

## Zechariah 1:7-2:13

May 25, 2022

### II. The Night Visions (1:7-6:15)

The first major section of Zechariah is a series of eight prophetic visions. As I mentioned last week, Zechariah starts off on a positive note, with the Israelites who had returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple responding favorably to the Lord's command to repent (v. 6). Now, the Lord is going to reveal His great plan for Israel's future.

#### A. The First Vision (1:7-17)

As we saw last week, we're in the period of history in which we can determine dates with a fair amount of accuracy. According to 1:7, these visions occurred on February 15, 519 BC. During this time, the earth was relatively quiet with a lack of conflict (v. 11). This report came from the Angel of the LORD, who is the preincarnate Son of God (i.e., Jesus before He was Jesus).

At this point, the Angel asks the LORD to deal favorably with Israel once again after *these seventy years* of exile (v. 12; cf. Jer 25:11-12; 29:10; Dan 9:1-4). In response, the LORD says He will indeed return *to Jerusalem with mercy* (v. 16). His house will be rebuilt. Even though the Israelites were currently in the midst of a rebuilding project, it was by no means the rebuilding the LORD has in store.

Indeed, the *surveyor's line shall be stretched out* (v. 16) and His *cities shall again spread out through prosperity* (v. 17). In doing so, *the LORD will again comfort Zion* (v. 17). Despite their past unfaithfulness, despite the unfaithfulness yet to come, the LORD remains steadfast in His promise to one day restore Israel.

#### B. The Second Vision (1:18-21)

In a second vision, Zechariah looks up and notices *four horns* (v. 18). The Angel of the LORD explains in v. 19 that *these are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem*. Whether these are actual countries (e.g., Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia) or perhaps the four points of the compass (cf. 2:6), the idea is that of totality. Just as the LORD will one day restore Israel, so also will He utterly remove any threat against them.

#### C. The Third Vision (2:1-13)

Zechariah *raised his eyes* for a third time, and now sees *a man with a measuring line in his hand* (2:1). Like the *line* in 1:16, it is being used *to measure Jerusalem* (v. 2). Jerusalem will one day be a large and grandiose city; indeed, larger than ever before. Not only that, but it *shall be inhabited as towns without walls* (v. 4; cf. Rev 21:25) because the LORD will be in her midst to protect her.

Support for the modern state of Israel is a hotly contested issue. Those on the one side see statements like the one in v. 8 (*he who touches you touches the apple of His eye*) as a divine command or warning to support Israel no matter the circumstances. I think we would do well to put these statements in context. The Church is currently God's chosen representatives on the earth, not Israel. Indeed, the modern state of Israel is quite the secular nation.

When seen in the Old Testament context, God was warning surrounding nations not to mess with Israel, which at the time was His chosen representatives. The day is coming when Israel will return to the forefront of the world and *will again choose Jerusalem* (v. 12). And on that day, *many nations shall be joined to the LORD* (v. 11).