



Zechariah - Chapter Two

I Zechariah 1:1-8:23 - Oracles and Visions (continues)

I.b Zechariah 1:7-6:15 - Eight Night Visions and a Coronation (continues)

Summary of Chapter Two

In this vision Zechariah anticipates a renewed Jerusalem, so full of people that it overspreads its walls. It will attract those Jews who remain in exile, as well as countless Gentiles. This is also the expectation for the New Jerusalem.

I.b.iii Zechariah 2:1-5 - Third Vision: The Man with a Measuring Line

In this third vision, the meaning of it was given by Zechariah in the second half of the chapter (vv.6-13). The Jerusalem which is revealed is not the physical Jerusalem at all, but the unlimited and glorious Jerusalem which is, as Paul puts it: <<*above; she is free, and she is our mother*>> (Galatians 4:26). As in all the other visions, there are definite Messianic implications in it.

¹ I looked up and saw a man with a measuring line in his hand. ² Then I asked, 'Where are you going?' He answered me, 'To measure Jerusalem, to see what is its width and what is its length.' ³ Then the angel who talked with me came forward, and another angel came forward to meet him, ⁴ and said to him, 'Run, say to that young man: Jerusalem shall be inhabited like villages without walls, because of the multitude of people and animals in it. ⁵ For I will be a wall of fire all round it, says the Lord, and I will be the glory within it.'

Zechariah 2:1-5

The third vision is of a man with a measuring line in his hand. This was undoubtedly an angelic being and some think it was the angel of the Lord. Angelic

beings never truly become human beings but they can take human form: <<**While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven'**>> (Acts 1:10-11). The focus of this vision is on the future size of the restored city, with an allusion to the future heavenly city, in contrast to its present unimpressive state.

To see what is its width and what is its length. Apparently Jerusalem is being measured to make sure that it is large enough for the multitudes God will bring to it. In the time of Zechariah it seemed strange to worry about Jerusalem being big enough, because there seemed to be too few people for the city. The people had feared for their nation in the confinement of captivity: <<**The children born in the time of your bereavement will yet say in your hearing: 'The place is too crowded for me; make room for me to settle'**>> (Isaiah 49:20), yet God had promised to maintain his people's population and provide a place for them to dwell: <<**Out of them shall come thanksgiving, and the sound of merrymakers. I will make them many, and they shall not be few; I will make them honoured, and they shall not be disdained**>> (Jeremiah 30:19). It is as if the man with a measuring line went into a huge old cathedral where only a few attended church and started to make sure it was large enough for the crowds God was sure to bring. The heavenly Jerusalem will be large enough to accommodate all whom the Lord calls to himself. There are similar visions of a man measuring the city in Ezekiel 40:3 and Revelation 21:15.

Jerusalem will be so large that it will need to be 'without walls' because of the numbers of people and animals within it. Yet the lack of a wall will not leave Jerusalem insecure and vulnerable: the Lord himself will provide a wall of fire around it, reminiscent of the cherubim and flaming sword that protected the garden of Eden in Genesis 3:24, and of the 'horses and chariots of fire' that protected Elisha (2 Kings 6:17). Zechariah returns to this theme later: <<**And it shall be inhabited, for never again shall it be doomed to destruction; Jerusalem shall abide in security**>> (Zechariah 14:11).

This prophecy had a short-term fulfilment in God's protection of the rebuilding, and blessing of the city under Ezra and Nehemiah; but clearly, its ultimate fulfilment is rebuilding under the rule of the Messiah. Today Jerusalem is indeed a city without walls, because in modern warfare they are useless in defending the city. Ultimately Jerusalem will be a city without walls because the prince of peace will reign from Jerusalem and he will be her protection.

The glory of God that had earlier inhabited the tabernacle and temple: <<**Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle**>> (Exodus 40:34), and: <<**When Solomon had ended his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices;**

and the glory of the Lord filled the temple>> (2 Chronicles 7:1), and had abandoned it before the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (Ezekiel Chapter 10), would return to inhabit the entire city, refer to Ezekiel Chapter 43.

I.b.iv Zechariah 2:6-13 - Interlude: An Appeal to the Exiles

Since God is promising to re-establish his presence in Jerusalem, both the earthly location and its heavenly equivalent, he is calling all his people to raise themselves up from their current oppressed state and return to him

⁶ Up, up! Flee from the land of the north, says the Lord; for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven, says the Lord. ⁷ Up! Escape to Zion, you that live with daughter Babylon.

Zechariah 2:6-7

Flee from the land of the north. In view of the return of the Lord's glory to Jerusalem and his coming judgement on their former rulers (1:18-20), those still in exile in Babylon should escape from there and return to Zion, the home of the temple and the birthplace of the church. Throughout the Bible Babylon is used as an idea as well as a city. If Jerusalem carried the idea of 'God's city' then Babylon carries the idea of the city of the world. Zechariah's call to come out of Babylon is both literal and figurative, as is the call in: <<*Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, 'Come out of her, my people, so that you do not take part in her sins, and so that you do not share in her plagues; for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities'*>> (Revelation 18:4-5).

For I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven. The entire people of Israel had been dispersed among the nations at various times, particularly the northern tribes who were taken by the Assyrians and then further dispersed and the exiles in Persia. In addition, some had settled in Egypt. Now God will start to recall them to himself, a task he will complete in the fullness of time: <<*Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven*>> (Mark 13:27).

⁸ For thus said the Lord of hosts (after his glory sent me) regarding the nations that plundered you: Truly, one who touches you touches the apple of my eye. ⁹ See now, I am going to raise my hand against them, and they shall become plunder for their own slaves. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me.

Zechariah 2:8-9

The Hebrew in v.8 is apparently difficult to understand: it could be rendered 'he sent me after glory' or after his glory sent me. The rendering here is suggested by

the parallel clause found at the end of v.9. Zechariah is thus alluding to his commission as a prophet, (as did other prophets before him, e.g. Isaiah 6:1-5 and Ezekiel 1:28), as he prepares to fulfil that role. His message is that the Lord is about to bring judgement on those who **plundered** his people, as was indicated during the exile in Ezekiel 39:25-29. Although once he brought the nations in judgement on Judah, now whoever assaults the Lord's people assaults **the apple of his eye**, that is, the pupil, one of the most sensitive parts of the anatomy.

They shall become plunder for their own slaves. God promises that those who enslaved the people of God will become spoil for them, i.e. the enslavers will become enslaved. This will be ultimately fulfilled in the millennial reign of Jesus.

The Lord will **raise** his **hand against** Judah's oppressors, thereby giving a signal for their destruction by their former slaves, as confirmed by: <<***On a bare hill raise a signal, cry aloud to them; wave the hand for them to enter the gates of the nobles***>> (Isaiah 13:2), and the implication of the Hebrew is that this is imminent. These events would authenticate the validity of the prophet's words.

¹⁰ Sing and rejoice, O daughter Zion! For lo, I will come and dwell in your midst, says the Lord. ¹¹ Many nations shall join themselves to the Lord on that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in your midst. And you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. ¹² The Lord will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem.

Zechariah 2:10-12

The instruction to **sing and rejoice** is paralleled in the Psalms at the conjunction of divine justice: <<***Let those who desire my vindication shout for joy and be glad, and say evermore, 'Great is the Lord, who delights in the welfare of his servant'***>> (Psalm 35:27), as confirmed in parallel wisdom: <<***In the transgression of the evil there is a snare, but the righteous sing and rejoice***>> (Proverbs 29:6), and divine presence: <<***Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days***>> (Psalm 90:14). The dramatic return of the Lord to inhabit his rebuilt house is cause for praise for those who have returned to Judah. God does not expect his people to be passive in response to all that he does for them but desires their praise and worship to pour forth: <<***Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!***>> (Zephaniah 3:14).

The **nations** too will come and **join themselves to** or enter into covenant with **the Lord** in that day, as seen in: <<***Do not let the foreigner joined to the Lord say, 'The Lord will surely separate me from his people'; and do not let the eunuch say, 'I am just a dry tree.'***>> For thus says the Lord: To the eunuchs who keep my

sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give, in my house and within my walls, a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off>> (Isaiah 56:3-5), and: <<For out of the north a nation has come up against her; it shall make her land a desolation, and no one shall live in it; both human beings and animals shall flee away>> (Jeremiah 50:3). The result will be Jews and Gentiles together in one nation, my people, with the Lord dwelling in their midst: <<and many nations shall come and say: 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem>> (Micah 4:2), as confirmed by Paul: <<But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, so that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it>> (Ephesians 2:13-16).

I will dwell in your midst. The first reason why God's people should be excited is because he will be among them in a unique and powerful way. This has always been his promise: <<And have them make me a sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them>> (Exodus 25:8), <<And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people>> (Leviticus 26:12), <<He has not beheld misfortune in Jacob; nor has he seen trouble in Israel. The Lord their God is with them, acclaimed as a king among them>> (Numbers 23:21), and: <<Thus says the Lord: I will return to Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts shall be called the holy mountain>> (Zechariah 8:3).

Although the nations will come to worship the Lord, Judah and Jerusalem will still be his chosen portion.

¹³ Be silent, all people, before the Lord; for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.

Zechariah 2:13

Since the Lord has roused himself from his holy dwelling, a hushed and reverent awe should descend on all flesh, as confirmed by: <<*But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him!*>> (Habakkuk 2:20).