more so in some respects, for when people are devious and they are conjuring up nefarious schemes, they are very active in their thinking. That is the only explanation we can see as to why the Muslims are not attacking us large-scale as they are doing in some of the other countries. They are creating havoc in the Philippines, for example, but their manifesto says, “Europe first, then America.”

God will put hooks into Gog when the forces are going westward into Europe, and He will pull them back so that they head southward toward Jerusalem. Therefore, Ezekiel 38:4 is describing an earlier prelude that, although future, will precede what is being explained here in chapter 12.

“I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah.” While confusion and blindness affect the host of Gog, the Holy Remnant will have the opposite experience. God will open His “eyes,” His favor, on the Holy Remnant and give them guidance and protection.

Zech. 12:5 And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the LORD of hosts their God.

The term “governors of Judah” is rendered “clans of Judah” in the RSV, which would be the same as the “tents of Judah” (verse 7), that is, the *common people*. Verse 5 is contrasting Judah with the situation in Jerusalem. The “tents of Judah” will be outside the city, whereas the “inhabitants of Jerusalem” will be inside the city. Verse 7 tells that God will deliver the “tents of Judah first,” and then the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In this drama, a distinction is made between those outside and those inside the city. The “governors [clans, tents] of Judah” pertain to towns and the ordinary people outside Jerusalem, in different parts of Judah, who are saying in their heart, “The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the LORD of hosts.” In other words, the general populace of Jews in the provinces of Judah, will regard Jerusalem as the seat of God’s control, so they will be looking for His intervention to occur inside the city. But the Lord tells us that His intention is to save the tents of Judah *first* so that the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not get high-minded. The Jews must see that God is the God of *Israel*, not just of the city of Jerusalem. The last scene, the final victory, will be centered in Jerusalem, but He will

do other things first.

The end time will be a siege, and we are getting closer and closer to that time. There is no solution at present, but we believe there will be a forced solution for a time that will seem to produce the desired results. The United States has pledged to see the creation of two states: Israel and a Palestinian state.

The tents of Judah, the people themselves, are going to fight, but in actuality, *God* will allow them to be successful. Verses 6 and 7 provide a little more information.

Zech. 12:6 In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.

Zech. 12:7 The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah.

What is in Judah that is not in Jerusalem? Down in the wilderness of Beer-sheba, which is a part of Judah, there is a nuclear facility. For years, we have anticipated that the time will come when Israel will not be able to depend on the United States because its very survival will be threatened. Other nations also have tanks, airplanes, missiles, etc., so there will have to be another means whereby the Arab nations will be stopped with an enforced peace. We feel that the Jews will use their own nuclear weapons, and if that happens, the United States, England, and France will have an excuse to quickly send troops as representatives of the United Nations to halt Israel's nuclear capability. However, the temporary solution is that Israel will feel safe. The people will be in a state of euphoria in thinking they have settled the Arab situation that immediately surrounds them. However, the Muslim forces up to the north will still remain, and they will come down later, at the time of Jacob's Trouble.

All of this thinking is conjectural, but it is based on hints here and there in Scripture. For instance, *God* will back up the tents of Judah and give a victory that will lead to a *false* peace. The *real* peace will follow *God's* victory in saving the Holy Remnant out of Jacob's Trouble. No human leadership will be involved in that victory, anymore than it was involved in the Flood of Noah's day. Likewise, *God* destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, and *God* opened the Red Sea for the Israelites to cross and then caused the waters to overflow the enemy. In the future victory, *God's* glory will be seen—the glory of the *God of Israel*.

The saving of the tents of Judah first, as an answer to the prayer of Psalm 83, is a necessary experience, for it will lead to a false peace. The victory will be quick, and as stated, we would not be surprised if nuclear power is used, for the threat of the surrounding Arab nations will be very real. Others of the Muslim faith who are way to the north will not be in this scenario.

Q: Does chapter 12 include information on both Psalm 83 and Jacob's Trouble?

A: Yes, but the information is compacted. To our understanding, chapter 12 embraces two events, two salvations of Israel, as it were, one with regard to the deliverance of Israel from its surrounding Arab enemies, as pictured by Psalm 83, and the other being the later Gog and Magog salvation. In between the two is a hiatus, or space of time, in which there will be a relative peace in Israel but not an enduring one. The only enduring peace will occur after the last verse of this chapter. Thus chapter 12 gives a general description of events at the very end of the age. Verses 5-7 pertain to the provinces of Judah and the scenario of Psalm 83, while

verses 8-14 refer to the Gog and Magog setting, when Jerusalem itself will be under siege.

Incidentally, Egypt is not mentioned in the Gog and Magog enumeration of Ezekiel 38:2-6, nor is it specially mentioned in Psalm 83. However, Psalm 83 does refer to the Arabs in Gaza, in Lebanon to the north, and on the east side of the Jordan River, both to the north and down below—the entire Dead Sea area as well as Gilead. Israel will be attacked from all sides in this Arab confederacy, but God will intervene and cause a great defeat. The reference to “fire in a sheaf” shows the *suddenness* and the *completeness* of the destruction.

Zech. 12:8 In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.

Before discussing verses 8 and 9, we will read Zechariah 14:2,3, “For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.” Notice the emphasis on the defeat of Jerusalem prior to God’s fighting against the forces of Gog, whereas verses 8 and 9 omit that information and say, “In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem” and “I [God] will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.” Then verse 10 tells that God will pour out His grace on the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Although chapters 12 and 14 both talk about the same time period, chapter 14 goes into more detail. Both chapters show the Lord as victorious, but chapter 14 tells that initially Jerusalem will be captured, and it will seem as though the invaders are the conquerors. In other words, while initially in the siege against Jerusalem, it will appear that the enemy is victorious, one purpose for allowing the defeat is to give God *sole credit* for Israel’s ultimate everlasting deliverance. In the final analysis, the city will indeed be saved.

Verse 8 shows the two classes of the “inhabitants of Jerusalem” at the time of Jacob’s Trouble, when God will bring the final and lasting salvation of the city. (1) The least of the inhabitants, those who are “feeble,” will be “as David” when he slew Goliath. (2) The “house of David [the higher element, those who are in authority] shall be as God.” The “house of David” in this picture and at this time—when the city is delivered from Gog—will be the Ancient Worthies; they will be on hand to give direction. David wrote prophetically of their resurrection: “At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments” (Psa. 119:62).

Zech. 12:9 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

“I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.” Notice the qualification; namely, the destruction of the nations is limited to those “that come against Jerusalem.” The Hebrew word *goi*, rendered “nations,” is sometimes translated “peoples” or “Gentiles.” Hence a large percentage of the Gentile enemies who are on the battle scene at Jerusalem will be destroyed. Their intent will be to destroy Jerusalem, but it is God’s intent to destroy those various peoples, or hordes, who come in from the north. Other Scriptures show that many of them will be Muslims from countries such as Pakistan. In their midst will be an element called “Gog,” which is the non-Muslim Russian aspect—those who are more or less natives of Russia itself. Some of them have a Genghis Khan background. Thus a mixed multitude will come down from the north with the intention of destroying Jerusalem.

A lot of information is compacted in verse 9. Evidently, it is not the Lord’s intention to destroy every single individual because eyewitnesses of the miraculous deliverance of the Holy Remnant have to go back to their homelands to testify. However, five sixths of the forces of

the enemy host will die; that is, only one-sixth will be spared (Ezek. 39:2).

In this confrontation with Gog, the Scriptures seem to indicate that one tenth of the Jews will live through the trouble, being handpicked as the Holy Remnant. Thus one tenth of the Jews will survive, and nine-tenths will die when they pass under the rod in Jacob's Trouble (Ezek. 20:37). In other words, there will be a holocaust with both the enemy and the Jews, for in both cases, only a remnant will survive. The Gospel Age will end with a *tremendous* climax that will shock the whole world. One of the purposes is to bring the people to their senses, for the Kingdom will be established in great power and great glory (Matt. 24:30; Mark 13:26). When the Kingdom starts, it will be *holy*, for the Jews who remain will have been thoroughly purged.

Daniel 12:1 provides additional information. "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." After the Church is complete, the Lord will prepare the stage for the Great Company to deliver an important message to Israel that will enlighten the Holy Remnant. Those with a hearing ear and faith in God's promises will respond. The majority with this proper heart condition, whose names will be written in advance "in the book" of life, will probably be among the ultra-Orthodox Jews. Their names will literally be on some kind of memorandum so that the spirit beings in heaven who have the guardianship will make sure they survive the trouble. The holy angels will protect the Holy Remnant in a very remarkable fashion. The protection will probably be of such a nature that, to a large extent, the immediate families and progeny of the Holy Remnant will be spared as well, for example, husband and wife.

As the Lord promised, "I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD" (Ezek. 20:37,38). This text is an allusion to the tithing arrangement. According to God's Law, an animal that was taken for sacrifice had to be clean, healthy, and whole. A sick animal was not to be intentionally offered. Every tenth animal was taken either as a sacrifice or as a gift for the priest.

The Jews do not really grasp the terrible enormity of the coming trouble. *Seven months* will be required just to bury the dead. The corpses will be so numerous that a stench will be on the land. If the fowl of heaven and the animals did not cooperate in eating the flesh of the corpses, the burying would be a task too large to handle. Even after the seven months, a burying crew will search the mountains and valleys of the land for additional bones.

The magnitude of the trouble and what God will do in defending His people will cause such astonishment to whoever is alive at that time that they will get down on their knees with great fear—whether they are of the holy Jewish element or of the Gentile element. Then many other Scriptures will take on an added meaning and cause a sober reflection. The Lord has been quiet and has been thought of as the God of love—which He certainly is—but at the end of the age, when the enemy comes into the land of Israel, His adrenaline will figuratively be so fired up that His anger will rise up through His frame and be seen in His face.

Many people do not like this type of explanation. For them, the truth is too hard and too searching, but the intent of truth is to purge us. We all need this type of discipline in a modified sense to bring us into complete harmony with the Lord. For that very reason, we sing the hymn, "Send sorrow; send pain. Sweet are thy messengers, and sweet their refrain." The discipline brings us into alignment. However, we are speaking not about the consecrated but about the opening phase of the Kingdom of God. All the families of the earth will mourn, not

just those in Israel but *all* who see the introduction of the Kingdom. The purpose of the trouble will be to convert *everyone*. Those who do not get down and put their knees on the ground will be put to death (Phil. 2:10,11). Those who refuse to listen to the voice of “that prophet” in that day will be cut off (Acts 3:23). There will be no excuse because what happens in Israel will be so dramatic that anyone who disobeys will be committing a full willful sin. The only ones wanting death at that time will be those who did so many things of such a horrible nature that their attitude will be, “Put me out of existence as quickly as possible.” They will not be willing to go through all the needed stripes and punishments as retribution.

The Scriptures indicate that willful sin cannot be forgiven but must receive stripes. The only exception to some extent would be sins committed prior to consecration that are thrown over God’s shoulder, but certain types of sin require an experience to offset what cannot be forgiven. For instance, the Apostle Paul willfully put Christians to death, and even though he thought he was doing God a service, he had to go through a threshing machine. Fortunately and gloriously, the great majority of his experiences were totally for Christ’s sake and for his faithfulness to the truth. However, some retribution had to come on him before he died. That principle also applied with David and the Apostle Peter. But the good news is that those who pass the test will live forever either down here or up in heaven.

Therefore, the great convulsion at the end of the present age is to be a lesson not only for the world of mankind on earth but also for all sentient beings who will ever be created in the future on the various planets in the universe. When they see, with their own eyes, the history of what has happened down here, the lesson will be more powerful than just reading a book or having faith in the written Word of God or in an unseen God. In the Kingdom Age, the people will learn by sight. Whether the history is past, current, or future, the way will be made plain. The aspect of faith in an unseen God will be different in the Kingdom Age.

Another aspect of Ezekiel 20:37 is its allusion to the New Covenant: “And I will cause you [every tenth one] to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the [New] covenant.” The New Covenant will begin at the setting up of the Kingdom when Jesus reigns over the tribes of the earth, and it will terminate, or be consummated, at the end of the Kingdom Age when all who are accounted worthy enter the age beyond the Millennium.

Zech. 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Comment: The change of pronouns is confusing: “They shall look upon *me* whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for *him*, as one mourneth for his only son.”

Reply: Those pronouns are correct. The setting pertains to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that is, to the Jews. The Jews have been cultured to look at Jesus as the *false* Messiah, so the Holy Remnant will be startled when they see a hologram of the Crucifixion in the heavens at the time of their deliverance from Jacob’s Trouble. There will be visual demonstrations of God’s power, but the crowning feature will be when those whose names are written in the book of life see this vision. What will be the effect? The Holy Remnant will get down on their knees and repent from the very core of their being.

Messianic Jews, who are few in number, believe in Christ. This belief is a preparatory work in the heart and the mind, for we believe that a large percentage of them will be amenable to instruction. When they see the providences in their personal life at that time, when their deliverance occurs in very strange ways, they will repent, and forgiveness is predicated upon

repentance. Stated another way, repentance has to precede true forgiveness.

Comment: Simeon said to Mary, “(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed” (Luke 2:35). Just as Mary’s own heart was not literally pierced through when she saw Jesus on the Cross, so the pronoun “me” refers to God. Seeing His Son in agony on the Cross affected the Heavenly Father.

Reply: When Mary saw a soldier pierce Jesus’ side with a javelin, she felt the wound in the very fibers of her being, even though he was already dead at that point. She experienced an emotional trauma. And the vision of Jesus on the Cross will penetrate those of Jewry who are on hand to see it. They know that God was to send a Messiah, and they are looking for Messiah’s visual coming, so when they see the hologram, they will know that they crucified God’s Son. Incidentally, we believe that in the future, the Book of Zechariah will be read avidly and will be spoken on and that it will have a great effect on the heart of the believing Jew.

When Jesus died, we can be sure that God did not look on the indignities and sufferings heaped on His Son without any emotion. Even though God knew the outcome, He had empathy for Jesus. It was as though God Himself were going through the experience. The Crucifixion had to take place, but nevertheless, the Father *felt* the sufferings. We can imagine His happiness when Jesus finished his course faithfully.

Zech. 12:11 In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.

Zech. 12:12 And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart;

Zech. 12:13 The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart;

Zech. 12:14 All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

“In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem.... the family of the *house of David* [shall mourn] apart, and their wives apart; the family of the *house of Nathan* apart, and their wives apart; The family of the *house of Levi* apart, and their wives apart; the family of *Shimei* apart, and their wives apart.” In addition, “all the families that remain [that is, the common people, the rest of the populace, shall mourn], every family apart, and their wives apart.” Verses 11-14 describe the reaction of the various categories of the Holy Remnant following their deliverance. The whole land will mourn in connection with realizing the responsibility that the nation had in crucifying Jesus. All strata of society will be affected.

The “house of David” refers to those of the Holy Remnant in positions of authority and leadership in the government of Israel. The “house of Nathan” is a reference to Nathan the prophet, and the “house of Levi” would be the religious element. Thus the first three categories refer to princes, prophets, and priests, respectively. In other words, all surviving Jews who are on hand in Israel to witness the mighty miracles and experience deliverance will be *thoroughly converted*. As Paul said in Romans 11:26, “And so all Israel [the Holy Remnant and their family members] shall be saved.” The other Jews, the nominal mass, will be purged out, leaving the Holy Remnant.

The “great mourning in Jerusalem” will be like “the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon,” which took place in the days of King Josiah, when he went to battle and took the side of Egypt against the enemy that came down from the north. Josiah perished in that

battle, and the nation truly mourned his slaying, for they recognized that they had lost a very noble person.

The Lord's people have been taught that the fig tree, Israel, put forth its leaves in 1878. "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass [away, that is, go into the tomb entirely], till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. 24:32-34). In other words, "all these things" will be fulfilled within the generation that starts when the fig tree puts forth its leaves. But we have passed the period of the generation that started in 1878, for Psalm 90:10 states the length of a "generation" as being 70 years: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." The furthest extremity of a generation would be 120 years, but even that period of time from 1878, or the year 1998, has expired. Therefore, the year 1878 was an improper date for starting the generation of Matthew 24:34. However, a significant date is 1948, for in May of that year, the fig tree, Israel, became a nation. If we add 70 years to 1948, we get 2018 as the end of a generation. Therefore, within that "generation" time period, "all these things" will be fulfilled—the true Church will be finished, the nominal Church will be destroyed, the Great Company will be completed, Armageddon will occur, the Ancient Worthies will be resurrected, the Holy Remnant will be rescued, and the Kingdom will be established.

Q: What class of Jews is represented by the "family of Shimei"?

A: The Septuagint version has "Simeon" instead of "Shimei." If Simeon is correct, the reference would be to the circumcision that was forced on the males of a Hivite city (Genesis 34). Simeon and Levi were later called "instruments of cruelty," for they had the ulterior motive in mind of slaughtering those people because of what Shechem had done to Dinah (Gen. 49:5). Thus the "family of Simeon" indicates that a dramatic change will take place in some Jews who comprise the Holy Remnant. We cannot be dogmatic as to which of the two—Shimei or Simeon—is intended in verse 13. Shimei did repent, but when he subsequently disobeyed a prohibition not to go outside a certain territory, Solomon put him to death. Although Shimei and Simeon are completely different personalities, the principle would be similar in either case, for they were both adversarial at one time.

The following is excerpted from a study in 1972, showing the reasoning if "Shimei" is correct.

The land will mourn, each family of the Holy Remnant apart, or by itself. Then various families are enumerated: David, Nathan, Levi, and Shimei, as well as the people at large. The Holy Remnant will recognize that Jesus is their Messiah and King at the time of their deliverance out of Jacob's Trouble. These individuals are mentioned to show that *all* classes will be involved in the living remnant, the survivors of Jacob's Trouble. The mourners will include some of the religious element (represented by Levi the priest), some of the teaching element (pictured by Nathan the prophet), some of the civil ruling element (represented by David), and a class of Jews who are especially the avowed enemies of Christ (shown by Shimei). Thus the term "the house of" is used in an accommodated sense to represent those who are leaders in civil affairs, leaders in religious affairs, teachers or prophets (not necessarily religious), and "honest" opponents. "All the families that remain" would be the common people of the Holy Remnant.

Shimei abused King David by cursing him and even trying to stone him (2 Sam. 16:5-13). Shimei walked along a high ridge, shouting down at David and hurling stones at him. This was a serious offense, but David had the spirit of forgiveness and also a sense of justice, for if he let his men kill Shimei, then he should do the same to his son Absalom. Also, David saw God's

providence in this whole affair as retribution.

When David was sick and weak at the end of his reign, it looked as if Absalom would take over the kingdom, but Absalom was defeated. When David came back the *victorious* monarch and crossed the Jordan River, Shimei was the first one to meet him. He prostrated himself and asked for forgiveness, and David granted forgiveness this time because he did not want to mar such a day of rejoicing with a death (2 Sam. 19:18-23). However, a restriction was added that Shimei would have to live within Jerusalem or be put to death. Sometime later he became so upset when two servants fled that he left Jerusalem to find them. Then King Solomon had Shimei put to death for disobedience (1 Kings 2:36-46).

The Shimei class has hated the message of salvation through Jesus. Thus verse 13 shows that the spirit of grace and supplications will also extend to Jews who rejected Christ in a special way. Most people are apathetic unless threatened, but others are avowed antagonists of Christianity. The Shimei class will probably be the first ones to get down on their knees—just as Shimei was when David crossed the Jordan River. (Shimei was not necessarily sincere, but he is a type.) We are reminded of the Apostle Paul. Just as he was a changed, converted man almost instantly, so it will be with this class. Since God can read the heart, He knows who will respond with deep remorse, contrition, and conviction. Accordingly, He will mark them to be part of the Holy Remnant. Deep down their motivation will be good, just as it was with Paul. The same is true of Christians who are converted *very suddenly* from reprobate lives. Mary Magdalene had seven devils (Mark 16:9). Not every one with seven devils was rescued, but something about Mary's heart condition was good and unusual. Hence individuals can be called in spite of their background.

“And their wives apart.” In this great mourning, the Holy Remnant will abstain from normal marital relationships and activities. (Such abstention was customary in the past during a fast or on a holy day.) There is a counterpart in the New Testament, for when both a man and his wife are consecrated, they should abstain if one or both want to fast or bring a special problem to the Lord in prayer (1 Cor. 7:5). To recognize the right of the other partner in this matter is good, and to inflict this restriction on oneself is also good. However, the abstaining should not last too long lest Satan tempt the other partner to look elsewhere. In the future, there will be a *public* manifestation of contrition in which a fast is declared, and each of the Holy Remnant will want to be alone to commune with the Lord in prayer. The mourning will be genuine.

The Kingdom will be inaugurated with a bang! Not only will great miracles be performed, but the people will recognize that God has done a great thing on their behalf. Normal activities will be put aside, for when people are disgusted with their humanity and want to draw near to the Lord, they try to remove all distracting influences, wear sackcloth and ashes, and do not comb their hair.

Zech. 13:1 In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

As indicated by verse 1, the fulfillment of chapter 13 will take place at the time the Kingdom reign commences. Based on the ending verses of chapter 12, we see that the nation of Israel will be in a repentant mode, for the Holy Remnant will be purged by their experiences in Jacob's Trouble. Now there will come a further realization that not only was the God of Israel responsible for their deliverance, but also the nation crucified Jesus, the Son of God. First, the nation refused to accept the prophets that God sent them, but when He sent His Son, they refused to accept him as well. The Holy Remnant will need this deeper understanding to make them more fit as representatives in whatever capacity they will serve as the nucleus of the Kingdom, which will be headquartered in Jerusalem.

If we understand correctly, chapter 12 outlines the relationship between Psalm 83 and the Gog and Magog picture. Chapter 13 brings us to the time when Jacob has been delivered out of its trouble (Jer. 30:7). Then chapter 14 goes back and reviews the events of chapters 12 and 13 in a more complete sense by providing additional helpful details.

“In that day”—that is, at the inauguration of the Kingdom after the destruction of Gog and Magog—a fountain will be “opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”

Zech. 13:2 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land.

“And it shall come to pass in that day [a *period* of time]” that God “will cause the [false] prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land.” As a result, there will be no more Canaanites in the land (Zech. 14:21). He “will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered.” The inauguration is one thing, but there will be a need for *continual* cleansing throughout the Kingdom, which will include a cleansing of doctrine. For more than 6,000 years, the human race has been tutored incorrectly and has worshipped idols of one kind or another: the world, the flesh, the devil, or some particular “ism” such as Catholicism or Protestantism. Therefore, verse 2 pertains to further instruction, to proper indoctrination. Especially when people are awakened from the tomb and the Kingdom progresses, they will have to unlearn what they previously thought was truth. Thus verse 2 indicates a *progression into* the Kingdom Age. The cutting off of the idols will be a *process*.

Among the Jews who come forth from the tomb, some who have been honored and highly esteemed in the past will be seen in the proper light. For example, false prophets will be recognized as such, and their degree of culpability will be seen. While the initial cleansing work pertains to the Holy Remnant, who are spared in Jacob’s Trouble, the cleansing, mourning, and repentance will continue throughout the Kingdom Age. Thus verse 2 shows that false religions and idols will be cut off, for a different standard—the standard of God’s name and His truth—will be held before the people. Instead of the former false prophets, God will have His own prophets in the Kingdom Age. The teachers will be the Ancient Worthies and, to a lesser extent, those who were identified with them. For example, Jeremiah and Isaiah had assistants who were not necessarily Ancient Worthies. Scriptural proof for this thought is that the Gershonites, the fourth Levitical tribe encamped around the Tabernacle, represent a secondary class prior to the First Advent who are comparable to the Great Company of the Gospel Age. This class, who assisted the Ancient Worthies, will be awakened from death later; that is, they will not come forth with the Ancient Worthies in the midst of Jacob’s Trouble.

Q: Would these assistants include the “sons of the prophets” (2 Kings 2:3,5,7,15, etc.)?

A: Yes.

Zech. 13:3 And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth.

When people come forth from the tomb in the Kingdom Age, they will be given a 100-year opportunity to walk up the highway of holiness, but those who *persist* in their wrong teachings and *refuse* to listen to the voice of “that prophet” will be cut off right away, summarily (Isa.

35:8; 65:20; Acts 3:23). In addition, of those who have 100 years of opportunity, the individuals who do not make sufficient progress will be cut off at the end of that time period. Another class will obey the letter of the Law but not really be transformed in their hearts. This class will be cut off at the end of the Kingdom Age when they fail to pass the test of the Little Season. Therefore, the cutting off of those who are false will occur in three degrees of enactment.

The point is that disobedience will not be tolerated for any duration of time. In the illustration of verse 3, a father and mother will be ready, in principle, to sacrifice a son right away for prophesying falsely and speaking “lies in the name of the LORD.” In other words, the mood of the public will be to love righteousness. The thought is not that there will be no evil in the Kingdom but that evil will not be tolerated, for society will be in sympathy with righteousness. Therefore, the Kingdom will be an age of morality. And after the Kingdom Age and the conclusion of the final testing, *no sin whatever*—of any shape, size, or form—*will be tolerated*.

Comment: The Christian needs to develop the love of righteousness and the hatred of iniquity in the present life and not favor individuals just because they are his children (Psa. 45:7; Heb. 1:8,9).

Reply: Yes. Jesus said that if we want to be his disciple, we must love him supremely. “He that loveth father or mother ... [or] son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Matt. 10:37). If a relative is in disagreement with righteousness, we are to cut ourselves off from that individual and not tolerate the sin. However, the Prophet Zechariah was speaking of conditions during the Kingdom Age. A person will come forth from the tomb with the same character that he had at the time of his decease, and time will be required for his instruction. Incidentally, the New Covenant will be similar to the old Law Covenant, which required parents to stone a son for disobedience (Exod. 21:17; Lev. 20:9).

Zech. 13:4 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive:

Zech. 13:5 But he shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.

Verses 4 and 5 remind us of what happened during the French Revolution when priests, cardinals, etc., tried to escape persecution by denying their religious profession and claiming to be farmers. However, their hands, having no calluses and being fair like the hands of a woman or of nobility, exposed the falsity of their claims. Hence they were put to death, for the common people wanted to get rid of the elite, the upper crust of society, who had enslaved them and kept them in poverty.

In the Kingdom, the false prophets will say, “I am no prophet, I am an husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.” Such individuals will try to deny their past as a false prophet, but instead of their having to show their hands, photographs and films will be produced to reveal the truth. God has recorded the history of mankind from Adam onward, so when the former false prophets see themselves on film and hear their words, they will be ashamed. In other words, not only will everything forbidden be cut off, but also those who try to say they were not identified with false religion will be exposed. Hence there will be no way to avoid the truth of a matter. A *complete cleansing* will occur.

Q: Do verses 4 and 5 refer to those who were false prophets in the present life or to those who will become false prophets in the Kingdom Age?

A: The principle will apply to both ages. Although the setting here specifically pertains to the Jewish prophets, we can extend the reasoning to the false prophets of Christendom who are in the tomb. For example, some of the popes were very arrogant, and when they come forth from the tomb, they will try to say they were not as bad as people think.

Q: Will the motive for their words and actions in the Kingdom be to try to avoid repentance?

A: Yes, but no one will be able to deny his past. A good illustration is Joseph, who was betrayed by his brothers. When he became the prime minister under Pharaoh years later, they did not recognize him. However, when Joseph subsequently revealed his identity, his brothers were very much ashamed. But while Joseph and his brothers illustrate the principle, that was a contemporary picture. Thus it was a little different in the sense that false religious leaders who are separated through many generations will try to disclaim their past profession when they are awakened from the tomb. The reverse order of the resurrection, with the last being first—that is, with the children coming forth before their parents—will prevent a parent from denying he has done such and such because history will already have been revealed. The point is that there will be a thorough exposé in the Kingdom, and punishment will be administered for *willful* sin as deemed appropriate. In contrast, Adamic sin can be forgiven *carte blanche* when the proper steps of repentance are taken.

Zech. 13:6 And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.

“What are these wounds in thine hands?” While the previous information given about the French Revolution is true from a historical standpoint, it has no relevancy to verse 6, which pertains to Jesus, who was “wounded” in the house of his “friends,” the Jewish nation. Some translations have “shoulders” or “back” instead of “hands.” Jesus was scourged; he was wounded in his back.

Zechariah’s whole prophecy will be an eye-opener to the Jew. There is a play on words here, for it was the *religious* Jewish element that wounded Jesus out of jealousy. In the Kingdom, what the religious leaders did to Jesus will haunt them—they will be exposed and will not escape retribution.

Zech. 13:7 Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

Referring to the Crucifixion, God said prophetically, “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd [Jesus], and [even] against the man that is my fellow.” Jehovah continued, “Smite the shepherd [Jesus], and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.”

It is sacrilegious to apply this verse to Bro. Russell except perhaps for the principle that when a religious leader prominently used by the Lord is removed from the scene, there is a repercussion on those left behind. But this verse applies to *Jesus*, God’s “fellow,” or right-hand “man.” Jehovah, the Great Shepherd of Psalm 23, is speaking about Jesus, His under-Shepherd, the Good Shepherd.

How did God turn His hand upon “the little ones,” the Little Flock? In Isaiah 1:25, He stated the principle: “And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin.” In other words, the hand of discipline purges away the dross and the tin, refining the Christian so that the good remains. When Jesus was taken off the scene, God dealt with the Church, but He did not pamper them. Many Christians have died violent, suffering

deaths. The turning of the hand is favorable, for it is designed to discipline the consecrated so that they can be victorious like Christ—so that they will be saviors with the Savior.

Verse 7 also applies to Jesus when he was apprehended in the Garden of Gethsemane and the apostles fled, with only two following at a distance. John went into the high priest's house, and Peter warmed himself in the courtyard.

Zech. 13:8 And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.

The “two parts ... [that] shall be cut off and die” are the Little Flock and the Great Company. The “third part [that] shall be left therein [down here]” is the Holy Remnant. Having a spiritual calling, the first two classes will be cut off in death. Of Jesus it was said, “He was [violently] cut off out of the land of the living” (Isa. 53:8). Thus verse 8 is speaking of three classes, and God continued to speak of the third class in verse 9.

Zech. 13:9 And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

The “third part,” the Holy Remnant, will be left on the earthly plane, but they will pass “through the fire” and be refined “as silver is refined” and tried “as gold is tried.” Initially, the Holy Remnant needs to be schooled, tried, and educated, but that process will occur very quickly, for their names are already in the book of life to be spared at the time of Jacob's Trouble (Isa. 4:3; Dan. 12:1).

Consider the Apostle Paul. Although chosen from his mother's womb, he was persecuting Christians, but God, in His foreknowledge, knew that those actions were done through a lack of proper understanding. In his *zeal*, Paul persecuted the followers of Jesus, but once his eyes were opened, he was immediately a changed person. Nevertheless, he needed schooling. And even though he repented and had acted out of misinformation, some of the sins he committed required retribution because they were willful. He was cleansed relatively quickly through stonings and imprisonment. In addition, he suffered repeatedly for righteousness' sake.

God prophesied, “They [the Holy Remnant] shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.” With Ezekiel 20:37 stating, “And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant,” the thought is that *nine tenths* of the Jews will die in Jacob's Trouble, for they will be unacceptable as part of the Holy Remnant. Moreover, *five sixths* of Gog and Magog will perish, and only one-sixth will survive to go back to their homelands as eyewitnesses (Ezek. 39:1,2). For that reason, it will take seven months to bury the dead (Ezek. 39:12). Since a thousand people can be easily buried in one day through the use of bulldozers, we get some idea of the number who will die at that time; the number of corpses will be in the millions. And these will be mass burials, without individual tombstones, in a cemetery that will be called Hamon-gog (Ezek. 39:11). The burials will be done because of the stench and also because a dead body and bones are a symbol of ceremonial defilement under the Law.

Zech. 14:1 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

Zech. 14:2 For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

Zech. 14:3 Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

The first part of verse 1 is self-explanatory. “The day of the LORD cometh” at the very end of the present age, that is, at the time of Jacob’s Trouble.

“Thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.” This wording could convey an improper thought, so we will consider what the “spoil” is. We know that in the final analysis, when all is said and done, Israel will partake of a spoil, for swords will be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks (Isa. 2:4). But this case seems to have a different focus based on the startling announcement of verse 2. Zechariah 12:1-3 already stated that God’s purpose is to gather all nations to Jerusalem to battle, but additional information is provided here; namely, it will appear that God’s promise is made void, for the expectation is that Jacob will be delivered when the forces of Gog and Magog come down to Jerusalem. Therefore, we need to properly analyze the end-time picture. Others, especially among Protestantism, can give a sermon on Gog and Magog that we would agree with, for at the end of the age, God will defend Israel. However, we should not overlook the warning in verse 2. First, *before the deliverance*, Jerusalem will be captured. Notice, “the city *shall be taken*, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished.” Verse 2 continues, “Half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.” Doesn’t the mention of the houses being rifled and the women being ravished indicate that it will appear Israel has been defeated? Moreover, a process of extermination, of complete obliteration, will be initiated, but it will be at that time—that is, *after the apparent defeat*—that God goes forth to battle for Israel. The apparent defeat will pierce the bubble of all those who thought the other way, and there will be utter depression at that moment in time.

This information is clearly inserted in chapter 14, but when people read later verses, they tend to forget what is stated about the prior temporary defeat. Therefore, the defeat will be a shock, a surprise, that causes many to wonder what has happened to God’s promise.

Notice the first half of verse 3: “Then [that is, after the appearance of an utter defeat of Israel] shall the LORD go forth, and fight.” The reason for the initial defeat is to show that the battle is *entirely* Jehovah’s—*He* will be given the credit. With miraculous, supernatural events bringing about the defeat of the forces of Gog and Magog, Israel itself will not be accredited with that part of the victory. First, Judah will be victorious, but then will come the defeat. If the advance information in verse 2 is kept in mind as we read the rest of the chapter, it will help to explain some of the subsequent events.

Half the people will be “cut off” from Jerusalem by going “forth into captivity.” The term “cut off” usually refers to death but not here. Rather, a residue of Jews will be left, and the other half will be outside the city.

Verse 3, when God goes forth to fight, will occur after Jerusalem has been captured and after half of the city goes forth into exile. The destination is not stated, but half the people will be removed. Therefore, not only will it look as if God’s plan has failed, but also the process of elimination will be dramatically taking place with nothing happening to stop it. Then, *all of a sudden*, God will intervene, for at Israel’s *extremity*, God will deliver the Holy Remnant.

Since there will be plenty of deaths of both the Jews and the forces of Gog and Magog, how do we explain Romans 11:26, which reads, “And so *all Israel* shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob”? Other Scriptures have to be considered to realize what the Apostle Paul was saying; namely, by the

time the miraculous events take place and the purging has occurred, only the Holy Remnant will be left.

The forces of Gog coming down to Jerusalem will be like a psychological event in which everyone is waiting for the great deliverance of Israel, but it will not happen when expected, for there will be a delay. Subsequently events will be triggered in regard to God's deliverance of the Holy Remnant, for in the near future, He will fight for Israel as He did in prior times in periods of dire extremity, as recorded in the Old Testament. For example, He delivered the Israelites from Egypt in a miraculous fashion, Gideon and the 300 men with him defeated the Midianites, a plague swept through the camp of the Assyrians and destroyed the 185,000-man army of King Sennacherib in one night, and the sun stood still in Joshua's day to shine for a full 24 hours. Many view such victories as fairy tales or moral lessons with instructional value, but they actually happened. In the coming deliverance of the Holy Remnant, God's fight for His people will be even more unusual than in former times, for He will defeat the enemy in *multiple* ways with *many* miracles. The deliverance will call to mind various miracles of the Old Testament as they are reenacted to defeat the tremendous host that comes down from the north.

Zech. 14:4 And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

Verse 4 starts to describe the drama of the miraculous deliverance of the Holy Remnant. "His [God's] feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east." This occurrence will be *primarily literal*, with figurative lessons. Here, then, is an instance in which an event will occur that has both a literal and a figurative or spiritual explanation. If possible, the best way to understand what is figurative is to start with the literal application.

Verse 4 is saying that a *visual* representation of feet will appear on the Mount of Olives. The clue for a *literal* interpretation is the statement "the mount of Olives ... is before Jerusalem on the east." It is as though someone were pointing and saying, "Over on the east side, the Mount of Olives will split in two." When the mountain is *actually parting*, two *tremendous* feet will be seen. This *visual* demonstration of Jehovah's authority will be appreciated in a double, or twofold, manner. Not only will an earthquake suddenly occur, but when the feet appear, everyone on the scene will know that God is intervening in earth's affairs.

"The mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley." Based on certain other Scriptures pertaining to this event, the split will take place in a very specific manner. Holy Writ tells how the two parts of the mountain will be related to each other at that time. Half the mount will move toward the north, and half will move toward the south. Therefore, the direction, or cleavage, of the *great* valley that opens up will go from east to west; that is, the valley will be at right angles to the opening of the mountain. The repetition in the account causes the reader to stop and consider.

Zech. 14:5 And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.

"And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains." The Holy Remnant will flee into the valley that opens up when the earthquake splits the Mount of Olives, and that valley "shall reach unto Azal," a specific location. For clues in Scripture as to where Azal is, we will consider the account of Jonathan and David. Others were momentarily astonished when David slew Goliath, but

Jonathan was impressed in a deeper sense, for the incident created a lasting heartfelt respect for David. Henceforth the two became loyal friends, whereas King Saul was jealous and viewed David as a rival for the throne, since Jonathan was the natural heir to succeed his father.

The point is that *literal* people will flee through the valley to Azal, a *literal* place, a rock. David fled for his life from Saul but returned when the king was pacified for a moment. However, when conditions led David to think that Saul intended to murder him, Jonathan agreed to search out the matter to see if his father really had evil intentions toward David. Jonathan could not meet in person but promised to inform David of the answer by shooting an arrow in a prearranged direction to indicate either yes or no. It so happened that Saul did plan to kill David, so Jonathan shot the arrow in the vicinity of Azal. David then knew he had to flee for good.

Comment: The separation of the Mount of Olives to the north and the south will be a reminder of the parting of the Red Sea at the time of the Exodus.

Reply: Yes, that will be one of *many* miracles to occur when the Holy Remnant is delivered out of Jacob's Trouble. The miracles will happen *one after another* in the greatest display of power in the history of Israel.

Then verse 5 adds, "The LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." The fulfillment will be twofold: (1) literally physical and (2) literally spiritual. Other Scriptures show that when God delivers Israel, the Ancient Worthies will appear on the scene. David wrote, "At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments" (Psa. 119:62). Also, "saviours [plural] shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD'S"; that is, the Little Flock will participate in this rescue effort (Obadiah 21).

Notice the change of venue with the clause "the LORD my God shall come." Jehovah, *Jesus' God*, will come. Certain verses in the Psalms contain two or three applications in the same verse. Here there are two changes in verse 5. The prophetic statement was made by Zechariah that the Holy Remnant will "flee to the valley of the mountains," and then Jesus, who was with the Father, interrupted the narrative and said, "Jehovah, my God, shall come." The account ends with "and all the saints with thee"; that is, all the resurrected saints, the "saviours," will be with Jesus when the Lord God comes. The Little Flock will take part in the drama. We feel that simultaneously the saints will have a major application in one direction, and Jehovah will have an application in another direction. The result will be a MIGHTY deliverance of Israel, both below and above, because the fallen angels will be loose at this moment of time. In other words, the fallen angels will be loosed before the Kingdom Age begins. When they materialize, their intent will be to destroy, first, the Great Company and, second, the Holy Remnant, the surviving representatives of Israel. The fallen angels will want to vent their spleen. Earlier the feet members will die as a class, as shown by various pictures: (1) the antitypical Elijah will be taken collectively, (2) the John the Baptist class will be beheaded, and (3) the earthen vessels of the 300 with Gideon, which contained the light of truth, will be smashed simultaneously.

A number of events will cascade down all at one time in a most dramatic fashion. God has withheld His anger, but when He sees what Gog and Magog do, His fury will rise up into His face, and that fury will be seen by the visual representation of His feet on the Mount of Olives. When Jesus died on the Cross, God's displeasure was manifested by the darkening of the sun from noon until 3 p.m. and the rending of the Temple veil between the Holy and Most Holy. Also, when the earthquake occurred, some of the "saints" who had been called were awakened from death and given an opportunity to walk in the narrow way when Pentecost came.

Q: Will God representatively put His feet on the Mount of Olives at the same time that Michael

stands up (Dan. 12:1)?

A: Yes. The feet will be a visual occurrence.

To show that the application is *literal*, that it is a *reality*, the account says not only that the Holy Remnant will flee through the valley which opens up from the earthquake, but also that they will flee “like as ye fled from before the [literal] earthquake in the days of Uzziah [also called Azariah] king of Judah” (Amos 1:1).

To repeat, when the mountain is split apart into two halves by an earthquake, the Holy Remnant will flee to the valley, or fissure, that opens up, and that valley shall “reach unto [a place called] Azal.” Then, to make sure we understand that the valley, the earthquake, and the fleeing are *literal*—no matter what spiritual ramifications can be drawn from the picture—repetition is used: “And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; ... yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah.” The literal aspect will be emphasized even more as we continue to read chapter 14.

In the *Volumes*, the Pastor stated that verses 4 and 5 were a *spiritual* picture, but late in his ministry, he changed his view, or perspective, for he then realized that these verses have a *literal* application. When correctly seen, they emphasize a *literal* earthquake, from which *spiritual* lessons can be extrapolated.

We will consider the last clause of verse 5 again. First, Jesus was speaking: “And the LORD [Jehovah] my [that is, Jesus’] God shall come.” Then God said, “And all the saints with thee [with Jesus].” There are other instances in the Bible where the perspective changes three times in the *same* verse, so the change of speaker in verse 5 is not that unusual. Incidentally, the term “my God” reminds us of David’s prophetic words: “The LORD [Jehovah] said unto my [David’s] Lord [that is, unto Jesus], Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool” (Psa. 110:1). Jesus used this Scripture to confound the Pharisees in the New Testament. “While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions” (Matt. 22:41-46).

Comment: *Reprint* No. 5437, entitled “The Mount of Olives the Kingdom of Blessing,” reads as follows:

“This text [Zechariah 14:4] refers to the closing of the day of trouble and the manifestation of God’s power in connection with that trouble. The literal Mount of Olives may have, and probably will have, somewhat to do with the matter. It is referred to here as experiencing a great earthquake. No doubt the Israelites will be gathered at Jerusalem at this time, and no doubt the Lord’s favor will be manifested to them there. This will be at the close of ‘Jacob’s trouble,’ from which the Lord will be present to deliver them. Our thought is that this will be after the church shall have passed into glory. The execution of what is here described seems to be a part of the work of the glorified church.

“We understand that the ancient worthies will then appear, and that God’s favor will have returned to the Jews, and that Israel’s temporal blessings will there begin. This would imply that the Jews will then be under the New Covenant arrangement, and hence that the church must have been completed.

“Symbolically, a mountain represents a kingdom. The Scriptures elsewhere declare that Jehovah will make the place of his feet glorious. The word olive always associates itself in the minds of the people of the Orient with the thought of light and nourishment. The olive oil they use regularly instead of butter. As the olive furnishes both light and food, the Mount of Olives would represent the kingdom of God. Olive oil was poured upon the head of the Jewish kings and priests, and symbolized thus the holy Spirit. God’s kingdom will be for the blessing of mankind. It will be of two phases—the heavenly and the earthly—and all people may eventually come under its blessed condition.”

Reply: Sixty years ago many of the brotherhood did not know about this article, and they were adamant that Zechariah 14:4 did not have a literal application. Back there we tried to explain that the earthquake has a literal application, from which spiritual lessons can be drawn. To better understand the spiritual (or figurative) application, we need to start with the *primary* literal application.

In fact, the Pastor went excruciatingly to the spiritual application in certain other pictures that pertain to phenomenal literal applications. Many insist that he never changed his view or was wrong, but like all of us, he had that option. No matter how great a person is, he makes mistakes. Even the apostles made misstatements—but not when they spoke *ex cathedra* or wrote epistles of instruction. The Lord overruled by His Holy Spirit that the written Word was pure, for the Church is founded upon the statements of our Lord Jesus and the apostles.

The Book of Zechariah is meant to open the eyes of the Jews at the end of this age to the startling truth that Jesus is their Messiah. The prophecy of Zechariah 14:4,5 will come into great prominence, but first, the Jews will associate it with Jehovah because His feet are mentioned. At the proper time, the Holy Remnant will understand that the pronouns “my” and “thee” refer to Jesus. Not only will they comprehend that the Mount of Olives will be split in two, but also they will begin to see the relationship between the Heavenly Father (Jehovah) and His Son. The literal application will open the minds of many to see the double application that Jesus is not God and that God is not Jesus. Therefore, we assume a literal large hologram of the Crucifixion will be seen toward the end of the miracles that deliver the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble. Zechariah 12:10 is the proof text: “They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.” In addition, they will see a representation of Jehovah’s feet on the Mount of Olives. In studying Zechariah 14:4, many think the “feet” are the feet of The Christ, but they are the feet of God. Therefore, we will explore this thought further.

Isaiah 52:7 reads, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” The general view is to give this Scripture a current application, saying that we, as the “feet of him [Jesus],” are declaring the wonderful message of restitution. The Apostle Paul quoted this Scripture in Romans 10:15 and gave it an application to the early Church: “And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” Paul associated the good news with the proclamation of the gospel message. Thus he used Isaiah 52:7 to illustrate a *principle*, namely, the lesson of being zealous for preaching good tidings of great joy. He was *not* indicating that this principle was the full fulfillment of Isaiah 52:7, because that Scripture refers specifically to the establishment of the Kingdom and will be the sounding note of the inauguration of the Kingdom, as proved by the context. “Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste

places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” (Isa. 52:8-10). Therefore, the exclamation “Thy God reigneth!” refers to the reign of *Israel’s* God. Likewise, “all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our [*Israel’s*] God.”

When the Book of Revelation speaks of the Kingdom of Christ, it brings in Jehovah. “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord [Jehovah], and of his Christ [The Christ, Head and body members]; and he shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 11:15). God has “appointed a day” in which He will judge all mankind “by that man [Jesus] whom he [God] hath ordained” to be His representative (Acts 17:31). In one sense, therefore, the Kingdom of Christ is the Kingdom of God.

However, another picture shows that the real Kingdom of God, in which His will is to be done on earth as it is done in heaven, is the age *beyond* the Kingdom Age. From that standpoint, the Kingdom of the Millennial Age is thought of as the Kingdom of Jesus, for that is when he will take his great power and reign, and the Kingdom of God will be in the age beyond the Millennium.

The fact that there are two different pictures causes much confusion among Bible Students, for many like to take just one definition and apply it everywhere a particular scriptural term is found or quoted. But that is not necessarily the case. For example, the picture of the Passover has more than one application.

Nahum 1:15 is helpful: “Behold upon the mountains the feet of him [God] that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.” This verse in Nahum condenses the four verses of Isaiah 52:7-10, but notice the addition: “The wicked shall [be] ... utterly cut off [in Israel].” The principle is that by the end of the Kingdom Age, the wicked will all be cut off, but Zechariah 14:3-5, Isaiah 52:7, and the first part of Nahum 1:15 dramatically portray the *starting point* of the cutting off of the wicked and “the feet” of God. Then we can extrapolate that the purpose of the Kingdom Age is to cleanse the earth of all who are unworthy of everlasting life.

Q: Can Azal be specifically identified?

A: Yes, it is mentioned in 1 Samuel 20:18,19, where the spelling is “Ezel”: “Then Jonathan said to David, Tomorrow is the new moon: and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty. And when thou hast stayed three days, then thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was in hand, and shalt remain by the *stone Ezel*.” When Jonathan shot the arrow far beyond the rock and uttered certain words, that was the signal to David to flee, for Saul really intended to kill him. Hence the rock Ezel, or Azal, in referring to the flight of David from his enemy, takes on the new significance of the flight of the Holy Remnant from their enemy to the valley of safety that will be miraculously provided by a literal earthquake.

Comment: The *Fourth Volume*, page 653, gives the spiritual significance of the valley, as follows:

“The removal of one part of the mountain to the north and the other to the south is significant; the North is the direction of the group Pleiades, the celestial center of the universe, the supposed seat of divine empire. This would seem to indicate the ‘*change*’ of the Gospel Church at this time, from human to spirit conditions as ‘partakers of the

divine nature': and the removal of the other half of the mountain would seem to signify the complete restitution, to perfect human conditions, of those ancient worthies accounted worthy to constitute the earthly representatives of God's Kingdom.

"The valley thus produced would be one full of light—free from shadows: for the sun would stream through it from east to west. This speaks symbolically of the Sun of Righteousness and its full light of divine truth and blessing scattering the shadows of sin, ignorance, superstition and death, and healing and restoring the willing and obedient of humanity who will flee to this valley of blessings, the valley of mercy. The valley of mercy, *between* and under the care of the spiritual and human phases of the Kingdom of Light and Peace (the establishment of Jehovah's feet) will surely be a 'Valley of Blessings' to all who enter it with broken and contrite hearts."

Reply: The Pastor gave a figurative application. The "light" is discussed in verse 7.

Zech. 14:6 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark:

There will not be much light at this point.

Comment: The description sounds like the atmospheric condition at the time of the Crucifixion.

Reply: Yes, because darkness was over the land of Israel from the sixth hour to the ninth hour, that is, from noontime until 3 p.m. This supernatural phenomenon indicated that the God of nature was disturbed at the Crucifixion of His Son. Conditions will be similar in the future except that there will be a larger application.

Notice, "the light shall not be clear, nor dark"; that is, it will be gray, the in-between tone between black and white. In other words, it will be overcast and cloudy, hence a confused light, the light of a cloudy day.

Zech. 14:7 But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.

This "one day," which will be known to Jehovah, will be neither day nor night. Almost every day has a sunrise and a sunset, and when the sun sets, there is complete darkness. Back in Joshua's day, a miraculous phenomenon occurred whereby the Lord favored him in the destruction of the Amorites by prolonging the day (Josh. 10:12-14). A *Reprint* article explains that light was reflected back, thus illuminating the night and preventing the usual contrast between light and darkness.

Although verses 4-7 are to be kept separate from verse 8, the account is preparing us for what will occur in the near future. The day in which "living waters" go out from Jerusalem is longer than 24 hours. In that "day," water will go out from the Third Temple. Half of the water will flow into the Mediterranean Sea, and the other half will go into the Dead Sea.

The "one day" of verse 7 will be a day of confusion—an abnormal period of time. In Joshua's long day of 24 hours, there were great hailstones, which usually come when there is a change, a mixture, between light and darkness. (Incidentally, we heard recently that hailstones as large as grapefruits fell in a very concentrated area of the United States.) The hailstones, plus the confusion of light and darkness that produces them, will be only one miracle among many miracles when God delivers the Holy Remnant. During the earthquake that opens a great valley between the two parts of the Mount of Olives, the sky will be overcast, and the effect will be a reminder of the dividing of the waters of the Red Sea when the Israelites fled from

Egypt in the Exodus. In the near future, the Holy Remnant will *flee* as the Israelites *fled* for safety in the days of Uzziah. Thus the account is connecting the God of the past, who performed miracles, with the God who delivers the Holy Remnant. Mankind thinks of the miraculous accounts of Old Testament times as fables, but they will think otherwise when miraculous events occur in connection with the inauguration of the Kingdom. These events will be samplings of the many miracles God did in the past. Thus the darkness of the future “day” will be reminiscent of the darkness in Joshua’s long day.

We question whether all the various miracles of the future will happen in one 24-hour day. Perhaps they will occur in one week, with one miracle after another taking place, so that they will sink into the consciousness of the people on the scene. But during that period of time, no sunrise or sunset will be seen in that locale in Israel, for in the vicinity of Jerusalem will be this cloudy experience. In the confusion and with all the miracles transpiring, the people will not be able to distinguish day from night. From their perspective, it will seem like one very long gray and cloudy day with a continuous flow of miracles. Just how long that “day” is we do not know, but it will not be a literal 24-hour day. We think that at least two 24-hour days will be involved in this elongated “day,” but the events could continue for a week.

When the Holy Remnant flee to the valley of the mountains, the Ancient Worthies will begin to appear on the scene. Of course both the Little Flock and the Great Company will be beyond the veil at this time. In the deliverance of the Holy Remnant, God will speak once with a great natural phenomenon, He will speak a second time with a great natural phenomenon, and when He speaks the third time, the people will see that the God *of nature*, the God *of Israel*, is expressing Himself on behalf of that nation. He will make bare His holy arm at that time.

Zech. 14:8 And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.

The beginning of this chapter pertains to gathering all nations against Jerusalem to battle. Then casualties are mentioned in connection with that battle. Eventually the deliverance of Israel out of Jacob’s Trouble takes place. Verse 5 tells that the Holy Remnant will flee through the valley of the mountains to Azal. That unique “day” will cover a short period of time, the duration of which is not stated. At that juncture, after the deliverance of Jacob from the trouble, waters will “go out from Jerusalem.” Ezekiel 47:1 states that the waters will issue forth from under the Third Temple, which will be north of the city, relatively in the suburbs, and on the top of Mount Zion. Of course the land will be different after the earthquake, but in any event, half of the waters from the city of Jerusalem will go “toward the former sea [the Dead Sea, the sea to the east, the sea in front of the city and the Temple],” and half will go “toward the hinder sea [the Mediterranean].”

The waters will flow “in summer and in winter,” meaning year-round, because they will come from a spring. As “living waters,” they will flow *continually* and not be dependent upon rain. The term “living waters” is stated in the plural because the one stream that first appears will part into two streams, with one sector going toward the Dead Sea and the other sector going toward the Mediterranean Sea.

Zech. 14:9 And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

Notice the repetitious expression “in that day” in this chapter. “And his [Jehovah’s] feet shall stand *in that day* upon the mount of Olives” (verse 4). “And it shall come to pass *in that day*, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark” (verse 6). “And it shall be *in that day*, that living waters

shall go out from Jerusalem” (verse 8). “*In that day* shall there be one LORD” (verse 9). “And it shall come to pass *in that day*, that a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them” (verse 13). “*In that day* shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD” (verse 20). “*In that day* there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts” (verse 21). The expression refers to a period of time that starts with these events. The events are not all simultaneous, but they will happen relatively close together, beginning with the salvation of the Holy Remnant. Some of the events will continue, but they will have their start in this period. Therefore, the expression “in that day” indicates that these events are future and that they will occur one after the other. Other Scriptures confirm that many events will occur in a short period of time.

Jehovah shall be “king” in that day. When the Kingdom is inaugurated, the credit will initially go to God, not Jesus, for God will open the door of the Kingdom Age. He wants it to be known that He is the Author, the Originator, and the Promoter of these events. The anger that comes from His inner parts up into His face will be seen (Ezek. 38:18). Shortly after the inauguration of *God’s* Kingdom, it will be known that *He* has appointed a day in which He will judge mankind by “that man” Jesus Christ, whom He has ordained (Acts 17:31). As the Messiah, Jesus will be seen as the channel through which the Kingdom blossoms forth. Thus it will be the Kingdom of God and of The Christ, Head and body (Rev. 11:15). At that time, the people will quickly become converts, for they will see that the real God is the God of Israel. As an exception, portions of Egypt will be hesitant to conform (Zech. 14:18,19).

The reign over the world will begin when it is seen that there is *one* God. Moreover, the Kingdom will be established *with authority*, for Jesus, as God’s agent, will rule with an *iron rod*.

Zech. 14:10 All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin’s gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king’s winepresses.

The turning of the land “as a plain from Geba to Rimmon” by an earthquake will take place at the beginning of the Kingdom Age. This miraculous phenomenon will be like an awakening or an announcement from God that He is taking over. His Son will then begin to take unto himself his great power to reign. God will be the General, as it were, doing one thing, and Jesus will do another. In a subsequent study, it would be helpful to try to explain the relationship of the two in connection with the rescue of the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble and the inauguration of the Kingdom.

Zechariah described the land in the terminology of Jerusalem as it existed in his day. Of course at that time, after the 70-year desolation of the land, the city was not in the best condition. Zechariah prophesied that the land will be lifted up by the earthquake and inhabited “from Benjamin’s gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king’s winepresses.” In addition, the land will be lifted up “as a plain,” meaning it will be lifted up more or less from its old level to a much higher level that will be convenient for building a city.

Zechariah was describing the future city, not the Temple Mount. However, if all the land, as described here, is to be lifted up, then the Temple Mount will also be lifted up, for it will be even higher than the city and to the north. This description, which is *natural*, not spiritual, will be the result of a *literal* earthquake. By mentioning five gates, or landmarks, the prophet gave the outer parameters of the city. Thus a line could be drawn around the city by connecting the five points. The area affected by the earthquake will be larger than just Jerusalem, for the suburbs of Geba and Rimmon are included. The Prophet Ezekiel also described the earthquake:

“For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I [God] spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a *great shaking in the land of Israel*; So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground” (Ezek. 38:19,20). As the climax of Jacob’s Trouble, this event will bring about the establishment of God’s authority. He will thus make known that a change in dispensation is taking place.

Geba, a suburb north of Jerusalem, was situated on a portion of the boundary line that separated the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. The other ten tribes were farther north. Judah extended quite a distance to the south, but verse 10 is talking only about the area where the earthquake will be specially focused.

Rimmon was a suburb southwest of Jerusalem. There are many interpretations as to what Rimmon signifies, but we understand that the Rimmon spoken of here is still a part of the tribe of Benjamin, although it is on the dividing line between Judah and Benjamin. The line of demarcation between the two tribes is very irregular. Some Scriptures indicate that Jerusalem is situated in Benjamin, and others say Judah. The peculiarity is due to the irregular boundary line that existed in Zechariah’s day, and he described Rimmon according to the terrain as he knew it. In the Kingdom, the land divisions for the 12 tribes will be different, for God has predetermined parallel-line boundaries (Ezek. 48:1-29). Many things will happen in the first few years of the establishment of the Kingdom, including the speedy construction of the Third Temple.

Thus the outer parameters of the earthquake will be from Geba to Rimmon, and Jerusalem will be affected because it is located within those boundaries. Zechariah gave a general description of both the outer and the inner boundaries of the portion of land that will be affected by the earthquake.

Chapter 14 is very dramatic. Evangelical Christians are familiar with these Scriptures and the ones about Gog and Magog, and some of them give interesting talks. However, the events will be even more startling than they realize because they consider the setting to be the time of their rapture. Hence they forget to dwell on the little details. Not understanding about restitution, evangelical Christians are generally not interested in what will happen to the rest of mankind except to believe they will be destroyed. They believe that Israel will be honored at that time and that the saints will be caught up in the air to be kings and priests in Jerusalem. (They think of a literal Jerusalem but in different terminology.) They are so focused on the spiritual that they do not give much attention to the natural, even though they are familiar with and quote the literal. Of course we believe in an *invisible* translation of the last body members into the spiritual phase of the Kingdom of the Lord, that is, a translation of the new creature but not of our physical bodies. As recorded in this chapter, very powerful events will occur.

Zech. 14:11 And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

Verse 11 is an addendum to verse 10, which tells that Jerusalem will be built and inhabited. Never again will the city be overturned to other powers, for henceforth it will be inhabited safely forever. There “shall be no more utter destruction.” This will be a tremendous change from the prior history of the city of Jerusalem and its inhabitants.

With this description, we are ushered into the Kingdom Age, but the account goes back and forth because so many diverse events will be happening—and some contemporaneously—that

they cannot be strung together in consecutive continuity. Chapter 14 describes a most unusual time period, showing that the inauguration of the Kingdom will be with POWER. Down through the permission of evil, Jehovah has been quiet. He hides Himself until this future time when He will make bare His holy arm and show His AUTHORITY.

Zech. 14:12 And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.

Over the years, many have tried to spiritualize this verse, but the subject matter is a *literal* plague. We usually think of a plague as a disease, but it can also be a punishment. A plague is an untoward horrendous event. Consider the ten plagues in Egypt that preceded the Exodus. Some of the plagues were a disease, and others were happenings of nature. The terminology of verse 12 is meant to remind us of Egypt. When the Lord delivered His children from Egypt, He inflicted upon the Egyptians all manner of hazardous occurrences called “plagues.”

Verse 12 tells the nature of this particular plague, which is one of several that will occur when God delivers the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble. With regard to the forces of Gog, “their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.” This startling description suggests the use of nuclear power, for *while the people are standing on their feet*, these conditions will occur. God, as Creator, powerfully bound the atoms together to make up hydrogen, oxygen, and other elements, and splitting them would result in this consuming effect.

This plague will take place in a limited area. In fact, the supernatural miracles will be peculiar and particular events of various kinds that will occur in a separate locale so that they can be seen as distinct plagues. With the focalization, or localization, the plagues will be seen and noted by survivors so that they can give eyewitness testimony in the Gentile homelands.

Zech. 14:13 And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour.

Verse 13 is a picture of confusion where everyone rises up against his neighbor. Again this event will be a repeat of what happened to some of Israel’s enemies in the past, for example, to the Midianites when Gideon and the 300 men with him broke their earthen vessels and blew their trumpets at night (Judg. 7:19-22). The enemy destroyed each other, thinking they were killing the Israelites. Hence the anarchy, confusion, and tumult will be “from the LORD.”

Comment: With the cloudy, gray condition at that time, poor visibility will add to the confusion.

Reply: Yes, verse 6 says that the light shall not be clear or dark but foggy. This verse is literal. It is true that there are spiritual lessons, but in order to understand them, we first need to understand the natural setting. Otherwise, we are apt to go outside the parameters of the literal and misinterpret the spiritual lesson.

Zech. 14:14 And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance.

Judah’s fighting against Jerusalem is an earlier separate event; that is, it will not occur in the midst of the tumult when God is saving the Holy Remnant. It would not be logical for Judah to be fighting with the radiation, confusion, etc., going on. Why would Judah have to fight against

the enemy forces who are *slaying themselves*?

“The wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance.” The wealth of the Gog host will be left when five sixths of the enemy are destroyed. This host that comes down from the north to spoil Jerusalem will want to wipe the city from the face of the earth. In addition, Gog’s intention will be to *live* in Israel. They will come down not merely to kill the Jews but also to occupy the land that is situated in the navel of the earth, which will have food and goodies not available in the other nations during the anarchy. Therefore, Jerusalem will be center stage, and the events that occur there will be made known to all mankind. The enemy will come down with big knapsacks of personal belongings and precious items they have robbed from other peoples, for their intention will be to capture and remain in the land of Israel. When the Holy Remnant ends up with the spoil instead, the event will be reminiscent of the Old Testament account of King Jehoshaphat and his singing army, who ended up with a great spoil (2 Chron. 20:1-30).

The horde that comes down from the north will be halfway between guerrilla warfare and a regular army. They will have weapons of war but relatively few vehicles of transport, which Ezekiel called “horses” because there were no armored tanks in his day (Ezek. 38:4,15). After Gog is defeated, Israel will convert the weapons of war into agricultural implements and industrial purposes. When melted down, the metal of a tank will be very useful, for it is refined steel that will enrich Israel for constructive purposes in the Kingdom.

Q: Will ash from the earthquake cause the fog and cloudiness?

A: Yes, that is what happened in Jesus’ day. The darkness over the land from noon until 3 p.m. was the result of dust from an earthquake that hid the light of the sun. Normally the sun is in its fullness at noontime but not on that day.

The plague of verse 12 will be a localized nuclear reaction. Many people think that man, with his ingenuity, has discovered all the wonderful inventions of today, but the laws of science have been known to God from the beginning when He set them in motion, so splitting the atom and hydrogen fusion are nothing new at all. The phenomena of nature in Jacob’s Trouble will humble man, who has a high opinion of himself.

What people have considered to be fables in the Old Testament will literally reoccur in the near future in such a fashion that the Gentile survivors of this experience will testify, “We have seen these miracles with our own eyes, and at least a million of us have survived!” Their testimony will be immutable evidence that such events did occur.

Q: Verse 14 begins, “And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem,” but the King James margin has “*against* Jerusalem.” Which thought is correct?

A: The preposition “against” is a better rendering because Judah will be fighting against the enemy in Jerusalem. The city will be taken by the enemy. Gog will possess Jerusalem prior to the miraculous intervention to save the Holy Remnant. When Gog and host come down from the north, they will conquer Jerusalem. They will rob and kill the inhabitants and rape the women, so the enemy will appear to have won the battle. Then God will go forth and fight as “in the day of battle” (verse 3).

Judah will be on the outside of the city, and God will “save the tents of Judah first” (Zech. 12:7). Jerusalem is a city in Judah, whereas the “tents of Judah” are the smaller cities in the tribe of Judah. Details about that victory are not given, whereas the deliverance of Jerusalem is described with much detail. When Judah fights against Jerusalem, God will defeat the enemy.

The people of Judah will then enter the city and find that the victory has been accomplished for Israel. And the survivors of Gog, as well as the survivors of Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish, will return to their homelands to testify as to what occurred. Thus when Judah enters Jerusalem, the situation will be much like that with King Jehoshaphat, who was handed a victory.

Zech. 14:15 And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague.

The horse, the mule, the camel, the ass, and all the beasts refer to the enemy's means of transportation. The instrumentation on the tanks and other vehicles will go awry, leaving the equipment in total disarray. The enemy's munitions of war, which are initially successful, will become immobilized with all sorts of mechanical, electronic, and physical problems.

Zech. 14:16 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

Verse 16 and subsequent verses discuss the opening phase of the Kingdom. The nations will already have been apprised of what happened when Jacob was saved out of its trouble and "the LORD of hosts" fought on Israel's behalf.

"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations [the Gentiles] which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship ... and to keep the feast of tabernacles." If this statement is taken literally, there is a problem, for the primary emphasis is on the Gentiles and the Jews already in Israel. However, Jews will also be spared in Gentile lands, and the Gentiles will want to ship them back to Israel.

Zechariah was saying that those of the enemy host who are in Israel at the time of Jacob's Trouble and survive and go back to their homelands will feel an obligation to return to Jerusalem each year for the Feast of Tabernacles. So startling will be the deliverance in which they themselves are spared—let alone the Holy Remnant—that they will *desire* to go to Jerusalem. However, verse 16 is carefully worded (and thus is an example of the Lord's Word being like silver refined seven times—Psa. 12:6).

In view of the number of Gentiles who are spared, which we think will be at least a million, it seems unreasonable that they would all be obligated to go every single year, especially when the Feast of Tabernacles will be celebrated annually throughout the Kingdom Age. Therefore, we believe the following is the thought intended. We understand the expression "from year to year" to mean that just as the Arabs feel that sometime in their lifetime, they have to go to Mecca, so in the Kingdom Age, the Gentiles who survive will have to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles from time to time. Because they were spared, they will feel duty-bound to show their respect and appreciation. In other words, they will not go to the feast every single year, but from year to year as convenient, it will be the innermost desire of their heart to make the trip. Incidentally, according to ancient tradition, all the survivors of the Noachian Flood had to go up to Ararat.

Q: Wouldn't it be more reasonable for the nations to send a representative each year to the Feast of Tabernacles?

A: We feel there is a little difference between verse 16 and verse 17. On the one hand, verse 16 is speaking of the survivors of the Gog and Magog host. It will be *on their heart* to make that pilgrimage *as often as possible*. And there is another point. For those who were involved with the host of Gog and Magog, the travel distance would probably be a maximum of about 1,200

or 1,500 miles, generally speaking. Since they will not have to cross an ocean to get to Jerusalem, they will attend the Feast of Tabernacles more frequently as *individuals*. On the other hand, verse 17 is speaking of an *annual obligation* for “all the families of the earth” to go to Jerusalem to worship God at the Feast of Tabernacles. In this case, there will be a *representation every year*, for the Gentile nations will be required to send a *delegation* to show their sympathy, appreciation, and obeisance.

Q: Is the thought that there will be a million *survivors* of Gog and Magog or that the entire host of Gog and Magog will consist of a million people?

A: Of the whole host of Gog and Magog, only one-sixth will be spared, and we think that the one-sixth will be more than a million individuals. From that standpoint, we can see how tremendous the host will be prior to God’s deliverance of the Holy Remnant; that is, the enemy will comprise 6 million or even 7 million people at the time they come down from the north and enter Israel. We have given much consideration to what will be involved from a mathematical standpoint.

Therefore, it is important to make a distinction between verses 16 and 17. To repeat, verse 16 pertains to the spared *individuals* of Gog and Magog, whereas verse 17 has to do with *everyone in all the nations*, so a representation, or delegation, will be sent in the latter case. Otherwise, the Third Temple, as large as it will be, would not even begin to accommodate the number of people attending the Feast of Tabernacles.

Zech. 14:17 And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.

Now, as previously stated, all the nations of earth are included. Each year all nations will have to go *representatively* to Jerusalem to worship Jehovah by sending a delegation.

Comment: Verse 17 seems to be a warning, for God will not just summarily destroy these recalcitrant “families” but will withhold the rain as a lesson.

Reply: Verse 17 pertains to “whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth [as a representation] unto Jerusalem.” For the people who refuse to send a delegation, “even upon them shall be no rain.” Verses 18 and 19 help by giving an example. These verses contain a lot of information, so we should go slowly lest we make wild statements that do not fit the picture.

Zech. 14:18 And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

Zech. 14:19 This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

For some reason, Egypt will not go up to the Feast of Tabernacles, and a judgment of “no rain” will be inflicted. Verse 18 sounds conditional—that rain will be withheld *if* “the family of Egypt go not up.” But verse 19 tells that Egypt *will disobey* and that a punishment *will come* upon that nation because of failure to fulfill this requirement.

Why will the observance of the *Feast of Tabernacles* be mandatory in the Kingdom Age, and not the Feast of Passover or Pentecost? Under the Mosaic Law, all males over a certain age were required to go to Jerusalem to observe all three feasts: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. In the Feast of Passover, the emphasis was on Jesus as an individual—he alone was the Passover

lamb—and the Feast of Pentecost pertained to the Church. However, the emphasis of the Feast of Tabernacles is on the world. Christians fit into the Pentecostal arrangement, and Jesus was very much in the Passover arrangement. On his shoulders came the deliverance of not only the Jews in Egypt but also those who were spared in the crossing of the Red Sea. The people's getting on the other side pictures the experience of mankind in the Kingdom Age. In other words, there is a mini-picture within a larger picture.

Q: In what month was the Feast of Tabernacles observed?

A: The Feast of Tabernacles followed the Day of Atonement, which was on the tenth day of the seventh month. The Feast of Tabernacles began five days later, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, according to the *sacred* Jewish calendar (and not according to the Babylonian calendar, which marked the civil year). In other words, the civil year begins in the fall, and the ecclesiastical year begins in the spring, in March or April depending on the year in the lunar calendar. Those individuals who become members of the firstborn class—be it the Little Flock or the Great Company—appreciate Jesus' sacrifice while they are in the flesh in the *present life*. In contrast, the Feast of Tabernacles stands out for the world of mankind in the *Kingdom Age*.

Egypt will not follow suit when the Kingdom is initially set up. We recall that Egypt is not listed among the peoples who comprise Gog and Magog (Ezek. 38:1-6). Therefore, when all the miraculous judgments occur primarily in the Jerusalem area in the deliverance of the Holy Remnant, no Egyptians will be on the scene. Hence none of them will be among the one-sixth survivors of the forces of Gog, and no eyewitnesses will return to Egypt. The Jews resident in Israel who are of the Holy Remnant will be fully cognizant of the events, whereas the Egyptians, who have a strong hatred for Israel, will be absent. Occasionally the news media mentions that of all the Muslims who hate the Jews today, the most intense hatred is in Egypt. We rarely hear their vitriolic and bitter statements because Egypt is not center stage among the nations. In fact, through wise policies of the Israeli leadership, Egypt is out of the picture.

Q: Then will Egypt be in the Psalm 83 setting?

A: No, Egypt is not mentioned in Psalm 83. Verses 6-8 of that Psalm read as follows: "The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes; Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assur also is joined with them: they have helped the children of Lot. Selah." While Hagar was an Egyptian, her descendants were not. Therefore, Psalm 83 refers to the Arabs who immediately surround Israel.

Israel is getting into an untenable, frustrating position and is verging on bankruptcy because so much of the national budget goes into defense and military preparedness. Therefore, the nation will be forced to either use the nuclear bomb or threaten to use it to bring about a resolution to this process. The United States is trying to implement the Road Map to Peace, but unless this country and other nations send a sizable force into Israel, there will be a real problem; namely, if the Arab enemies of Israel coordinated an attack and an invasion, they would wipe out Israel in a matter of days because of the tremendous numbers in their armies and the quantity of munitions. The deterrent thus far has been the nuclear bomb that Israel possesses. If the Arab nations get their own nuclear capability, they will not be inhibited by Israel's threat, and they will do their utmost to get rid of Israel immediately. About a year and a half ago, the prime minister of Iran said, "The first nuclear bomb we get will be for Tel Aviv."

Q: Then will the Lord destroy the Egyptians?

A: Yes, He will destroy the Egyptians who are recalcitrant. For one thing, a natural punishment will be visited upon Egypt that will affect the Nile River (Isa. 11:15).

Q: Are these the ones in verse 18 that God will “smite”?

A: Yes, but the destruction, or smiting, will be temporary, for they will come forth in the general resurrection. Similarly, the Jews and the five sixths of the forces of Gog who die when God saves the Holy Remnant will come forth in the resurrection and be dealt with as individuals.

Q: What is the time setting here? Has the resurrection started?

A: The setting is the Kingdom Age, but before the general resurrection begins, the current generation has to learn about Jesus. Then, as each wave comes forth from the grave, each person will have to learn about Jesus, for that knowledge is guaranteed to every individual of the human race. One cannot go into Second Death without first knowing that he is the Savior. Judas knew Jesus was the Messiah and had plenty of light. Moreover, the scribes and Pharisees at the First Advent, particularly those at the very high echelon, incurred great responsibility.

Q: Is the following the correct thought? The Egyptians referred to in verses 18 and 19 will have lived through the Time of Trouble. Because of refusing to go up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, God will withhold rain.

A: Rain rarely falls in Egypt. Therefore, the terminology of chapter 14 has to be understood. For example, “horses” are tanks, and “no rain” means that the Nile River will not provide its normal supply of water. The Scriptures indicate that the Nile will temporarily dry up, causing many deaths. Isaiah 11:15 reads, “And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod.”

Egyptian history tells of a “Nile-ometer” that was used in Upper Egypt to get a weather forecast for the ensuing year. This measuring device predicted whether Egypt would have a reasonable amount of water, a lot of water, or a paucity of water, and then the people tried to prepare in advance for the coming circumstance. Incidentally, there was a time early in the twentieth century when it had not rained in Egypt for 45 years. For the last decade, unusual weather changes have been taking place all over the world. In the decade before that, the Gulf Stream shifted, causing a radical change. The La Niña and the El Niño have also greatly affected the weather pattern, bringing unusual conditions.

Q: Is the thought that some who live through Jacob’s Trouble or the Time of Trouble might die but not go into Second Death?

A: Yes. Such individuals will be resuscitated to have the opportunity to know about Jesus and walk up the highway of holiness (Isa. 35:8).

Zech. 14:20 In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, **HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD;** and the pots in the LORD’S house shall be like the bowls before the altar.

Zech. 14:21 Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

For many years, and even up until recently, we have felt that the word “horses” in verse 20 represents a means of travel or doctrines. In a spiritual sense, we ride, or are guided by, doctrines. In a natural sense, horses represent agencies of travel of a material nature. The

various translations were all forced to use the word “horses,” but the problem was, How could horses have anything to do with the Third Temple when King Solomon was greatly criticized for having horses in proximity to the Temple? Some King James Bibles have the word “bridles” in the margin instead of “bells”: “In that day shall there be upon the *bridles* of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD.” In the Latin Bible, which is a translation by Jerome of the Hebrew into Latin, the word “bridles” is also used. In the Septuagint, which dates back to about 300 BC and is an Old Testament translation of the Hebrew into Greek, the rendering is also “bridles.” The point is that verse 20 has nothing to do with “bells,” and “bridles” is correct.

It has been well known by those in different nations who are familiar with history that people of honor and distinction hung gold ornaments from the horse’s bridle to show they were important individuals. Whether a person was mounted on a steed or horses were drawing a chariot, the gold symbolized wealth. When the Israelites were in the wilderness, they donated various items for the construction of the Tabernacle. The women gave their gold earrings, copper mirrors, etc.—things they used to adorn themselves. Similarly, verse 20 is saying that adornments from the horses’ bridles will be translated into wealth and given to the Jews and that the giving will be done in a proper spirit.

And there is another point about the horses. Notice that verse 16 pertains to the *movement* of people going down to Jerusalem from Russia, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, etc.—that is, the survivors of Gog and Magog—to worship God on the Feast of Tabernacles. Many people will be coming from other parts of the world for this occasion. The mode of travel is pictured by the horses, and the people will be bringing precious personal items as an offering. The items will be accepted because the people are coming with a repentant attitude. In other words, they will not be like the wealthy who, of their largesse, cast gold into the treasury to be seen of men. Instead they will be more like the widow who humbly put in her two mites (Luke 21:1-4). The point is that the people will be coming to Jerusalem to worship in sincerity, and out of a heartfelt desire to show their appreciation, they will bring their wealth.

Movement is being described. In summary, verse 16 tells that the people will go up to Jerusalem from year to year for the Feast of Tabernacles. Verses 17-19 tell what will happen to those who refuse to go up. Verse 20 talks about the bridles of the horses of the people coming from their homelands to Jerusalem and bringing that which is dear to them to express their feelings. Of course Zechariah used the term “horses,” which was appropriate for his day, to describe vehicles and transportation methods in the Kingdom.

Q: If cars are used for transportation, won’t there be a lot of pollution and traffic congestion?

A: No, because radical changes will take place. However, the changes will occur slowly because the primary purpose will be to return to an agrarian society. After the Kingdom Age, every man will have his own vine and fig tree, but the beginning will be a period of adjustment, starting with the individuals themselves. The labor aspect will change when people can eat of the trees of Paradise, but there is no indication of that being done during the Kingdom Age.

The second half of verse 20 is linked to verse 21. “In the LORD’S house,” the Third Temple, the “bowls before the altar” will be holy. “Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts.” So much wealth will be brought that the situation will be reminiscent of the great wealth that the Egyptians gave to the Israelites after the tenth plague to show appreciation for their deliverance (Exod. 3:21,22). Not only will there be pots in the Temple, but every pot in the city of Jerusalem and in the tribe of Judah (outside Jerusalem) will be “holiness unto the LORD of hosts.” The wealth of the nations will come to Israel, and God will allow the freewill offerings to be accepted. Normally speaking, Gentile offerings would not be permitted, but the spirit of contrition and appreciation will make them acceptable.

Verse 21 certainly proves there will be a literal Temple in Jerusalem in the Kingdom. “All they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and see the [food] therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.” Some try to use Revelation 21:22,23 to disprove the thought of a literal Temple. “And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” However, to say there will be no literal Temple in the Kingdom, one would also have to say there will be no sun or moon. That text in the Book of Revelation is saying that there will be no “temple” in the glorified Church. The New Jerusalem, the holy city that comes down from heaven to reign, is the Bride, who will not need a place of worship, a sun, or a moon, for the saints will have light within them. However, a *literal* house of worship in Jerusalem is another matter. Thus Revelation, the *spiritual* book of signs and symbols, cannot be mixed with the *literal* books of Ezekiel and Zechariah. In summary, there will be a literal Temple with spiritual lessons *in the earth*, whereas the Revelation setting pertains to the city *in heaven* that comes down. The heavenly city will not need a light, “for the glory of God ... and the Lamb” will be its light (Rev. 21:23).

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The following update, or amendment, was given in December 2005.

Zechariah 14:1-5

Zechariah 14:1 reads, “Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.” This “day of the LORD” is the real end time, when the forces of Gog and Magog come down into the land of Israel. When God disposes of these forces, the booty, or spoil, that they bring down with them will be utilized by the nation of Israel for agricultural and industrial purposes. This conversion is spoken of as swords being figuratively beaten “into plowshares” and spears “into pruninghooks” (Isa. 2:4).

Zechariah 14:2 states, “For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken.” We have emphasized for many years that the *whole* city of Jerusalem will be taken, not half of the city, but it is the *New City* of Jerusalem, the western part where the Jews are, that will be captured. Why? Because the Old City is already, to all practical purposes, filled with Muslims who dwell there. Thus, when the forces of Gog and Magog come down, they will defeat Israel and take the New City of Jerusalem.

Verse 2 continues: “... and the houses [will be] rifled [pillaged for booty], and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.” With regard to half of the city going “forth into captivity,” the word “captivity” is a proper translation of the Hebrew word, but we do not think it is proper in this particular context. For years we have been looking for a parallel proof, or evidence, to assure us that we have a correct understanding of this portion of verse 2, but we could not find one. However, this same chapter tells that when the forces of Gog and Magog come down, there will be, among many other signs and wonders, an earthquake which divides the Mount of Olives in twain, that is, in the midst. “And his [God’s] feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south” (Zech. 14:4). Notice the next verse: “And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the *earthquake* in the days of Uzziah king of Judah” (Zech. 14:5). In other words, when Gog and

Magog come down, an earthquake will open up a valley to provide some Jews with a way of escape. They will flee for refuge in that valley.

To repeat the problem, verse 2 says, “Half of the city shall go forth into captivity,” but we could not find a second witness in Scripture to explain and verify this flight. Then, lo and behold, it became apparent that the answer, the second proof text, has been right under our nose for years, as we will try to show.

The Hebrew word translated “captivity” is *golah*. In a number of places in Scripture, the word is properly rendered “captivity,” but in at least four other places, it is correctly translated otherwise, as we believe it should also be here in verse 2. The reason is that in this instance, *golah* is a participle, which is a verbal form usually ending in “ing,” and it has a continuum of action. Moreover, here *golah* is an *active* participle. (“Active” means the subject is *doing* the action, whereas “passive” means something is *being done* to the party.) The point is that the Jews who flee at the time of the earthquake will not be taken into captivity but will actually be fleeing, departing, and/or going away. Thus verses 2 and 5 are saying the same thing. “Half of the city shall go forth in *fleeing* [or departing].” “And ye shall *flee* to the valley of the mountains; ... yea, ye shall *flee*, like as ye *fled* from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah.” A flight of Israelis will take place when the earthquake occurs. The mountain will split to the north and to the south, opening up a large valley in between that runs east and west (verse 4). Because of the detail furnished in Scripture, we can almost approximate the width of that valley, even mathematically. Jews will flee to safety through that valley, which will reach to Azal, a specific location east of the metropolis of Jerusalem.

However, before the Mount of Olives is split by the earthquake and Jews flee through the valley that opens up, other events will occur. The Muslims will be delirious with joy when they capture the New City of Jerusalem. Meanwhile, when it is realized that the forces of Gog and Magog are approaching, the Jews in the Old City will flee to the suburbs and hide there. The Muslims will be so preoccupied in rifling the houses, ravishing the women, taking a spoil, etc., that for a while, they will confine their activities to the New City and ignore the Old City. In due time, however, they will march on the Old City and start out into the suburbs with the intention of seizing the rest of the Jews and their possessions. At that point, God will cause the Mount of Olives to split, miraculously opening up a valley. Then He will start His miraculous deliverance of the Holy Remnant, of which those Jews in the Jerusalem area will be a part (Dan. 12:1; Isa. 4:3). As they flee to safety through the valley, the experience will be reminiscent of when the Israelites crossed the Red Sea at the time of the Exodus.

Zechariah 14:3 states, “Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.” However, God will not enter into the deliverance of Israel until, first, the earthquake occurs. Then, right away, a string of miraculous events will happen.

But, first, Jerusalem (the New City) will be defeated, and the Muslims will be deliriously happy, relishing what they consider their victory and feeling that their hope of destroying Israel has finally been accomplished. However, there is a providential reason for the temporary defeat of the city; namely, when the whole scenario is finished, it will be seen that the victory is *Jehovah's*. Even though the account says that Judah will fight, the Jews will not fight henceforth from the moment the earthquake opens the valley and God begins the miraculous deliverance (Zech. 14:14). The victory will be attributed to *God alone*. Two beautiful Old Testament pictures indicate that without a single sword being used by Israel, God will deliver His people.

One picture took place when King Jehoshaphat had a choir sing with joy ahead of him as he and the Israelites went to fight the Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Edomites. They went to battle in this rather strange fashion, and in the final analysis, Judah did not have to lift a finger

for the victory, for the enemies got confused and, in their confusion, killed one another. When Jehoshaphat came down, the entire landscape was filled with corpses and blood. Clearly, the salvation was Jehovah's (2 Chron. 20:1-25).

The second picture, a prototype of an antitype, is of King Sennacherib of Assyria. He had defeated northern Israel much earlier and then, later, entered the land of Judah and laid waste most of the cities. His next plan was to capture Jerusalem. Therefore, Sennacherib sent Rabshakeh to tell King Hezekiah to give up and submit because Jerusalem would be defeated. Other conversations and threats ensued, but that night an angel of Jehovah slew 185,000 Assyrians in the environs outside Jerusalem. King Sennacherib fled to the north, where he was finally assassinated (Isa. 37:36-38).

Thus two pictures show that *God alone* delivered Israel in the past, and this will happen again in Jacob's Trouble. Israel will then see that if it were not for God, there would be no hope whatsoever against such enormous odds coming against the nation at that juncture of time.

The next topic is (1) the burying of those who die when God delivers the Holy Remnant out of Jacob's Trouble and (2) the setting up of the Kingdom. So many people will come down against Israel in the forces of Gog from the land of Magog—that is, hordes from Russia, as well as Muslims from the satellite nations of Russia—that the burial of the dead bodies will take seven months (Ezek. 39:12). The stink of so many corpses will be horrific. "But I [God] will remove far off from you [Israel] the northern army [Gog], and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and *his stink* shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things" (Joel 2:20). In fact, it will take longer than seven months for all of the skeletal remains to be removed from the land. Work crews will be hired to collect the bones that remain after the mass burial.

This burial must be accomplished before thoughts can turn to building Ezekiel's Temple. Thus a large time element will be involved before the Kingdom can be established, whereas we tend to think in terms of only a day or a week. It will take time for all nations to know that Jehovah is the God of Israel (Ezek. 39:7,8). When the one-sixth survivors of Gog and Magog slowly go the distance back to their homelands—i.e., not by airplane—they will testify what happened. Their eyewitness testimony will be needed because the whole communication system will be nonfunctional at that time. The system is so delicate that very little will be needed to destroy the means of communication.

Moreover, the survivors of the onlookers from the three nations that are there—Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish in the type—will also return to their homelands and tell what they personally witnessed. But these events are only the beginning of the story.

After the Jews get rid of the smell of the corpses, news will have to be disseminated of this most startling historic event in which God manifests His power in various ways to deliver Israel. It will take time not only for the news to reach Russia, Europe, and the United States but also for the news to sink in so that the people "take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you [and want to conform]: for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech. 8:23). But what about other nations such as China? We do not think any citizens of China will be participating in the forces of Gog because that country is too far away geographically. To transport an army to Israel, an armada of planes would be needed to fly over the highest mountains in the world. One out of three people lives in China. This immense populace knows about Confucius and Buddha, but they know relatively little about Christianity. Therefore, for them to know about God's deliverance of Israel will take still more time. Not only do they have to hear of the events, but they have to change their own religion. They have to see that Christ alone is the way to salvation. And Africa will also be a problem.

Certain portions of that continent are enlightened, but prejudices have to be removed. For example, the Muslim populace in Egypt has a deep-seated hatred for Israel.

Incidentally, Egypt is not numbered among the nations that will come down against Israel in Gog and Magog, nor are they in the equation of Psalm 83. The Egyptians know that if they act, the Israelis can drop a bomb on the Aswan Dam, causing devastating effects. The Prophet Zechariah foretold that God will inflict a plague of “no rain” upon Egypt to bring the people of that country into conformity with Israel. Eventually, down the road, Israel, Assyria, and Egypt will be in complete harmony with one another, but it will take time for the hatred and animosity to subside (Isa. 19:23,24). And there is a hint that Egypt will not be the only nation that is recalcitrant and reluctant to accept Jesus because of beliefs existing from childhood over many centuries. “And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles” (Zech. 14:17-19).

In summary, time will be needed to bring into alignment all the living generations upon the face of the earth. All will need to be in harmony with God before the general resurrection of the dead can even begin to take place. The people who live through the Time of Trouble will have to be schooled and tried. Those who are willing and obedient and who bow the knee to Jesus will get a trial period of 100 years to walk up the highway of holiness. Thus a hundred years will be needed before the raising of any of the dead of the general world of mankind.

A number of problems have to be dealt with first. When we start to consider some of them, we get a better feel of the prophetic events that must occur. For example, even though Israel will be wonderfully delivered, the nation will be at war *after* their deliverance. After the Jews clean up the land and do other things, they will still have enemies, namely, those living who know nothing about Christ. Consider Arafat’s progeny, for example. They are raised from childhood to hate Israel. Can the mind and heart of a terrorist be changed to accept the Lord Jesus Christ overnight? No, some teaching will be required. An iron rod will have to be used to get many to unlearn their previous wrong thoughts, words, and deeds (Rev. 2:27; 19:15). The Kingdom message will be one of discipline, not love. Jesus will rule with a rod of iron to bring the people into conformity and make them kneel before him. After he knocks them over the head, as it were, he will reason with them, saying, “I am the only way to life. You must come through me, the Son, the Savior of mankind.”

Zechariah 14:4 states, “And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east.” These “feet” are not the last members of the body of Christ but *Jehovah’s* feet, for the miracles that are done during the time of Jacob’s Trouble to deliver Israel from the enemy host will be peculiarly identified with *Jehovah Himself*. He is the One who will split the Mount of Olives.

ZECHARIAH CHAPTERS 12-14

(Excerpted from study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1991)

Zech. 12:1 The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.

The word “burden” indicates a problem is coming; namely, the nation of Israel will have an experience, but the Holy Remnant will be delivered (Isa. 4:2-4).

As a preface, Jehovah is mentioned as the Creator. The purpose is to remind the Jew of God’s awesome authority, majesty, and power. *HE* created the heavens, the earth, and man, and therefore the things *HE* prophesied, to be fulfilled yet future, *will come to pass*. Though all the people of earth be against Israel, Israel has a formidable, stalwart Savior: the Creator. With Him, all things are possible.

Zech. 12:2 Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem.

God “will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about.” Jerusalem and its environs are likened to a cup, depression, or bowl. Surrounding enemy nations will drink from the bowl, resulting in staggering effects upon those (especially Gog) intent upon eliminating Israel (Ezekiel 38 and 39). The contents of the cup will produce a “poison,” or stupor (see King James margin), to Israel’s enemies.

“When they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem.” This portion of verse 2 shows where the tremendous horde that comes down from the north will ultimately center its activities. Judah is the southern part of Israel. The intent of the invading force will be concentrated against both Judah and Jerusalem—but particularly Jerusalem. The word “siege” indicates a time factor, so we know the enemy will be present for a while before God arises to deliver Israel.

At the end of the age, the nations will be gathered *against* Israel and *in* Israel. In addition to the enemy horde, United Nations and American forces will be there as peacekeepers. The enemy horde from the north will consist of a conglomerate of people: Gomer and all his bands, Togarmah, etc., but under the leadership symbol of “Gog” (Ezek. 38:2-6).

Zech. 12:3 And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

Two points are emphasized: (1) Jerusalem will be a “burdensome stone” for all people everywhere, that is, a great concern and a troublesome issue. (2) Those who actually go there to fight will be “cut in pieces.”

Note: Jerusalem will be an *international* issue, but “all” can mean *representatively*. A United Nations presence would be international representation. The United States, France, and Great Britain will be especially involved (Ezek. 38:13).

A “burdensome stone” is a heavy stone that is in the way. In fact, it is so large that it cannot be pushed out of the way. The term suggests a stone that is partly submerged in the earth and

thus is difficult to remove.

Those who “burden themselves with it [the burdensome stone]” will be those more *actively* involved in going to Israel. Israel will be an international issue, but those who go there to try to resolve the issue and/or *participate* in one way or another will be “cut in pieces,” lacerated.

The Arabs (Psalm 83) will be defeated in a different way than those who come down from the north. The latter will particularly experience God’s wrath and judgment in Jerusalem and its environs. The Arab problem will be solved earlier, that is, ahead of Jacob’s Trouble.

Zech. 12:4 In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness.

Verses 4-6 are both *literal* and figurative. Verse 4 tells us that God will smite the horses and riders of Israel’s adversaries with madness and astonishment (terror). Of course Zechariah had to use the vocabulary of his day, and back there the horse was used in warfare. Today’s equivalent would be tanks, armored vehicles, etc., and their drivers (“riders”). When God saves Israel out of Jacob’s Trouble, sudden mass electrical and mechanical failures will disable the vehicles and bewilder their operators.

The Holy Remnant will have the opposite experience. Jehovah says, “I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah.” In other words, God will “open” His favor upon them, providing guidance and protection. So great will the confusion be upon the enemy that they will even slay each other. Ezekiel 38 and 39 also show that cataclysms of nature will cause machinery to malfunction and terrify, confuse, and stupefy the enemy while the Holy Remnant survives. There will be *tremendous simultaneous* happenings and miracles—examples of *all the ways God delivered Israel in Old Testament times*. As in the Red Sea crossing at the time of the Exodus, upon the enemy will come confusion, and upon Israel will come light.

Zech. 12:5 And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the LORD of hosts their God.

“Governors of Judah” are “*clans of Judah*” in the Revised Standard Version. “Then the clans of Judah shall say to themselves, ‘The inhabitants of Jerusalem have strength through the LORD of hosts, their God.’” The “clans of Judah” are the same as the “tents of Judah” in verse 7; that is, they are the *common people*. The people themselves will fight—even though God is the real “Fighter.”

Psalm 83:4 reads, “They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.” This text shows that the intent of the enemy will be to cut off Israel from being a nation. But notice that Psalm 83 focuses on *Israel*, not on Jerusalem, and on an *Arab confederacy*, not on Gog and forces. Psalm 83 is talking about *localized* enemies and kinsmen of the Ishmael seed. It is a prayer of the right-hearted element in Israel in the face of the Arab confederacy. Verse 17 reads, “Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish.” The Psalm does not show the outcome or answer to the prayer.

Because Gog is not mentioned in Psalm 83, we see that Israel has *TWO DIFFERENT TYPES OF ENEMIES* at the end of the age: (1) The Arabs immediately surrounding Israel such as Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan are one type. These more local enemies will be confederate and threaten the existence of Israel. *Outside Jerusalem*, Judah will be threatened by this force. This situation will occur first or earlier. The Arab threat—an uprising of Tyre, Sidon, the Gaza Strip, Jordan,

etc.—will end in their defeat (Zech. 12:6). (2) The later or last type of enemy will be the Gog-from-Magog element. As a last resort, the Gog multitude will threaten and descend upon *Jerusalem*.

Zech. 12:6 In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.

Zech. 12:7 The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah.

“Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.” Although an attempt will be made to wipe out Israel in the near future, God says this will not happen to the Holy Remnant.

God will “save the tents of *Judah first*,” that is, before He saves *Jerusalem* and the Holy Remnant. The reason for the distinction and sequence is so that the Jews will not get too heady about what ultimately happens in Jerusalem. The “tents of Judah,” those in the *outlying provinces* of Judah, are one part of the picture. The other part is Jerusalem and its inhabitants, the immediate environs of the city.

Those in the outlying provinces will be like a fire in the midst of a dry sheaf. The “sheaf” (the Arabs) will be devoured by “fire.” This victory will precede the deliverance of Jerusalem. Psalm 83 describes the Arab enemies and Israel’s prayer in regard to these Arab enemies. Therefore, the “tents of Judah” pertain to Arab enemies, over which the outlying provinces of Judah will be victorious. Israel will be like a fire in a dry sheaf to the Arabs.

An important point to note is that a *time interval* will occur between the victory of Judah first and Jerusalem later, between the Arab defeat and Jacob’s Trouble. This little period will be the time of peace and prosperity when Israel dwells with “unwalled villages” and gets “cattle and goods” (Ezek. 38:11,12). In the Revised Standard Version, Ezekiel 38:10-12 says of the multitude of Gog, “Thus says the LORD GOD: On that day thoughts will come into your mind, and you will devise an evil scheme and say, ‘I will go up against the land of unwalled villages; I will fall upon the quiet people who dwell securely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having no bars or gates’; to seize spoil and carry off plunder; to assail the waste places which are now inhabited, and the people who were gathered from the nations, who have gotten cattle and goods, who dwell at the center of the earth.” While Israel is dwelling safely and in prosperity, the enemy will come down from the north.

The “tents of Judah” will be flushed with victory just as the Israelis were, on a minor scale, following the Six-Day War. At first, God was credited. For a week or two, the victory was considered miraculous. Then the Israelis credited the brilliance of *their* air force. They forgot that they had acknowledged winning the war in six days as a miracle, and they praised the intelligence and ingenuity of their *human* leadership instead. The future victory against the Arabs in the outlying provinces will be a *glorious* one. The final battle will be in the city of Jerusalem and its immediate environs.

Q: In regard to Ezekiel 38:11,12, will the period of prosperity and dwelling safely be sufficiently long for the increase in cattle and goods?

A: Yes. For several years now, the cattle have been gradually increasing, and the increase will

continue on into the peace period. When armaments are not a concern, the money will be concentrated on the economy. The war effort has been draining them, but they will get enough food and cattle to be self-sufficient. At present, they have to export weapons and food to get enough money to support their defenses and the war effort, but that situation will change.

Zechariah 12 mentions neither the time interval between the two battles (the Arab defeat and Jacob's Trouble) nor the *temporary capture and defeat of Jerusalem*. Zechariah 14:2 says, "For ... the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." Because of the *glorious victory* over the Arabs, the Jews at first will think Jerusalem is going to be protected when the Gog horde comes down. But there is to be another Holocaust in which all the ungodly of Israel will perish. The nation will go under the rod to be purged (Ezek. 20:37). All Jews whose names are not written in the book of survival will perish (Isa. 4:3; Dan. 12:1). The Scriptures must be harmonized, line upon line, and this added lesson will be needed. The early confidence of the Jews in regard to the horde from the north will give way to fear as the horde increases in size to blanket the land like a cloud and draws close to besiege Jerusalem. Then, after a temporary defeat, the Holy Remnant will be delivered.

If there were not a previous victory by Judah outside Jerusalem—that is, in the outlying provinces—those in the city who survive might get inordinately heady by God's mighty miraculous deliverance out of Jacob's Trouble. Saving Judah's tents first will be a balancing factor.

The "house of David" (verse 7) refers to Jerusalem, the capital. That is where the ruling element dwelled in Zechariah's day.

Comment: If the victory over the Arabs is a *general* one, then the purging or screening will not occur until the battle at Jerusalem. Therefore, another reason why the Jews will not get heady is that, first, it is just a general, indiscriminate saving, but in Jacob's Trouble the survivors will know they were handpicked.

Reply: Because of the nature of the battle in the general victory, the Jews will not perceive that some who live through the trouble are of the Holy Remnant. Deaths that occur in the first battle will simply be attributed to casualties of war. However, in Jacob's Trouble, each survivor will realize the Lord's protection *personally*. Jacob's Trouble will not be warfare in the usual sense. The situation will seem *hopeless*, and then *God*, through *MIGHTY MIRACLES*, will deliver the Holy Remnant. The victory will not in any way be due to *man's* efforts.

Zech. 12:8 In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.

In Jerusalem, the common people (of the Holy Remnant) will be individually strengthened as David was to fight Goliath. These are the "inhabitants of Jerusalem." In contrast, the rulership is called the "house of David." More specifically, the "house of David," the rulers, are the Ancient Worthies, who will come forth from the tomb at the "midnight" hour and be almost like God because of their stature—but on the human plane, of course (Psa. 119:62).

Comment: With the wording here ("the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them"), it sounds as if the Ancient Worthies will actually lead the Holy Remnant into victory and be like the angel of the cloud at the Exodus Red Sea crossing.

Reply: The Ancient Worthies will instruct the people. In Old Testament times, the Ancient

Worthies heard instruction in their inner ear. God spoke and they *heard* a voice. In Jacob's Trouble, the Ancient Worthies will again hear instruction and will transfer the instruction to the people, saying, "Flee. Come this way." And they will point out the direction (Zech. 14:5).

Zech. 12:9 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

"I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem." God does not say that He will *destroy* all nations but only that He will seek to do this. In effect, five-sixths will lose their lives (Ezek. 39:2). The one-sixth surviving Gentile eyewitnesses will go back to their home countries and report what they *actually saw* of God's miraculous deliverance of Israel.

Zech. 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

God will pour on the Ancient Worthies and the Holy Remnant the spirit of (1) grace and (2) supplications. The order is significant, which is the reverse of the usual. Usually one supplicates to obtain grace. Here grace *precedes* supplication. We are reminded of the brothers who intended to kill Joseph. When, years later, Joseph was made prime minister of Egypt and he disclosed his identity to them, they were in great fear, for their lives depended on the one they had betrayed. However, Joseph's grace (mercy and forgiveness) prompted him to extend kindness to them. He was kind, seeing the whole matter as God's overruling providence.

Q: If the "house of David" is the Ancient Worthies, verse 10 includes them as having the spirit of grace and supplications. Is this because they will be like Daniel, who was blameless but included himself in the prayers for Israel's sins? The Ancient Worthies were not responsible for Messiah's death, but will they have the same spirit because they identify themselves with the nation?

A: In the grave, there is no knowledge, so the Ancient Worthies will come out perfect but be unaware. Therefore, they will need to be instructed orally in the inner ear. Moses looked forward to Christ. Abraham, Daniel, and David looked forward to "that day." The Ancient Worthies will be told, "This is midnight, this is the day seen afar off, this is the end of days when you stand in your lot" (Psa. 119:62; Gen. 19:27,28; Dan. 12:13). By their very resurrection and perfect bodies (with power), they will realize they have received mercy.

"They shall look upon *me* whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for *him*, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for *him*, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." The Holy Remnant will already have a reverence for God, for they will be saved out of Jacob's Trouble because of a right character, but Jesus' being their Messiah is the problem.

When God saves Israel out of Jacob's Trouble through miracles, Jesus will *literally* be seen—but through a *vision*, or hologram, of the Crucifixion. (His flesh cannot actually be seen because he gave it for the life of the world.) A hologram is a three-dimensional picture that looks *real*. The vision will *suddenly convert* Israel to Jesus. The nation has been cultured to see him as a false Messiah, so the conversion will require something startling.

Nathanael is an example of an instant conversion, which occurred when Jesus referred to his *secret* praying under a fig tree. Another example is Zacchaeus, who accepted Jesus as Messiah when Jesus saw him up in the tree and said he would dine at the publican's house that night. Zacchaeus verbalized his conversion at his house when he said he would make good

(according to the Law) for anything exacted improperly. Still another example is the woman of Samaria at the well. When Jesus revealed that he knew her background of five husbands, she forgot her water pot and ran into the city to tell others about Jesus. She would be converted later when the gospel went to Samaria. The Apostle Paul's conversion was also fast. Hence conversion *can be quick*.

Some years back, during a thunderstorm in Israel, Sr. Saphore and her husband saw the Crucifixion in the sky. Two rabbis also testified to having seen this phenomenon. The Lord will use a similar method in the future when He delivers the Holy Remnant out of Jacob's Trouble. At that time, Jesus will appear huge in vision so that anyone in Jerusalem will see him. What will be the result? The Holy Remnant will say, "This is God's *Son—he was the Messiah!*" Their piercing of Jesus would mean they pierced *God*. Crucifying the Son, the Savior, affected the *Father*. God sent His Son to help Israel, and Israel slew Jesus. The Holy Remnant will mourn for what the nation did in crucifying Jesus. This realization will produce fear—*reverential fear*—and mourning for what they did. All previous biases and misconceptions will be smashed down. The conversion will be real and quick.

When accused of being Christ-killers down through history, the Jews proclaimed their innocence. They felt they were being persecuted and, for the most part, did not have the spirit of remembrance.

Q: Is the thought that the Israelites will look upon *God*, whom they have pierced, but that they will mourn for *Jesus*?

A: Yes. When the Holy Remnant see that the crucified Savior is the *Son of God*, they will know that the wound pierced the *Father's* heart. Perceiving the relationship between Father and Son, they will realize that the persecution upon Jesus grieved the Father. The Holy Remnant will look upon the wounds in the vision and see God being pierced. In looking at *Jesus*, they will see God; that is, they will *literally see* the Crucifixion in vision but *mentally perceive* instantly that they have offended not just Jesus but also the Father, who sent him. They will mourn, saying, "We have crucified the One sent of God." The two pronouns have an intentional distinction.

In the Old Testament, the Father is the Aleph and the Tav, the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. *God* is the beginning and the ending in the sense that His glory will He give to none other (Isa. 42:8). In the New Testament, *Jesus* is the Alpha and Omega, the Head of the Church, the beginner and finisher of our faith. God is, and always will be, the First and the Last in regard to His position as Emperor of the universe.

Jesus said to Saul, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest" (Acts 9:5). Jesus was off the scene, so his *followers* were the ones being persecuted. The same principle applies here in verse 10. Jesus was crucified, but his suffering was like persecuting the Father.

When the Holy Remnant realize that the Crucified One was *God's Son*, they will immediately know what was done to the Father. It was like putting the spear in *His* side. There is a double picture. The Holy Remnant will immediately see that they had a completely wrong concept. What they did to *Jesus*, they did to the *Father*. What is done to *Christians* is done to *Jesus*. The motives of the Little Flock have been misrepresented by fellow brethren. The Great Company will ultimately be humbled by realizing how little they knew and how little character they could discern—even though it was right in front of their eyes. Jesus was rejected by his *own* people, and he was *perfect*.

Comment: In Luke 2:35, Simeon said to Mary, "A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also." In other words, when Jesus suffered, Mary felt she was suffering too.

Reply: Mary saw the impaling of Jesus' side with a spear when she was at the foot of the Cross. At that moment, she felt a corresponding piercing. The principle is the same with the Father and the Son.

The hologram vision of the Crucifixion will be one of the very *last* miracles to occur in saving the Holy Remnant. Until this point, they will see only that *Jehovah* is fighting for their deliverance. At the end, they will realize Jesus was God's Son.

Some commentators change the pronoun "me" to "him," but the Hebrew text supports "me." "They shall look upon *me* whom they have pierced." The Latin and Greek codices also support the use of "me." (Incidentally, the Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Hebrew.)

Zech. 12:11 In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.

Zech. 12:12 And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart;

Zech. 12:13 The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart;

Zech. 12:14 All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

The mourning will affect everyone—all the survivors. From the ones on top down to the lowliest person, all will be affected. Even the Ancient Worthies will enter into the mourning with empathy, as though they, too, were guilty. "You mean Israel [we] did this as a people!?"

The miraculous, sudden conversion could not occur through reading or a discourse. A dramatic vision will lead each survivor to *personally* grieve, without wife or children. It will be a thorough and heartfelt conversion. *Personal* grief and guilt will seize *all* of the Holy Remnant. Each will want to pray separately to God.

When the Ancient Worthies are resurrected, some of their close, sympathetic companions may be raised at the same time (for example, wives).

The actual Crucifixion, filmed back there, will be played and replayed again and again in the Kingdom. In regard to the hologram of the Crucifixion, we have examples in Scripture of large manifestations of angels. Angels would have appeared *huge* to the shepherds watching their flocks the night of Jesus' birth (Luke 2:8-14). A *large* angel appeared with his sword drawn over Jerusalem (1 Chron. 21:16). Elisha prayed that his servant's eyes would be opened to see the holy angels, and they, too, were *very large* (2 Kings 6:15-17).

The following thoughts are from a study in 1972:

The "great mourning" in that (future) day in Jerusalem is likened to the mourning in the Valley of Megiddo when good King Josiah, who is a picture of Messiah, was slain in battle (2 Kings 23:29,30; 2 Chron. 35:25-27). Megiddo is a fairly large, open valley, while Hadadrimmon is a smaller area within that valley. In fact, Hadadrimmon may have been the very spot where Josiah died and a *public* mourning occurred. The nation must have really appreciated King Josiah.

When the Holy Remnant are delivered and recognize that Jesus is their Messiah and

King, the land will mourn, each family apart. The following families are enumerated: the house, family, and wives of David, Nathan, Levi, Shimei, and the people at large. These individuals are mentioned to show that *all* classes are involved. Notice that the account does not say “David” but the “*house of David*,” etc. This mourning will occur *before* the resurrection of the dead, the exception being the Ancient Worthies. Thus the *living* remnant, who *survive* Jacob’s Trouble, will mourn. These individuals are also mentioned to show that the Holy Remnant and mourning will include some of the *religious* element (Levi the priest), some of the *teaching* element (Nathan the prophet), some of the *civil ruling* element (David), and a class of Jews who were especially the avowed enemies of Christ (Shimei). “All the families that remain” would be the common people of the Holy Remnant.

Shimei abused David, the *king*, by cursing him and even by trying to stone him (2 Sam. 16:5-13). He walked along a high ridge, shouting down at David and hurling stones at him. This was a serious offense, but David had the spirit of forgiveness and also a sense of justice; that is, if he were to let his men kill Shimei, then he should do the same to his own son Absalom. In addition, David saw God’s providence in this whole affair as retribution. At the end of David’s reign when he was sick and weak, it looked as if Absalom would take over the kingdom. However, he was defeated (2 Sam. 19:18-22). When David came back the *victorious* monarch and crossed Jordan, Shimei was the first one to meet him. When Shimei prostrated himself and asked for forgiveness, David granted forgiveness the second time—this time because he did not want to mar the day of rejoicing with a death.

There is a lesson here. A restriction was placed on Shimei that he would have to live within Jerusalem or be put to death. Sometime later Shimei became so upset when two slaves fled that he left Jerusalem to get them. Then King Solomon had Shimei put to death. In this incident, David personifies Jesus during the Gospel Age, and a principle emerges. In regard to the judgment of the wicked during “David’s age” (the Gospel Age), the wicked go unpunished for their evil deeds, generally speaking. However, Solomon represents Christ in the Kingdom, and his numerous wives picture the Church. With many of the wicked at present, their judgment is *deferred* until the Kingdom. In other words, depending on the nature of the sin, the sin is not simply forgiven. If a sin is against light, punishment will have to be meted out at *some* time, either in the present age or in the next age. Hence for the most part, the “Shimei” class will be recipients of judgment in the Kingdom.

The Shimei class hate the message of salvation through Jesus. (In the type, Shimei *pursued* David and cursed him.) Thus verse 13 shows that the spirit of grace and of supplications will also extend to those Jews who rejected Christ in a special way. Most people are apathetic unless threatened, but others are avowed antagonists of Christianity. The Shimei class will probably be the first to get down on their knees—just as Shimei was when David crossed Jordan. (Shimei was not necessarily sincere, but he is a type.) We are reminded of the Apostle Paul. Just as Paul was a changed, converted man almost instantly, so it will be with this class. Since God can read the heart, He knows who will respond with such deep remorse, contrition, and conviction, and thus He will mark those individuals to be part of the Holy Remnant. Deep down their motivation is good, just as it was with Paul. The same is true with Christians. Some are converted *very suddenly* from reprobate lives. Mary Magdalene had seven devils. Not everyone with seven devils was rescued, but there was something about her heart condition that was good and unusual. Hence we can be called *in spite of our background*.

“And their wives apart.” In this great future mourning, the Holy Remnant will abstain

from normal marital relationships and activities. (Abstention was customary in the past during a fast on a holy day.) The New Testament counterpart is 1 Corinthians 7:5: “Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.” When both husband and wife are consecrated, they should abstain if one or both want to fast or bring a special problem to the Lord in prayer. To recognize the right of the other partner in this matter is good, and to inflict this restriction on oneself is also good. However, Paul counseled not to abstain for too long lest Satan tempt the other partner to look elsewhere.

The first verse of chapter 13 should be part of chapter 12, for the “spirit of grace and of supplications” is based on the fact that a fountain of forgiveness will be available to them.

Zech. 13:1 In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

A fountain of grace, mercy, and truth for sin and uncleanness will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The time setting is when Jesus’ merit is applied for the world and the Kingdom is inaugurated—and then continuing throughout the Kingdom.

Zech. 13:2 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land.

Zech. 13:3 And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth.

The cutting off of idols and causing the “unclean spirit to pass out of the land” will occur all through the Kingdom as generations come forth from the tomb. First, the current religious leadership will be removed and replaced. Only pure doctrines will be allowed when the Kingdom is established. As others come out of the tomb, they will be instructed in truth and righteousness. If the former religious leaders and false prophets try to retain their previous roles, they will be put to death. As under the old Law Covenant, their nearest earthly kin will have to “throw the first stone,” as it were. Others will then assist in the punishment.

“Cut off the *names* of the idols out of the land.” Not only will literal idols be prohibited, but even the desire for idols must be removed from the people’s hearts. The same principle applies to Christendom’s leaders: popes, cardinals, etc. They will emerge from the tomb with the same aspirations but will have to lose them in order to get life.

Comment: In the Kingdom, one might go into Adamic death again and be brought forth. For instance, if this situation were a first offense, the parents would be tested in their obedience to the Lord’s commandments in seeing that punishment takes place. Subsequently, if the Lord saw fit, the son or daughter might be resuscitated again with another opportunity.

Reply: The parents would have to show their attitude but would not necessarily have to literally kill with a sword, for example. In other words, the parents would at least have to give token consent that they agree with God’s will as expressed under Messiah. Along another line, the Mosaic Law required the exposure of a false prophet lest the one hearing also incur responsibility and guilt.

Generally speaking, each individual will have a 100-year trial to make a real change in his or her life. However, some recalcitrant, incorrigible individuals will not get a full 100 years. The test is to truly love God with all one's heart, mind, soul, and strength—and not just to obey out of prudence. To obey merely to avoid death is not the proper motive. The test at the end of the Millennium will manifest this distinction.

Comment: If such a strong test is needed for life on the *human* plane, then the same spirit *must operate* among the Spirit-begotten ones now. A stand for truth and righteousness must be taken now, when necessary.

Reply: Yes. See Luke 14:26,27. “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” We must love God more than any earthly relative and more than our own life if we would be Jesus' disciple. That is the divine standard for *all* who get life in this age, Little Flock or Great Company. And perfect love is the standard for the next age too—perfect love for *God*. The difference is that conditions in the Kingdom will be favorable to obedience and the attainment of life, whereas now we have obstacles.

Comment: The fountain in verse 1, being one of mercy, forgiveness, grace, and truth, shows that every opportunity for life will be given. But if the opportunities are not used properly, then the judgment comes.

Reply: Yes. The *period of time* for cleansing will start with the fountain being opened. Each individual who comes forth from the tomb will have to partake of the fountain in order to be forgiven.

To love our brethren and lay down our life for them does not mean that we agree with them or that we should console them in wrong conduct. We are to think of their long-term interest rather than their short-term friendship. To be too loving and forgiving is the easier way, but it does not help the sinner. For us to take a stand or to admonish another causes a problem unless the errant one recognizes that we are right. The rebuke of a friend far surpasses the consolation of seven others; the seven merely confirm the sinner in his wrong way (Prov. 27:5,6). Long-term interest is more important than short-term pleasure and fellowship. Jesus laid down his life for the brethren, and so did the prophets. The prophets were stoned, yet they had the interests of the people in their hearts. The true prophets had God's approval and the people's disfavor. On the other hand, the false prophets prophesied “smooth things” and were well liked; they tickled the ears of their listeners. Love should not be an emotional judgment but should be based on God's Word and principles. We are to have *Godlike* love—and if we do, we will be misunderstood. The minority view is usually more correct, especially today as the end of the age closes in.

The world forgives adulterers, homosexuals, etc., and that very attitude is creeping into our midst. That attitude can even be Satanic, but under the guise of love. 1 Corinthians 13 does not describe all the facets of love.

Comment: Verse 3 says, “When any shall yet prophesy,” and the context is negative, yet Joel 2:28 says that prophesying in a good sense will take place in the Kingdom.

Reply: Yes, that verse in Joel speaks of a happy, proper prophesying in harmony with Kingdom teaching. An example of proper prophesying in the Gospel Age is when Simeon held up the babe Jesus and prophesied of him as Messiah, yet Simeon was not a regular prophet. At the end of the Kingdom, Satan will have sympathizers in the Little Season who will promote

his message. That will be wrong, false prophesying.

Zech. 13:4 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive:

Zech. 13:5 But he shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.

The previous false prophets who come forth from the tomb and *properly* react by repenting and obeying will be *ashamed* of their past and the exposure of their false deeds. In other words, of the class of false prophets in the present life, there will be two different reactions in the Kingdom: verses 2 and 3 show the incorrigible false prophets, and verses 4 and 5 show the repentant prophets, who will get life. In the next age, the repentant prophets will not again wear a prophet's garment. In Old Testament times, some wore rough garments to appear like Elijah. The counterpart in the Gospel Age is rich priestly robes. The papal hierarchy believes we are in the Kingdom now, but it is the *false Millennium* with *glory* garments.

Comment: The *repentant* false prophet's saying, "I am no prophet," shows he will give up his pretensions.

Reply: Yes, this confession shows humiliation. Such will be ashamed and *express* their shame, confessing their former misdeeds and pretensions. They will not remain silent. They will say they are just ordinary people, and not religiously superior.

Zech. 13:6 And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.

The time setting or posture already taken continues—that verse 6 takes place not initially when the Kingdom starts but *during* the Kingdom Age. However, this verse is not saying that someone will speak to the false prophets. Verse 5 shows that rightly exercised false prophets will admit they are ordinary people and will unabashedly confess their sin.

But there is another situation. What will happen when those who lived *before* Christ come forth from the tomb and find a crucified Messiah? Such individuals, being *puzzled* to learn that Messiah died, will ask, "Why?" Therefore, verse 6 should be disconnected from verse 5. As each person comes forth from the tomb, he will need to be told not only why it was necessary for Jesus to die but also why he had to die by crucifixion.

Zechariah 12:10 says that God will pour the spirit of grace and supplications on the Holy Remnant and the Ancient Worthies. The reference is back to when Joseph forgave his brethren who had betrayed him. As prime minister of Egypt, Joseph was gracious to them, but when he said, "I am Joseph," they were startled and very afraid. Seeing God's hand in the matter, Joseph replied, "God overruled what you did for good. I can now be a blessing to you that was not possible otherwise." And so those who come forth from the tomb in the Kingdom will be given an explanation of the permission of evil.

Just as Joseph's brethren betrayed him, so Israel betrayed Jesus. The nation "received him not" and crucified him (John 1:11). Jesus "was wounded in the house of ... [his] friends."

Verse 7 is related, for it definitely applies to Jesus, but the perspective changes. Verses 1-6 refer to the opening of the fountain and afterward in the Kingdom. Verses 7-9 apply to the Gospel Age up through the deliverance of the Holy Remnant.

Zech. 13:7 Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

Verse 7 is a prophecy that the coming Messiah would be crucified with a “sword,” that the Gospel Age would be initiated with the Crucifixion. Jehovah said, “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd [Jesus], and against the man that is my fellow [my associate].” Jesus was on the right hand of the Father; i.e., he was an associate of the Father in the highest sense of the word. All three terms refer to Jesus: “shepherd,” “man,” and “fellow” (associate). He is the Shepherd God selected to care for the sheep. Jesus came to give his life—that was part of God’s plan.

Jesus quoted part of this verse as he and the apostles left for the Mount of Olives after the Last Supper. “Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad” (Matt. 26:31).

Zech. 13:8 And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.

This verse goes to the end of the Gospel Age. “Two parts [Little Flock and Great Company] ... shall be cut off [out of the land] and die; but the third [Israel, the Holy Remnant] shall be left therein.” God’s purpose down through the Gospel Age was to develop the Little Flock and the Great Company, but they are quickly passed over here, and the account concentrates on the third part at the very end of the age.

Zech. 13:9 And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

God “will bring the third part through the *fire*” and “*refine them*” and “*try them*” so that they will call on Him and say, “The LORD is my God.” The purgation will start with Jacob’s Trouble, which will bring Israel to Jehovah, *their God*. But then, in the next phase, they will be *converted to Jesus*. They will recognize him as Messiah. The silver and the gold (the righteous element) will remain, but the dross (the Jews who are not marked to survive and escape, that is, *the majority*) will be removed. When the Holy Remnant see Messiah and the Crucifixion in vision, they will mourn for him. That event will introduce the Kingdom Age.

The refining process will be like going through a wringer; it will be marked by severe tribulation and an intense emotional experience. The revelation to the Holy Remnant of the identity of the true Messiah will be the real crusher.

A message in the near future to Israel will encourage them to search the Old Testament, which they are not doing now. God will use both the Little Flock and the Great Company to give messages and ignite the spark of interest in the Hebrew Scriptures. Of the two classes, the Great Company will be more successful later, after the Little Flock is off the scene. The foolish virgins will give the message when they get the oil.

Q: What does the end of verse 7 mean? “I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.”

A: It is a ministry of suffering for the Christian. The most holy class of Israel was anointed in AD 33, the midst of the week, when God turned His attention to Christian Jews. Then in AD 36, He recognized all Christians, both Jew and Gentile.

The turning of the hand upon “the little ones” refers to the Little Flock. How will God do this? With favor and yet with judgment. Isaiah 1:25 expresses the principle: “And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin.” The turning of the hand is the hand of discipline, which purges away the dross and the tin, refining us so that the good remains. When Jesus was taken off the scene, God dealt with the Church, but He did not pamper them. Many Christians have died violent and suffering deaths. The turning of the hand has been favorable; it is designed to discipline the consecrated so that they can be victorious like Christ—and be saviors with the Savior (Obadiah 21).

The Zechariah prophecy, especially chapters 12–14, will be the most meaningful to Israel before the revealment of Messiah. The Jews, particularly the right-hearted, will study about the last days.

Zech. 14:1 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

Zech. 14:2 For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

Gog and Magog will come down into Israel and temporarily capture Jerusalem and be victorious. The spoil will be the rifling of the houses of Jerusalem and the taking of goods. (Verse 14 shows the opposite condition. When God fights for Israel, the Holy Remnant will take a spoil from the invading defeated Gentile enemies.)

Half of Jerusalem will go into captivity (exile); the other half will remain. Verse 2 shows a little time lapse during which part of the population of Jerusalem will be marched out of the city into exile. In other words, the entire city will be captured. However, the Old City, that which is inside the walls, will remain, whereas the New City, that which is outside the Jaffa Gate, will be taken into exile. The New City is the larger portion.

Zechariah 12:7 said that God will “save the tents of Judah first” lest the inhabitants of the Old City think too highly of themselves. Fighting and tumult will take place before the siege of Jerusalem. Now, in Zechariah 14, we are finding out how God will deal with the Old City, which will not be cut off.

Ezekiel 38:11,12 mentions the same spoil as Zechariah 14:1,2. “And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages ... to take a *spoil*, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land.” Gog and Magog will come down from the north because they are starving and want the produce of Israel. Even now many wonder how the people of Russia will survive the winter with so little food. This condition will continue until they are in desperate straits. Meanwhile, Israel will prosper materially more and more. Very hard times lie ahead for Russia.

Gog will temporarily acquire a booty in Israel, but then they themselves will become a booty. (Ezekiel 39:9 shows the weapons will be converted to farm implements.) The wealth of the invading force will become Israel’s spoil. Thus there are two spoils: (1) where Israel is the victim and (2) where the invading force is the victim.

Zech. 14:3 Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

God will fight against the invading nations under Gog as *He did* in the former “day of battle.” This will occur *after* Jerusalem has been captured and half of the city is taken into exile. Gog and Magog will appear victorious and will be helping themselves to the goods. *Then* God will fight for Israel to show this is *His* victory. God will *simultaneously* use the various miracles that were done on *separate* occasions in the past—for example, overflowing rain, earthquake, disease, confusion. The miracles will remind the Holy Remnant that God is fighting for them as in days of old.

God will fight through The Christ, who will act as His General. Saviors (plural, i.e., The Christ) will arise on Mount Zion (Obadiah 21). The time setting is when Michael stands up (Dan. 12:1).

Zech. 14:4 And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

Zech. 14:5 And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.

Jehovah's feet will figuratively stand (be manifested) on the Mount of Olives through the earthquake. Stated another way, the earthquake will be seen as *Jehovah's* acting on behalf of Israel. Verses 4 and 5 are *literal*. (Although a spiritual lesson can be drawn, the literal is the primary lesson.) God will establish and manifest His authority in the earthquake. There is even a faint possibility of a vision of God's feet.

The valley that opens west to east, from the Old City to the Mount of Olives, will be an avenue of escape for the Holy Remnant. As the people fled before the literal earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, so it will be again (Amos 1:1). Azal is probably the place where Jonathan had a secret meeting with David and shot the arrow before David fled for his life (1 Sam. 20:19).

As the Jews are fleeing to the Mount of Olives through the valley created by the earthquake, a hologram, or vision, of the Crucifixion will appear ahead of them. Up to this point in time, the Holy Remnant will realize *God* is fighting for them, but the vision of Jesus on the Cross will reveal to them that *Jesus* is God's Son and *their Messiah*. The result of this very large visual demonstration will be an instantaneous conversion.

As the earthquake opens up the valley for fleeing and the Jews enter it, they will liken the opening to the opening of the Red Sea at the time of the Exodus. The former was the opening of water; now will come the opening of the earth. A verification of an earthquake fault in the Mount of Olives area is the earthquake that rent the Temple veil when Jesus died.

Isaiah 52:7 reads, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” In this verse, the “feet” of God are The Christ, Head and body, who will “publish” to all the world the plan of salvation.

Here in Zechariah 14, God's *authority* (“feet”) will be manifested through the miraculous events. It will be seen that the very God *of nature* is fighting on behalf of Israel, and the enemy host will realize, further, that the God *of Israel* is doing the fighting.

The Ancient Worthies will be resurrected at the “midnight” hour of Jacob's Trouble (Psa.

119:62). In Old Testament times, God spoke mechanically through the mind to the Ancient Worthies, so that they could actually hear a voice instructing them. They lived and died with the hope of a resurrection. Thus, when they are raised from the tomb, they will realize it is the resurrection, and they will be given instruction in a similar mechanical way.

Of the three texts that speak of Jehovah's feet in connection with Israel in the near future, there is a slight distinction in the time settings. In all three, the "feet" of God are The Christ.

1. Zechariah 14:4 will take place during Jacob's Trouble, that is, *prior to* the inauguration of the Kingdom. God's authority will be manifested in a miraculous way.
2. Isaiah 52:7 is the official inauguration of the Kingdom. The "watchmen" in verse 8 are the Ancient Worthies. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy *watchmen* shall lift up the voice; ... for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion."
3. Nahum 1:15 states, "Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off." This text is similar to Isaiah 52:7.

Comment: In comparing verses 4 and 5, verse 4 keeps referring to the "mount" or "mountain" (*singular*) of Olives. A great valley will open when half of the mountain (*singular*) moves north and half moves south. Then verse 5 picks up with "mountains" (*plural*) because the earthquake has occurred. This is an interesting confirmation that the earthquake is literal.

The future earthquake will level Dome of the Rock but will not destroy the Temple Mount. The Temple Mount will be lifted up.

The end of verse 5 is a parenthetical insertion: "and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." The Revised Standard Version has, "Then the LORD your God will come, and all the holy ones with him." Zechariah 12:10 had correct pronouns in the King James, but here the Revised Standard has the right thought. (Old translations back up the Revised, even though the Hebrew agrees with the King James.) "All the saints" would be The Christ, who are the representatives of God. Hence The Christ will be involved with the miraculous intervention and the deliverance of Israel out of Jacob's Trouble.

Q: Is the time frame the same as Matthew 25:31? "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory."

A: Yes, that is the inauguration of the Kingdom. Then the division of sheep and goats will take place as a process throughout the Kingdom.

Signs and wonders will occur in the heavens in other nations, but especially in Jerusalem, God will fight for His people and use great miracles in nature. In other nations, it will appear that God is angry.

Q: Does the "sign" in Matthew 24:30 tie in with the hologram of the Crucifixion? "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

A: Yes, that "sign" can be the visual representation in Jacob's Trouble of Jesus and the

Crucifixion. Not only will the sign convert the Holy Remnant to Jesus, but it will show that Jesus is beginning his reign on behalf of the Father.

Comment: Spiritually, the Mount of Olives refers to the Millennial Kingdom. The north half represents the heavenly phase of the Kingdom. The south half represents the earthly phase of the Kingdom under the Ancient Worthies.

Reply: Yes, that would be the spiritual application. The “olive” is a symbol of peace and quietness. Fleeing through the valley symbolizes that under the culture and schooling of the Church and the Ancient Worthies (the north and south halves of the Kingdom, respectively) will come salvation for the world. But the literal application is the *primary* one.

Zech. 14:6 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark:

The “day” is the “day of the LORD” (verse 1), during which there will be unusual phenomena in the heavens, and God will work mighty miracles on behalf of the Holy Remnant.

Zech. 14:7 But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.

This verse broadens the application. Phenomena will occur in God’s deliverance of Israel: an earthquake, a darkening of the sun, hail, etc. Some of these signs will be seen in other parts of the world, but Israel will be different because of the *multiplicity* of signs concentrated in Jerusalem. In other words, Israel will be center stage, whereas the miracles and phenomena elsewhere will be sufficient for mankind to realize that something is happening.

Verses 6 and 7 can also be read as applying to the whole Kingdom Age. Those who come from the tomb will enter the Kingdom Age with no knowledge that the reign has begun, that Jesus is Messiah, etc. Hence they will have to be enlightened. However, by the end of the Kingdom, no one will have to say, “Know the LORD,” for all will know Him “from the least of them unto the greatest of them” (Jer. 31:34). Hence at “evening time,” all will know, for “it shall be light.” It is like the “light of the sun” being increased “sevenfold” (Isa. 30:26).

However, if verse 6 is separated from verse 7, then verse 6 can have a literal application. The sky will be overcast, like twilight, for the duration of time that God works mighty miracles on behalf of Israel—whether that time is two days, five days, or whatever.

Q: Will the literal application be like a twilight condition around the clock?

A: Yes. For instance, at the time of hailstones, the sky is neither fully light nor fully dark but is overcast with clouds that drop hail. The “day” will not necessarily be a 24-hour day but a very short period of time. It will be the day of the Lord’s revealing and the day of His wrath when His fury comes up in His face (Ezek. 38:18).

The literal application of verse 6 ties in with verse 3 because the twilight condition around the clock will be a sample or a reoccurrence of a miracle that happened in the past, namely, in Joshua’s long day. When the light dimmed, or was prolonged into the night, it seemed to the Amorites that their sun god had withdrawn his favor. Twilight, with clouds rolling in, portends something ominous.

Zech. 14:8 And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.

The picture is broadened out into the Kingdom Age. Living waters shall go out from Jerusalem, half toward the Dead Sea on the east and half toward the Mediterranean on the west. Since the Temple will face toward the east, the Dead Sea is the *front* or “former sea.” The Mediterranean Sea to the west is in back or *behind*; that is, it is the “hinder sea.”

The earthquake will set up conditions for the living waters to go out from Jerusalem, but the waters will not flow from beneath the threshold of the Third Temple until it is complete. These waters will go past the altar, out the gate, down into the Arabah, and finally into the Dead Sea.

For half of the living waters to go toward the Mediterranean Sea, the account implies the completion of a project Israel has long wanted to do but could not because their budget was slanted toward the military. The land is wonderfully suited to have a power dam because of the difference in elevation. The Dead Sea is the lowest point on earth, and the Jordan Valley is very low as it approaches the Dead Sea. Thus if water could be brought through a much higher level, there would be a natural power dam. The water would have to be brought from Haifa down the Esdraelon Valley or near Ashkelon. Israel, Syria, and Jordan all have serious water problems, and the population keeps increasing.

The earthquake will start some of these conditions going, especially the water flowing toward the Mediterranean Sea. When the earthquake splits the Mount of Olives, a ravine will open up, but the Temple water will come from the elevated portion of land upon which the Temple is built. The water that goes down into the Arabah from the Temple cannot start until the Temple is built, but the water going toward the Mediterranean Sea can flow sooner. The ravine that opens up when the Mount of Olives is split will not be on the Temple Mount but *alongside* it. The *full* fulfillment, where one stream goes in one direction and a second stream in the other direction, awaits the building of the Temple.

Q: Will the water that comes out from the Temple be like a spring because it symbolically comes from The Christ, who will supply living waters to mankind?

A: Yes.

Comment: Joel 3:18 speaks of a fountain: “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim.”

Reply: The main volume of water that empties into the Dead Sea and brings fish will come from the Mediterranean. This water will go through the Valley of Shittim in the Arabah into the Jordan River and on into the Dead Sea. (Acacia or shittim trees grow in the wadi.)

On the other hand, the Temple water will be shallow to start with but will then get deeper and larger: ankle deep, knee deep, hip deep, and then one will have to swim because of the depth. The water, which starts as a trickle, will indirectly join the other stream when they empty into the Dead Sea, so that symbolically it is the holy water of the Temple, in conjunction with the water the Lord causes to occur through natural phenomena, that will bring life. In other words, the union of these waters will bring life (or “fish”) both spiritually and literally.

Jesus said in Matthew 4:19, “I will make you fishers of men.” Just as believers are now called “fish,” so mankind can be likened to fish in the next age.

Thus we can see that the flowing of the “living waters” will not be sudden like the miraculous

deliverance of the Holy Remnant, although the conditions for the Temple waters will be set up by the earthquake. In Solomon's Quarries underneath the Temple Mount, there is a spring today. It is assumed that the Pool of Siloam is somehow connected to the spring and the upper end of Hezekiah's Tunnel called the Virgin's Fount. The spring suggests that a tremendous volume of water exists underground, of which only a trickle is currently coming forth. The fact that the water from the Temple goes east and west shows the source of the water is Jerusalem.

Other Scriptures imply that fish from the Mediterranean will go over to the Dead Sea. Wherever the "two rivers" go, there will be life (Ezek. 47:6-12). A deeper ravine, which will bring the waters from the Mediterranean, is a lower, artificial sea-level canal through the Plain of Esdraelon and the Valley of Jezreel. The canal, in combination with a man-made tunnel complex, will eventuate in dropping the water "Niagara Falls" style into the Jordan powering turbines to provide electricity and irrigation, as well as to bring fish from the Mediterranean as a side benefit. Separate waters will issue forth from the Temple toward the Dead Sea. Zechariah 14:8 speaks of the waters from Jerusalem flowing east to the Dead Sea and west to the Mediterranean, but only the eastward-flowing waters will go out from the Temple.

Q: Will the source of water from the Temple be relatively small but with volume?

A: Yes.

Q: Will this smaller water source intercept the major volume going from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea?

A: Yes, but indirectly at the Dead Sea, as shown on the sketch.

Q: But will another water source go westward out of the city toward the Mediterranean?

A: The water is underneath the Temple area, basically speaking. When the whole plateau is lifted up by the earthquake, the Temple will be built on the top, and the city will be at a lower level to the south. The water that comes up and issues forth from the Temple will go eastward toward the Dead Sea, but from that source underneath the Temple Mount, a portion will flow westward into the Mediterranean.

While the volume will be relatively small going east and west from the source under the Temple Mount, it will be symbolically identified as coming from the Temple. In other words, the source of life is the Temple.

Q: In regard to the water that comes out from the spring underneath the Temple Mount, some will go all the way to the Dead Sea. But does the part that goes toward the Mediterranean go *all the way* to the Mediterranean, or does it join with other water and thus change direction?

A: The tributary from the Temple will not join the larger volume of water until it gets near the mouth of the Dead Sea because the Temple water will flow down into the Arabah, whereas the other water will come from a level farther north and then down. Not only will the combined water dilute the Dead Sea, which is now so saline that no life is in it, but fish will find their way into the Dead Sea and survive. Only the south end of the Dead Sea will remain very salty and thus lifeless.

Q: What about the overflow?

A: The overflow can be controlled. The dam will regulate flow and thus control the rate of evaporation, etc.

Ezekiel 47:9 reads, “And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever *the rivers* shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.” “The [two] rivers” pertain to (1) the Mediterranean connection and (2) one of the two rivulets coming up from under the Temple Mount, the one going toward the east. Joel 3:18, Zechariah 14:8, and Ezekiel 47:9 must all be considered in order to get a rounded-out picture.

Ezekiel 47:1-12 tells of the water coming out visually from the Temple and the freshening of the Dead Sea.

“Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under, from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.

“Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side.

“And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles.

“Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins.

“Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

“And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river.

“Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.

“Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

“And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

“And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from En-ge-di even unto En-eglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.

“But the miry places thereof and the marshes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt.

“And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.”

Zechariah 14:8 adds another detail: “in summer and in winter shall it be.” In other words, the waters will flow year-round. They will flow constantly, as pictured spiritually in Revelation 21:6, “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.” As the people come forth from the grave, they will be able to drink “of the water of life freely,” thus getting instruction and learning of the Lord. Another way of saying the same thing is that the Temple gates will be open night and day.

Incidentally, in the vision in Ezekiel 47, the only reason the prophet went out the north gate is that the outer east gate will be closed for spiritual reasons; namely, the closed east gate will signify that the Church is complete.

Zech. 14:9 And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

In that day (the Kingdom), there will be *one* religion and *one* God.

Zech. 14:10 All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses.

The leveling and lifting of the land will be limited to about a 30-mile circumference. Geba is north and Rimmon south, marking the outer boundaries of the land north and south to be elevated by the earthquake. The Tyropoean Valley will be pinched underneath by the earthquake and raised up. Of course the gates, which were familiar to Zechariah as landmarks, are unknown and uncertain to us today. The point is that the Old City will be rebuilt with more or less the same parameters but lifted up or elevated above the other hills.

The Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aksa Mosque will be leveled by the earthquake so that the Third Temple can be built. Around the Temple Mount, there will be dwellings for people to live in (see Ezekiel 47 and 48). The priests and the Levites will be given specific places to live.

For the water to come up to the Temple level indicates it will be like a geyser and under pressure. This water (probably the half of the water not seen to come from the Temple) can be channeled off for living purposes.

Comment: As one approaches Jerusalem, the entire city will appear elevated, but the Temple Mount will be even higher to be the focal point silhouetted against the sky.

Reply: Yes, the city will be lower and south of the Temple. The “holy oblation” will be especially the Temple and the housing of the Levites and the priests.

The rebuilt city of Jerusalem will have 12 gates, whereas the Temple will have only three. One of the three (the east gate) will be closed. Only the north and south gates will be open.

Zech. 14:11 And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

This verse will be fulfilled in the Kingdom Age.

Zech. 14:12 And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.

By a “plague,” God “will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem” so that their flesh will “consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.”

Q: Does this verse refer to a nuclear explosion?

A: Although a nuclear explosion could do these things, that does not seem to be the case here. The account clearly states that this is a plague *from the LORD*. If a nuclear explosion caused the consumption, the people would not see it as a judgment from *God*. He will fight for His people as in days of old (Zech. 14:3). Although God could cause a nuclear explosion, that method was not used in the past, and it might cause a misunderstanding, for it would look like *man’s* work.

An example of a past plague occurred in Hezekiah’s conflict with Sennacherib’s army (Isaiah 36 and 37). The latter was besieging Lachish near Jerusalem. When Sennacherib sent Rab-shakeh to threaten Israel with the consequences of not obeying, the common people of Israel heard, but God told Hezekiah through the Prophet Isaiah not to fear. The next day many thousands of Sennacherib’s army were dead of disease. In other words, the plague was *sudden*—it occurred *in one night*. Another example of *sudden* death is the tenth plague on the Egyptians at the midnight hour. And a relatively modern-day example is the bubonic plague, which killed people very suddenly. They just keeled over.

“And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem.” Notice that the plague will come against those who have *already fought against Jerusalem*. When Gog captures Jerusalem, Israel will be momentarily defeated. Then, at Israel’s moment of extremity, *God* will step in and fight for them. The term “*all the people*” should be modified because a *series* of events will take place to deliver the Holy Remnant and defeat Gog. In other words, only a certain segment of Gog will receive this particular judgment. The plague will overtake the enemy “while they *stand* upon their feet.” The thought is that while they are in motion, they will *suddenly* be overtaken. A related text is Ezekiel 38:22, which reads, “I [God] will plead against him with pestilence.”

Zech. 14:13 And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour.

Verse 13 mentions another type of judgment: confusion, or anarchy, whereby the enemy destroys itself. A companion text is Ezekiel 38:21, “And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD: every man’s sword shall be against his brother.” In this “great tumult from the LORD ... they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour.” And just as with the plague of verse 12, the great tumult will be “*from the LORD*.”

Note: Each of the coming dozen or so judgments would be sufficient to decimate the enemy, but Gog will be the recipient of *many* judgments. Some will die this way, some that way, etc. In retrospect, the Holy Remnant survivors will realize the Old Testament miracles were all true.

This great battle of God Almighty will have greater significance along natural lines than anything in the past.

Q: Are verses 12 and 13 related? When the plague comes suddenly, will mass panic hit the forces of Gog, so that in their effort to flee and in the confusion that follows, they will slay one another?

A: Yes, partly. Such panic occurred in the incident with Gideon. When the Midianites heard the crashing of 300 vessels in the dark and then saw 300 lights, they thought each light represented a whole company of soldiers. In the ensuing panic, they slew one another.

Q: Then is the tumult a result of the plague?

A: The tumult is a panic that will be created. God can create a panic in the hearts of the enemy, for He has the power to greatly magnify the experience. For example, with Gideon a false impression entered the minds of the Midianites.

Zech. 14:14 **And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance.**

Comment: This is the second strong proof text in Zechariah to show that the holy Jew will engage in warfare. The earlier verse was Zechariah 9:15, “The LORD of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour, and subdue with sling stones; and they shall drink, and make a noise as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar.”

Reply: Yes, fighting is not morally wrong for the Jew. God will first save the “tents of Judah,” who are not the inhabitants of Jerusalem but of the outlying districts of Judah (Zech. 12:7). They will be given victories and marvels lest the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who will subsequently be *MIGHTILY* rescued by God, get heady and feel superior because of being within the sacred walls of the Old City. Even though the common people of Judah will fight on the outside to try to help their compatriots, their efforts will be meaningless with regard to the Old City of Jerusalem, for *God* will effect that victory.

Comment: Nevertheless, those of Judah who fight will display courage, for they will think they are committing suicide. The situation will appear to be hopeless.

Reply: Yes, it will seem hopeless because of the overwhelming numbers of the enemy. The fighters from Judah will feel that if Jerusalem perishes, they and Jewry perish too.

Comment: What a beautiful thought—and humbling too—for Judah to start to fight against overwhelming odds and then to realize their efforts are as nothing when the Lord takes over the battle.

Reply: Inferentially, not only does God *earlier* save the tents of Judah first lest the inhabitants of *Jerusalem* get high-minded, but also in this *later* case, God will do the fighting lest *Judah* gets high-minded.

Comment: In regard to the environs of Jerusalem, it sounds like hand-to-hand combat, which is a more primitive and personal level of fighting.

Reply: Yes. Wars today are fought more with tanks, airplanes, etc., and not so much with foot soldiers, but Jerusalem will be different when God delivers Israel.

Comment: The malfunctioning of the mechanical contrivances brought in by the enemy will force hand-to-hand combat.

Earlier in Zechariah 14, we saw that Gog will take a spoil when Jerusalem is captured and the houses are rifled. However, when God saves Israel, the reverse will be true. Then Israel will take a spoil. Ezekiel 38:12 shows Gog's taking a spoil. Ezekiel 39:9,10 tells of Israel's spoil. It will take seven years to convert Israel's booty from weapons of war to farm implements. "And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years: So that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire: and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord GOD." Burning the weapons will eliminate the need to cut down trees for firewood.

Comment: With their homelands in anarchy, the forces of Gog from Magog will be somewhat organized and traveling with earthly goods because they have no homes to return to. These possessions will be a source of wealth for Israel to spoil.

Reply: Yes, and much of the electronic equipment has gold, silver, crystals, and precious metals, which Israel will convert for peaceful purposes.

Zech. 14:15 And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague.

Verse 15 is the second use of the word "plague" in Zechariah 14. Here we are told that the electronics on the machinery and weapons will go askew. For example, in the Gulf War conflict with Iraq, Baghdad's antimissile weapons misfired because the Americans put a virus in the computers the French sold to Saddam Hussein. The horse, mule, camel, and ass are Zechariah's language to refer to the tanks, aircraft, etc., of today.

The "tents" would be camps and temporary dwellings set up in the field as the Gog host travels down to and into Israel. Gog will come with the purpose of acquiring "cattle and goods" (Ezek. 38:13). They will want to satisfy their stomachs. Also, with Israel dwelling in the navel of the earth, Gog will want to extinguish Jewry and make Israel their permanent residence.

Zech. 14:16 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

Zech. 14:17 And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.

Zech. 14:18 And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

Zech. 14:19 This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

The punishment of Egypt and all nations that refuse to go up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles will be the withholding of rain. Egypt completely depends on the Nile, and the Nile completely depends on rain at its source. Hence a withholding at the source would be very effective in bringing these nations to their knees.

In verse 18, the word “plague” is used for the third time in this chapter of Zechariah. All three plagues are of the Lord: a sudden disease (verse 12), electronic failure of war equipment (verse 15), and the withholding of rain (verse 18). Whether the rain is literal or figurative or both, the withholding will be a plague to punish the nation(s).

In verses 18 and 19, the mention of “Egypt” and “nations” not coming representatively to Jerusalem suggests that some nations, as well as at least part of Egypt, will refuse to comply when the Kingdom is set up. (Other Scriptures show that another part of Egypt will readily fall in line and obey.) Stripes will be necessary in recalcitrant cases to break the prejudice and bring the realization that salvation is of the Jew. Jerusalem will be the earthly source of life and hope.

In verse 16, the clause “every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem” refers to the one-sixth survivors of Gog (Ezek. 39:2), as well as to those on the scene from Tarshish, Sheba, and Dedan, who will all go back to their homelands with eyewitness testimony. At least for a while at the beginning of the Kingdom, these individuals will have to return to Jerusalem to acknowledge the King at the Feast of Tabernacles. (The same idea occurs when veterans return to a place significant in a former battle.) In other words, from the first year on, the nations will have to send *representatives* annually in recognition of Israel’s being the center of God’s dealings and government on earth. It will be like sending ambassadors for an unusual occasion. However, the survivors of Jacob’s Trouble and the eyewitnesses will have to go back *first*. One reason for their return is to show their appreciation for being spared.

What is the purpose of the Feast of Tabernacles? It represents the *world’s* recognition of *The Christ*. The earlier Passover (lamb) focuses on *Jesus*, and the Feast of Pentecost focuses on the church of the firstborn, the two loaves being the *Little Flock* and the *Great Company* (Lev. 23:17). Verses 16-19 help to elucidate the distinction between the three feasts every male Jew was required to attend. The Feast of Tabernacles obviously pertains to the world.

God is determined to gather “all nations” to Israel to battle. “For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle” (Zech. 14:2). However, the term “all nations” has to be modified, for nations such as Guyana and Peru will not be included. The thought is that from the extremities of the earth, nations will come to Jacob’s Trouble, to the *climax* of God’s war, where He will manifest Himself to the world and inaugurate the Kingdom.

Comment: It will be especially essential for the survivors of Gog to acknowledge the role of Israel because of their previous intention to destroy it.

Reply: Yes, upon them the recognition of Israel will be particularly incumbent.

Gog will go down to Israel in an organized fashion, but the binding force will be their *common hatred of the Jew*. In this heterogeneous force, Gog will be noticeable as the chief enemy. Although Gog will not be organized in the sense of having a chain of command, their common hatred of the Jew will be the organizing factor. (With *us*, the unifying factor should be the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit binds together Christians with different ethnicity through their *common love for God and for Jesus*, who was sent by God and who is the *only* channel in this or the next age for salvation.)

When “all nations” go back to worship in Jerusalem, where will they go? The logical place is the Third Temple, which will be a physical-structure meeting place. Hence verses 16-19 support the idea of a *literal* temple.

Even to *doubt* there will be a literal temple shows a lack of familiarity with Scripture. We speak

strongly because it is better to recognize a truth *now* and acknowledge a wrong teaching in the *present* life.

Several Scriptures in the Minor Prophets show that hatred of Israel will lead Gog to invade the tiny nation. There is a Satanic plan not only against the spiritual people of God but also against the natural people. Satan has multiple targets: (1) The Elect are his special targets. (2) The Great Company are next. (3) Finally, the Jews will be targets. Satan has blinded the *minds* of the people to the gospel, but he can also instill his evil spirit into the *hearts* of the people. The first two parts (Little Flock and Great Company) will be cut off, but the third part (Israel) will be brought through the fire (Zech. 13:8). The *Adversary* will be involved with all three parts. He crucified Jesus and he will crucify, as it were, the feet members, then the Great Company, then Israel. Satan will think he is successful *until God fights for His people*.

Zech. 14:20 In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar.

Zech. 14:21 Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

“Bells of the horses” will be inscribed with “HOLINESS UNTO JEHOVAH.” “Bells” would be bells and bridles. Spiritually, “horses” are doctrines. When the “pure language” goes forth, there will be no more confusion or religious error (Zeph. 3:9). Just as *bells* on the high priest's garment *announced* his presence in the Holy and Most Holy, so in the Kingdom, the pure truth will be announced and recognized. Bridles are the controlling factor that will coordinate the doctrines and head them in the right direction.

This holy influence will be centered in Judah and Jerusalem. What happens in the capital (Jerusalem) will influence the whole earth. The word of the Lord (the pronouncements) will go forth from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3).

The “house of the LORD” is the literal Temple. The Temple will have cooking chambers to “seethe” the meat. Another proof of a literal Temple is the word “altar.”

“There shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.” “Canaanite” means trader. Hence never again will there be money dealing or a mixture where the priesthood oppresses and takes advantage of the people. Anything donated in that day will be either strictly *mandatory* according to the sin or a *freewill* offering by the individual. Merchandising will never again be permitted in the house of the Lord.

Q: If the house of the Lord, the altar, the pots, and seething the meat are all literal, would not the bells and the horses also be literal?

A: The pots, bells, and horses are both literal in a figurative sense and symbolic possessing a spiritual meaning. The bells and horses being literal in a figurative sense signify that on special holidays, all modes of transportation both to and from the Temple, such as buses and cars, will be decorated with colorful banners, ribbons, and sounding cymbals of some sort to convey happiness and joy—as well as the opposite signs (that is, mourning) on more solemn occasions.