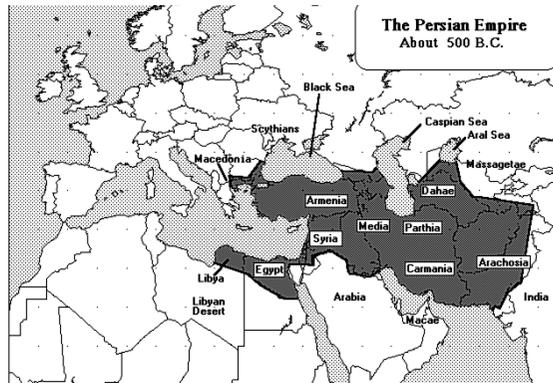


### “The Glorious Future for Jerusalem” (Zechariah 2:1-13)

The Lord gave 8 visions (within a single night) to Zechariah to encourage His people in Jerusalem. At this point in history, the walls of the city were just rubble and the foundation for the new temple was now laid. Around 50,000 people inhabited the whole area. From a human perspective, it appeared that this city could never recapture its former glory under King David and King Solomon.

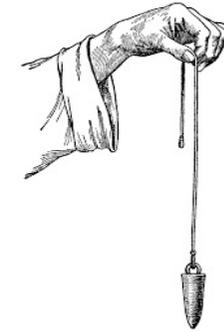


The ungodly ruled much of the great kingdoms of the world. The mighty Persian Empire expanded to consume around 100 countries stretching from Afghanistan and India in the east to southern Ethiopia in the west. This amounted to more than 2.9 million square miles (7.5 million square kilometers) of land and spanned three continents (Asia, Africa and Europe). This empire had 50 million people living until its control (roughly 44% of the world's population at the time). The Persian armies contained millions of soldiers. No country seemed able to withstand their might. It was a troubling time for God's people.

However, the Lord has a special place in history for Israel which He calls, "My land." And God chose one city in that land above all of the cities of the earth, "But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there..." (2 Chron. 6:6) where He will reign from, "That is my holy hill." (Psalm 2:6) Daniel reveals that this city will be the centre of much bloodshed and trouble throughout the centuries, "unto the end of the war desolations are determined." (Daniel 9:26) This city shall face turmoil until the Prince of Peace comes in the future to reign from it, "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her... For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream..." (Isaiah 66:10, 12) God has wonderful future plans for the Holy City. MacArthur notes,

"God isn't finished. And the glory of Israel is yet to come. There will be a day when Jerusalem is glorious beyond anything we have ever dreamed. And that kind of message of hope would be thrilling to every Jew and to every Christian who holds in his heart a special place for that city because it's the city where our dear Lord was crucified and rose

again. And this is precisely the message that Zechariah delivers to his saddened and humiliated people.



*I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand. 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. (v1-2)*

The next vision reveals a man with a measuring line in his hand, who is going out to measure the dimensions of the Holy City, "To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof." The identity of this man is not revealed so speculation doesn't really help in our understanding. The act of measuring indicated ownership. It documents the growth and prosperity that the Lord will give to the city. That is the real crucial point in the vision. The Lord is making clear that Jerusalem belongs to Him. He has a future mapped out for it. Even the very smallest details pertaining to its dimensions are already planned.

*And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, 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: 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. (v3-5)*

Zechariah now is given the explanation, "Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein." The city that was in ruins will one day be overflowing with people. There will be a wonderful sense of safety and happiness for two of the most vulnerable groups - the old and the young,

**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. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. (Zechariah 8:4-5)**

This prophecy was never completely fulfilled in the history of Israel. Even today security is a major concern for the Jews. Jerusalem is still not yet free from danger as to require no "walls" or external protection from their enemies. But it will be fulfilled in the Millennium Kingdom.



But as Zechariah spoke these words of prophesy, the walls of Jerusalem lay in ruin. It was hard to see how they could protect anyone at this time. The Lord explains how the nation would be protected, “*For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about...*” They didn’t need a physical wall when they had the Lord defending them. He is their fire-wall of protection!



Of course, the Bible makes clear that the Lord guards all of His people. Elisha prayed for God to show his servant that truth,

**And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. (2 Kings 6:15-16)**

*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. Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon. 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. 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. (v6-9)*

The Lord noted here that many of the Jews (in fact the majority) remained in Babylon. This area (now the Medo-Persian Empire) was prospering. They had jobs, homes and seeming security in such a prosperous place with walled cities and mighty armies. Many Jews were comfortable living in Babylon, and they weren’t interested in making the long dangerous journey back. Jerusalem lacked culture, prosperity and security. Its walls were in ruin. But the Lord called them to return from that land, “*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. Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon.*” Jerusalem was “God’s City” whereas Babylon was the “Devil’s City.”

The Lord reveals that the security, prosperity, and culture that Babylon promised would not last, “*For, behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants.*” The days of this Empire were numbered. God just needs to “*shake mine hand*” to deal with the proud Empire. It is nothing to Him. God will totally reverse the situation. These enslavers would become enslaved, “*and they shall be a spoil to their servants.*” This final consummation of events will happen when God the Father sends God the Son to rule this world from Jerusalem. This is the event described, “*After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you..... and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me.*” MacArthur explains the clear Trinitarian reference here,

“Who sends the Lord of Hosts? The Lord of Hosts sends the Lord of Hosts. You say, “Now, wait a minute. Jehovah sends Jehovah?” If you reject the New Testament, you got a problem with that. Right? If you accept the New Testament, you don’t have a problem with that. The Lord of Hosts the Father sends the Lord of Hosts the Son. Isn’t that great? And He is the one who comes to deliver His people. He is the one who comes to conquer the nations. And He is after glory. He is after glory. Listen, everything is done for glory for God. The nations are judged that God may be glorified. Summing it up, He says, the second person of the Trinity, the Saviour, the Messiah, is sent by the first person of the Trinity, the Father, in order that He may judge the nations to bring glory to God because God too long has been looked down on because His people have been downtrodden. And God says, “In the end, when I exalt My people, then the world will know that I am God.””

The Jews are very precious to the Lord. He declares, “*After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.*” The “*apple of his eye*” refers to the pupil of the eye - the hollowed-out, middle, black part of the eye (cf. Deut. 32:10; Psa. 17:8). The eye is a highly sensitive and vulnerable organ. This metaphor illustrates that God recognises the importance and the vulnerability of the Jewish people. The Lord identifies with His people. If you attack them, you attack the Lord. When you become an enemy of Israel, you become an enemy of God. Spurgeon put it wonderfully,

“He esteems them as much as men value their eyesight, and is as careful to protect them from injury, as men are to protect the apple of their eye. The pupil of the eye is the

tenderest part of the tenderest organ, and very fitly sets forth the inexpressible tenderness of God's love."



The Lord was speaking to the immediate generation of Jews who had stayed behind in the former Babylonian Empire. But it has relevance to us. For the call to come out of Babylon is both literal and figurative (cf. Revelation 18:4-5). Steve Cole makes a helpful application,

"The command to flee Babylon is of more than academic value to us. In the Scriptures, Babylon represents the world system as opposed to God. Even as God's people, it's easy to dwell there. It has many enticements: money, pleasure, status, the good life—and you can experience it all *right now!* The church, world missions, the kingdom of God—that's all nice, but not nearly as enticing as what the world dangles in front of us.....It takes faith to obey God on this matter. Right now, the world looks mighty appealing. The church looks pretty drab in comparison. But in the final chapters of Revelation, God reveals the outcome of Babylon compared to that of the church. Babylon and all her wealth are destroyed in one hour. The church rejoices over Babylon's destruction and enjoys the marriage supper of the Lamb (see Revelation 18 & 19)."

*Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD.*  
(v10)

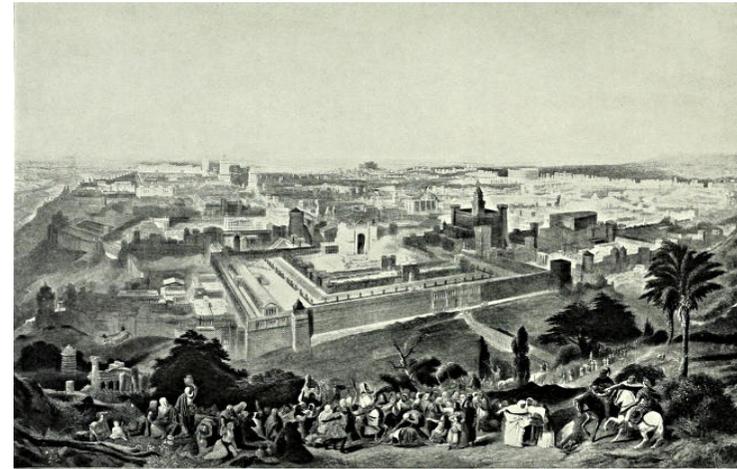
Today the Jews are weeping and their Gentile oppressors are celebrating. But there will be a change in the future. God calls His Jewish people to rejoice, "*Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion.*" The key reason for this joy is the presence of God, "*for, lo, I come.....and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD.*" The Lord will be there in the personal, physical, visible form in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the future millennial kingdom, Jesus Christ will reign there in person. The name *Jerusalem* means "city of peace," but it has known little peace in its 3,000 years. Much bloodshed and tears has been part of its sad history. And Jerusalem can expect more heartache and more tears. But there will be a true peace one day.

*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. And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation. (v11-13)*

The Lord then gives an insight into the glorious future. There is a glorious future planned for Jerusalem and the Jewish people. They will then become a truly "*holy land*" when the Messiah will return, defend His people, cleanse their sins, and restore the glory of God in the middle of it. The nations will come there to worship, "*And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day*"

(Isaiah 2:1-5). Guzik notes, "God's desire to bless for Israel was never intended to stop with Israel, but to use them as a channel of blessing for many nations." That's why God's people are instructed to pray, "*Thy kingdom come.*"

All the events in the past and all in the future will progress according to the perfect plan and will of God. We may not have perfect knowledge of the events and timing but that should not diminish our faith and our hope in the Return of Christ. Men and Empires come and go but only God remaineth. We are confident that His promises will be fulfilled in Israel, "*And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again.*"



The certain knowledge that our God controlled the past and controls the future reassures us that He also controls the present. The Lord reigns. We must say with the Psalmist, "*My times are in thy hand*" (Psa. 31:15) That is the bottom line. That is the starting point for a life of peace in the midst of any present or future storms. Our anchor is rested on His perfect wisdom and sovereignty. It is well with our souls. We can rest, like Zechariah, knowing that it all ends well. A better day and world is coming. Jesus called Jerusalem, "*the city of the great King?*" We await His glorious coming. And all of God's people say, "*Even so, come, Lord Jesus*" (Rev. 22:20).

**Within this awesome volume lies  
Mystery of mysteries...  
Happiest they of human race  
Who from their God have gotten grace  
To read, to wonder and to pray,  
To lift the latch and face the way;  
But better had he ne'er been born  
Who reads to laugh, who reads to scorn.**