

Zechariah 5:1-6:8

July 13, 2022

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

It's been a couple of weeks, so let's take a moment to reorient ourselves. Zechariah was a prophet in Israel in 520 BC, after the Jews returned from the exile. A contemporary of Haggai and Ezra, Zechariah encouraged the Israelites to remain faithful to Yahweh, instead of starting the spiritual backsliding of their ancestors.

Zechariah begins with a series of eight visions, underscoring God's covenantal faithfulness to Israel, and His blessing of Joshua as the new high priest, and Zerubbabel as the governor. All the while, Zechariah peers over their shoulders, looking past them to another Man who will ultimately come on the scene.

F. The Sixth Vision (5:1-4)

We pick up this morning with Zechariah's sixth vision, one that centers around a *flying scroll* (v. 1). This massive scroll contains a *curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth*, specifically calling out those who steal and those *who swear falsely by My name* (v. 4).

There seems to be general agreement that, by singling out the eighth and third commandments, the scroll is representative of the entire Law. In other words, heed the Mosaic Covenant or face the consequences: judgment!

G. The Seventh Vision (5:5-11)

In the seventh vision, Zechariah moves from the moral reform to social reform. Instead of a scroll, Zechariah now sees a *basket* that is being carried to *the land of Shinar* – another name for Babylon (vv. 6, 11). This basket is topped by a *lead lid* (v. 7), so that its

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contents – *Wickedness* (v. 8) – could not escape. Merrill draws our attention to Babylon, in that it is...

“the very epitome of humanistic independence of and resistance to God and His sovereignty. It was at Babylon... that the rebel human race erected a great ziggurat, the purpose of which was to frustrate God’s mandate to ‘be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth.’ ...From that time Babylon became synonymous with arrogant human independence, the very fountainhead of antitheocratic social, political, and religious ideology” (*Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, p. 163).

With the building of the Temple, there are some construction materials that are better off left in Babylon: evil, wicked ways. Let wickedness stay in Babylon! Revelation 17-18 has much to say about the future judgment of Babylon.

H. The Eighth Vision (6:1-8)

In the eighth and final vision, we once again come upon four horses, just as we did in the first vision (1:7-17). Yet, unlike the horses in the first vision, these horses pulling chariots appear to be set on conquest. The angel identifies these horses as *four spirits* [winds] *of heaven* whose work will give rest to My Spirit in the north country – Babylon (vv. 5, 8). After their work is done, Yahweh will no longer contend with Babylon.

Merrill concludes this first section of Zechariah, writing:

“There can be little doubt that Zechariah’s vision pertains to his own times, but its eschatological, apocalyptic character means it cannot be limited to that era. The picture here, as throughout the apocalyptic literature, is one of final and universal dominion by YHWH over His creation. How that will take place is a major part of the message of the oracles of Zechariah in chapters 7-14” (pp. 174-175).

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