

13. Zechariah

- Zechariah, like Jeremiah and Ezekiel before him, was both a prophet and a priest. He was born in Babylon and his ministry began after the Babylonian captivity. He returned to Jerusalem from Babylon with almost 50,000 other Jewish exiles. Zechariah began his prophetic ministry in 520 B.C., encouraging the people to spiritual renewal and motivating them to rebuild the temple by revealing to them God's plan for Israel's future. With this prophetic encouragement, the people completed the temple reconstruction in 515 B.C. (Ezra 6:15).

*Zechariah 1; Call to repentance (1:1-6); Vision #1: Patrol of the earth and 70-year indignation (1:7-17); Vision #2: The four horns and the four craftsmen (1:18-21)

- The first six verses of chapter one are a call to repentance. Following this, Zechariah describes eight prophetic visions he saw in a single night (519 B.C.) in the first six chapters of his book. These visions were interpreted by an angel and reveal some important details about the end times and God's plan for Israel and the world.

- Vision #1: Patrol of the earth and 70-year indignation (1:7-17)

- "On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, as follows:" (1:7). "I saw at night, and behold, a man was riding on a red horse, and he was standing among the myrtle trees which were in the ravine, with red, sorrel and white horses behind him" (1:8). "Then I said, 'My lord, what are these?' And the angel who was speaking with me said to me, 'I will show you what these are'" (1:9). "And the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered and said, 'These are those whom the LORD has sent to patrol the earth'" (1:10). "So they answered the angel of the LORD who was standing among the myrtle trees and said, 'We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth is peaceful and quiet'" (1:11). Based on the end-time events at the end of this vision, it is likely that the patrol occurs just prior to the rapture. Since the rapture will come unexpectedly (except for alert believers), like a thief in the night, it makes sense that the earth would be "peaceful and quiet" prior to this event. "For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, 'Peace and safety!' then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child" (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3). After the rapture, the earth will no longer be "peaceful and quiet" (1:11) because "he who now restrains" (the Holy Spirit) will be "taken out of the way" (2 Thessalonians 2:6-7).

- "Then the angel of the LORD said, 'O LORD of hosts, how long will You have no compassion for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which You have been indignant these seventy years?'" (1:12). When the angel of the Lord receives the report from the patrol, he is clearly concerned for the people of Jerusalem and Judah. Even though "all the earth is peaceful and quiet" the Jewish people are apparently experiencing anti-Semitism and are being threatened by their enemies. Why the Lord has been without compassion (mercy) and indignant (angry) for 70 years is not stated. Perhaps it is because the Jewish people have rebelled against God and have

not believed in the Messiah as their Lord and Savior (Isaiah 64:5; Hebrews 3:17-19). This 70-year period is not the same period that is mentioned in Jeremiah, Daniel or 2 Chronicles; prophecies that will be fulfilled in two phases (Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10; Daniel 9:2; 2 Chronicles 36:20-21). Zechariah 1:12 does not mention Babylon or the prophecies of Jeremiah, as these other passages do. Also, the first phase of these prophecies was fulfilled approximately 19 to 20 years before the eight prophetic vision came to Zechariah from the Lord (519 B.C., Zechariah 1:7). In addition, a two-phase fulfillment does not match the details of this vision.

- So when does the 70-year period start? Many of the end-time prophecies that mention a period of time have a clearly defined starting and ending point and are associated with the Great Tribulation. This is true for Daniel's 70-weeks prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27) and the 70-year prophecies of Jeremiah, Daniel and 2 Chronicles. Since the time period of Zechariah 1:12 probably includes the time just prior to the rapture, it would be logical to conclude that the 70 years begins with the rebirth of Israel, 14 May 1948 (Yom Ha'atzmaut, 5 Iyar 5708 in the Jewish calendar). Israel's rebirth in Scripture is often associated with the nation's spiritual awakening and revival (Ezekiel 11:14-21, 36:22-38, 37:1-28, 39:25-29), with the judgment of nations (Joel 3:1-3; Ezekiel 28:25-26), with great tribulation (Jeremiah 30:1-11) and with the coming of Messiah (Zechariah 12, 14). There are several other reasons to make this conclusion. First, Zechariah's eight visions all appear to be associated with the end times. Second, Zechariah's first vision concludes with a description of the millennial kingdom, when the Lord "will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem" (1:17). Third, another patrol of the earth is described in Zechariah's eighth vision, which probably occurs during the Great Tribulation (6:1-8). Fourth, after the fall of Jerusalem in 605 B.C., Israel was not a sovereign nation again until her rebirth in 1948. One could argue that the 70 years of indignation and "no compassion" could not occur until Israel was a nation once again. Since Jerusalem's fall, there has not been an obvious, well-defined 70-year period that would match the details of Zechariah's first vision until Israel's rebirth. For additional information about the 70-year period and the many similarities between Zechariah 1:12 and 7:5, refer to section 54 (The 70-Year Bible Prophecies).

- The concerns of the angel (1:12) are addressed when the Lord speaks to him with "gracious words" and "comforting words" (1:13). The Lord of hosts said, "I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion. But I am very angry with the nations who are at ease; for while I was only a little angry, they furthered the disaster" (1:14-15). In spite of God's 70 years of anger, His jealousy for Jerusalem and Zion speaks of His great love for the Jewish people. In Zechariah 8:2, the Lord is also "exceedingly jealous for Zion, yes, with great wrath I am jealous for her". Following this verse is a description of the millennial kingdom. Since "all the earth is peaceful and quiet" (1:11), why is the Lord "very angry with the nations who are at ease"? These same nations who are living at ease (careless and proud) are probably the same nations that are hostile toward God's people and are causing great concern for the angel of the Lord (1:12). The Lord's anger toward these nations increases because "they furthered the disaster". This could be a reference to the Ezekiel 38 battle, which probably occurs just prior to the start of the Great Tribulation. During this battle a mighty army, from many nations, will go up "like a storm" against Israel. These nations will experience God's fury, anger and blazing wrath when He destroys this invading horde (Ezekiel 38-39). Following this battle, God's anger toward the

nations will continue throughout the Tribulation period as God's seal, trumpet and bowl judgments are brought upon the earth (Revelation 6, 8, 9, 11, 15, 16). In the past, God's people often experienced "disaster" as a result of turning away from the Lord. "Hear, O earth: behold, I am bringing disaster on this people, the fruit of their plans, because they have not listened to My words, and as for My law, they have rejected it also" (Jeremiah 6:19; see also Jeremiah 35:17).

- "Therefore thus says the LORD, 'I will return to Jerusalem with compassion; My house will be built in it,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'and a measuring line will be stretched over Jerusalem'" (1:16; see also 2:1). God's long period of "no compassion" (1:12) will end, for He "will return to Jerusalem with compassion" and as a result, the Tribulation temple will be built. The long-awaited third temple will be completed quickly because according to Daniel 8 (see commentary) it will apparently be dedicated 220 days after the Israel-antichrist peace treaty. God's compassion (mercy) for Israel will also be displayed for the whole world to see during the Ezekiel 38 battle. The defeat of Israel's enemies will clear the way for the construction of the temple.

- "Again, proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'My cities will again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem'" (1:17). When Jesus returns, He will set up His kingdom and the millennial (Messiah's) temple will be built in Jerusalem (6:12-13). The Lord will "again choose Jerusalem" (see also 2:12) and will dwell in the midst of His people during the millennial kingdom (2:10-11, 8:3).

- Vision #2: The four horns and the four craftsmen (1:18-21)

- This second vision shows God's judgment on the four horns "which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem... so that no man lifts up his head" (1:19, 21). These horns symbolize proud Gentile powers ("horns of the nations"; 1:21). The four craftsmen have come to terrorize the four horns, "to throw down the horns of the nations who have lifted up their horns against the land of Judah in order to scatter it" (1:21). Some writers are of the opinion that these four horns represent four Gentile empires, perhaps Assyria, Egypt, Babylon and Medo-Persia. In this case the four craftsmen are the empires that succeeded them, respectively, with the fourth craftsman being Greece. There are several issues with this interpretation. Why would Zechariah have a vision about events that had already taken place, except for the judgment against Medo-Persia? Also, Zechariah's other visions concern end-time events or foreshadows of end-time events. This vision appears to transition directly into the third vision (see notes on 2:1), which describes the end times. These horns are spoken about as a unit, both in their actions and in their judgment. Notice that the horns have "scattered" (past tense, 1:19) Israel before the craftsmen "terrify them" and before they "throw down the horns of the nations". Notice also that these Gentile powers have lifted up their horns against the "land" of Judah in order to scatter it (1:21); the land that God promised to the Jewish people.

- It seems more likely that Zechariah's vision pertains to four end-time horns and craftsmen. The four horns may represent the modern-day Quartet, comprised of the United States of

America, Russia, the European Union, and the United Nations. The Quartet was established in 2002 to mediate the peace process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This group often pressures Israel to give up land in exchange for peace. In this case, the four craftsmen would represent God's judgment on these four Gentile powers in the form of historically severe catastrophes. Since Israel's rebirth, any nation or political power that has attempted to take land away from Israel either by force or by negotiation has paid the price. Many of these nations have experienced tremendous economic and financial losses and natural disasters as a result of their negotiation efforts. If this is the correct interpretation, then the four horns will act against the land of Judah during the same 70-year period mentioned in Zechariah's first vision (1:12). Four horns are also mentioned by Daniel (8:8, 22-23), which represent four end-time Gentile powers. The antichrist will arise from one of these horns (Daniel 8:9).

*Zechariah 2; Vision #3: The surveyor with the measuring line (end times and Millennium; 2:1-13)

- "Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a man with a measuring line in his hand. So I said, 'Where are you going?' And he said to me, 'To measure Jerusalem, to see how wide it is and how long it is'" (2:1-2). Verse 1 reflects the transition to the next vision and the continuity with the preceding one. A "measuring line" was also mentioned in the first vision (1:16). An angel runs after the young man (surveyor), and says to him, "Jerusalem will be inhabited without walls because of the multitude of men and cattle within it" (2:3-4; see also Ezekiel 38:11). The absence of walls may be a result of the Ezekiel 38 battle, where every wall will fall to the ground (Ezekiel 38:20). Walls will not be necessary after this battle because the Lord will be a wall of fire around Jerusalem, and the glory in her midst (2:5). This may be a reference to God's divine protection of Israel during the first half of the Tribulation. A "multitude of men and cattle" reflect prosperity and God's blessing. This divine protection will be removed for the second half of the Tribulation, perhaps due to the disobedience and unbelief of the Jewish people and to fulfill the two-phase prophecies of Daniel 9:2 and 2 Chronicles 36:20-21.

- God's people are strongly encouraged to "Flee from the land of the north" and to "Escape, you who are living with the daughter of Babylon" (2:6-7). This warning anticipates God's judgment on the nations of the world. During Zechariah's second patrol of the earth (eighth vision), the "land of the north" will experience God's wrath, probably during the Tribulation period (6:7-8). After glory, God will judge the nations that plunder God's people, the "apple of His eye" (2:8), symbolizing God's protection of His people (Deuteronomy 32:10). "'Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,' declares the LORD" (2:10). During the Millennium, God will dwell in the midst of His people. Many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day and will become His people (2:10-11). "The LORD will possess Judah as His portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem" (2:12; see also 1:17).

*Zechariah 3; Vision #4: Joshua the high priest and the Branch (Messiah, 3:1-10)

- Joshua the high priest was standing before the angel of the Lord "clothed with filthy garments" and "Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him" (3:1-3). The filthy garments were replaced with festal robes and a clean turban signifying that his iniquity had been taken away (3:4-5). Joshua and Zerubbabel the governor had returned from Babylon with Zechariah and almost 50,000 other Jewish exiles to rebuild the Jerusalem temple. Joshua was urged to walk in the ways of the Lord and to perform His service (3:6-7).

- The Lord next explained the point of the vision; that Joshua and his friends were symbolic of things to come (3:8). In their priestly cleansing from sin they foreshadowed the future cleansing of the nation of Israel. This future cleansing was associated with the coming Messiah who was given three messianic titles; "My servant", "the Branch", and "the stone" (3:8-9). As the Servant of the Lord, Christ is the One who will do the will of the Father, and "will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities" (Isaiah 53:11; see also 42:1, 52:13). As the "righteous Branch of David", Christ is the descendant of David who will "execute justice and righteousness on the earth" (Jeremiah 33:15), "will build the temple of the LORD" (Zechariah 6:12) and "will reign as king" (Jeremiah 23:5). As the stone, He was rejected by the builders, but "has become the chief corner stone" (Psalm 118:22). The Messiah is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense (1 Peter 2:8) and "he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust" (Matthew 21:44).

- The "seven eyes" that are on the stone (3:9) are perhaps a reference to the "seven... eyes of the LORD which range to and fro throughout the earth" (4:10). Joshua the high priest is also a foreshadow of Jesus, our "great high priest" (Hebrews 4:14, 3:1, 6:20). Ultimately though, the Messiah will "remove the iniquity of that land in one day" (3:8-9). This is probably a reference to the New Covenant which was initiated by Jesus' sacrifice (Luke 22:20; Hebrews 9:15). Jeremiah speaks about this New Covenant; "'Behold, days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah... I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people... for they will all know Me... for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more'" (Jeremiah 31:31-34). These specific promises will find their ultimate fulfillment for Israel when Jesus Christ returns and sets up His millennial kingdom. Sitting under one's own vine and fig tree refers to conditions of peace and prosperity, probably during the millennial kingdom (3:10; Micah 4:4).

*Zechariah 4; Vision #5: The golden lampstand and the two olive trees (4:1-14)

- Zechariah saw a "lampstand all of gold" and two olive trees by it (4:2-3). An angel said to him, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts" (4:6). 'What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!"' (4:7). "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will finish it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you" (4:9). This vision was an encouragement to Zerubbabel the governor to continue the work of building the temple. Only through the power of the Holy Spirit, would the temple be completed, and every obstacle

(mountain) would be removed in the process. The lampstand was probably similar to the lampstand placed in Israel's tabernacle (Exodus 25:31-40) and the 10 lampstands of Solomon's temple (1 Kings 7:49). These earlier lampstands had to be filled with oil by the priests. However, the unique design of the bowl on top, the seven spouts and the two golden pipes tapped into the olive trees allowed for a continuous supply of "golden oil" to the seven lamps of Zechariah's lampstand (4:2, 12).

- "Then I said to him, 'What are these two olive trees on the right of the lampstand and on its left?'" (4:11). The two olive trees are the "two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth" (4:14, see also 4:3, 11), who foreshadow the two mighty witnesses of the Tribulation period (Revelation 11:3-6). Just as Joshua and Zerubbabel were involved in the construction of the second temple (Zerubbabel's temple), the two witnesses will prophecy from Jerusalem during the construction of the third temple (Tribulation temple) and will probably be associated with the temple in some way.

*Zechariah 5; Vision #6: The flying scroll (5:1-4); Vision #7: The woman in the ephah (5:5-11)

- Vision #6: The flying scroll (5:1-4)

- The sixth vision describes a huge "flying scroll; its length is twenty cubits and its width ten cubits" (5:2; approximately 9 by 4.5 meters). "Then he said to me, 'This is the curse that is going forth over the face of the whole land; surely everyone who steals will be purged away according to the writing on one side, and everyone who swears will be purged away according to the writing on the other side'" (5:3). "'I will make it go forth,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name; and it will spend the night within that house and consume it with its timber and stones'" (5:4). This vision is a warning and encouragement that God will judge sin. The severity of the judgment and the fact that the curse is going forth over the face of the whole land suggests a fulfillment during the Great Tribulation. Isaiah describes a similar curse during the Tribulation period. "Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left" (Isaiah 24:6).

- Vision #7: The woman in the ephah (5:5-11)

- The woman in the ephah (barrel) represents wickedness. She was observed when the lead cover was lifted up by the angel. He then replaced the cover to prevent her from escaping (5:5-8). Two women with wings (probably demons) took the ephah away, "To build a temple for her in the land of Shinar; and when it is prepared, she will be set there on her own pedestal" (5:9-11). The land of Shinar was the location of the tower of Babel (Genesis 10:10, 11:2-4) and later became the site of Babylon (Daniel 1:2). This woman will be set on her own pedestal in a temple made just for her. This strongly suggests that this woman represents the great harlot and false religion of end-time Babylon the Great, who was "drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus"; who made the kings of the earth "drunk with the wine of her immorality" (Revelation 17:1-7) during the first half of the Great Tribulation. It is

not likely that this passage is talking about a physical temple being constructed in a future, rebuilt city of Babylon. For additional information, refer to Revelation 17-18. Just as the curse of the sixth vision goes forth (mentioned twice), so will the wickedness from the ephah go forth (also mentioned twice). This wickedness will apparently involve false worship.

*Zechariah 6; Vision #8: The four chariots and patrol of the earth (6:1-8); crowning of Joshua (6:9-15)

- Zechariah's eighth vision describes four chariots with horses (no riders are mentioned), which "are the four spirits of heaven, going forth after standing before the Lord of all the earth" (6:5). The four spirits (or "winds") of heaven may refer to angels of divine judgment. They are eager to patrol the earth and those who are going to the land of the north will appease God's wrath (6:7-8). The land of the north sometimes refers to Babylon (Jeremiah 10:22). In Zechariah's third vision, the LORD declares to Zion, "Flee from the land of the north... for I have dispersed you as the four winds of the heavens... Escape, you who are living with the daughter of Babylon" (2:6-7). In this passage, the "land of the north" is equated with the "daughter of Babylon". Judgment is promised against the nations that "plunder" Judah and Jerusalem (2:8-9). In Zechariah's first vision God was angry with the nations that were at ease (1:15); in this eighth vision He was satisfied with their judgment, probably occurring during the Tribulation period.

- "The word of the LORD" came to Zechariah, instructing him to "take silver and gold" from some exiles that had arrived from Babylon, and to "make an ornate crown and set it on the head Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest" (6:9-11). "Then say to him, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the LORD. Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the LORD, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices"'" (6:12-13). The crowning of Joshua as high priest is a foreshadow of the crowning of Messiah (Branch; see also 3:8), who will build the temple of the Lord and unite the offices of king and priest in one person in the millennial kingdom.

*Zechariah 7; 70-year prophecy and fasts (7:1-14)

- "In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev" (7:1). Almost two years after Zechariah's eight visions (chapters 1 to 6), four messages (chapters 7 and 8) came to Zechariah from the Lord. This was in 518 B.C., 68 years after the temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. (Jeremiah 52:12-13). Some men from the town of Bethel came to Jerusalem to ask if it was still necessary to observe the fast of the fifth month which commemorated the destruction of the first temple (2 Kings 25:8-10). "Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, 'Say to all the people of the land and to the priests, "When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months these seventy years, was it actually for Me that you fasted?"'" (7:5). "'When you eat and drink, do you not eat for yourselves and do you not drink for yourselves?"' (7:6). So "these seventy years" is spoken prophetically since 70 years of fasting and mourning would not end for

another two years, when the new temple would be completed "on the third day of the month Adar", which is the twelfth month (515 B.C.; Ezra 6:15; Esther 3:7). Even though two more fasts were to be observed during the next two years, the message is given in the past tense; "you fasted and mourned". The seventieth fifth month fast was the last one observed because the second temple was completed seven months later. This same phrase, "these seventy years", appears in Zechariah 1:12 and is also spoken prophetically. These are the only two occurrences of the phrase "these seventy years" in the Bible. For additional information about the similarities of Zechariah 1:12 and 7:5, refer to section 54 (The 70-Year Bible Prophecies).

- Since the temple was being rebuilt and was nearing completion, the people wondered if it was still necessary to observe the fast of the fifth month. The first message to the people (7:4-7) was a rebuke for observing self-imposed fasts that were not commanded by God and were observed with the wrong motivation. They were fasting and feasting for themselves, not for the Lord. Even though the people did not inquire about the fast of the seventh month, Zechariah included it in his response. The fast of the seventh month, also self-imposed, commemorated the murder of Gedaliah, the governor of Judah, shortly after the fall of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 41:1-2; 2 Kings 25:25). Jerusalem fell in the fifth month and Gedaliah was murdered just two months later in the seventh month, 586 B.C. The people's question about the fifth month fast (7:3) was answered indirectly in the fourth message. In the millennial kingdom, the fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months will become joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah (8:19). The fast of the tenth month commemorated the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon in January, 588 B.C. (2 Kings 25:1-2; Jeremiah 39:1). The fast of the fourth month commemorated the capture of Jerusalem by Babylon in 586 B.C. (2 Kings 25:3-4; Jeremiah 39:2). These fasts were also self-imposed. The third and fourth messages (chapter 8) give encouragement and hope to the people, describing the millennial kingdom where fasts will become feasts.

- There are several unusual things about Zechariah 7 and 8 that should be noted. First, why are two chapters of Zechariah, including four messages from the Lord dedicated to answering what seems to be a relatively unimportant question about a man-made fast? Second, why is a prophecy that was fulfilled in 515 B.C. included in a book that mainly focuses on future events and the end times? Third, since the temple was nearing completion, why would the people of Bethel be so concerned about a one-day fast that would only be observed two more times? Fourth, why are "these seventy years" mentioned when it has only been 68 years? It is spoken in the past tense as if the 70 years have already been completed. Since the temple was completed in the twelfth month (Adar; 515 B.C.; February-March; Ezra 6:15), then the last fast of the fifth month would have been observed in 516 B.C. (fifth month; July-August 516 B.C.). According to this prophecy, the first fast must have begun the year after the temple was destroyed, which was the fifth month (July-August) of 585 B.C. Then the last fast of the fifth month would have occurred exactly 70 years later in 516 B.C. Since Gedaliah was murdered just two months after the burning of Jerusalem, the fast of the seventh month would have first been observed in 585 B.C. (July-August) and the last fast would have occurred 70 years later in 516 B.C. Based on the unusual nature of this prophecy, one must conclude that there is more to this passage than meets the eye. One's attention is drawn to "seventy years" (7:5), a time

period that also appears in Zechariah 1:12 and that is often associated with end-time events. The many similarities between the Zechariah 1:12 and 7:5 prophecies suggest that they are connected in a special way. Perhaps the Zechariah 7:5 message from the Lord can be used to help interpret the Zechariah 1:12 passage. For additional information, refer to section 54 (The 70-Year Bible Prophecies).

- The second message from Zechariah (7:8-14) is a reminder to listen to and obey the word of the Lord. In the past, disobedience resulted in the Jewish people being scattered "among all the nations whom they have not known" and "they made the pleasant land desolate" (7:14).

*Zechariah 8; The future for Jerusalem (Zion, 8:1-23)

- Of the four messages given to Zechariah in "the fourth year of King Darius" (7:1), the last two are explained in this chapter. The third message (8:1-17) describes God's blessings during the millennial kingdom. "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I am exceedingly jealous for Zion, yes, with great wrath I am jealous for her'" (8:2). "Thus says the LORD, 'I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD of host will be called the Holy Mountain'" (8:3). The Lord will bring His people back, "'and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness'" (8:8).

- The fourth message (8:18-23) indirectly answers the question about the necessity of observing the fast of the fifth month (7:2-3). "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'The fast of the fourth, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth months will become joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah; so love truth and peace'" (8:19). During the millennial kingdom, these fasts will become feasts, and "'many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD'" (8:22; see also 14:16-18; Isaiah 2:2-3). For additional information about these fasts, refer to the Zechariah 7 commentary. "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you"'" (8:23).

*Zechariah 12; Jesus' second coming, Armageddon, attack and defense of Jerusalem (12:1-14)

- "The burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel" (12:1) describes the campaign of Armageddon, the second coming of Jesus Christ and the millennial kingdom in chapters 12 to 14. It is one of the most detailed accounts of this future time period in the Bible. The campaign of Armageddon begins when "the kings of the whole world" and their armies are gathered together in Israel (Jezreel Valley) "for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty" (Revelation 16:13-16). The Lord declares, "Behold, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah (12:2). "It will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it" (12:3). The final war (Armageddon) of the Great Tribulation is described in many

places in the Bible (Revelation 14:14-20, 16:13-21, 19:11-21; Zechariah 12:1-14, 14:1-15; Isaiah 34:1-17, 63:1-6; Jeremiah 25:12-38; Joel 3:1-17). God will strike the attacking armies with confusion, madness, panic and a devastating plague (12:4, 14:12-13).

- "In that day I will make the clans of Judah like a firepot among pieces of wood and a flaming torch among sheaves, so they will consume on the right hand and on the left all the surrounding peoples, while the inhabitants of Jerusalem again dwell on their own sites in Jerusalem" (12:6). "In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the LORD before them" (12:8). It appears that at the very end of the Tribulation many Jews will return to Jerusalem because "the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem". Perhaps some will return in anticipation of Jesus Christ's second coming. "And in that day I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" (12:9).

- "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn" (12:10). At the second coming of Christ, the Jews will finally realize that the One whom their forefathers rejected and "pierced" (crucified) is Jesus, the Messiah, and "all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him" (Revelation 1:7). "In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem... every family by itself and their wives by themselves" (12:11-14).

*Zechariah 13; The Lord's cleansing of Jerusalem (13:1-9)

- "In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity" (13:1). Following the time of mourning in the preceding chapter, the cleansing of the nation of Israel is described in 13:1-6. In the last three chapters of Zechariah, the phrase "in that day" occurs 16 times. The Lord is "the hope of Israel" and "the fountain of living water" offering salvation to all who believe (Jeremiah 17:13). "In that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem" (14:8).

- "Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered" is a reference to the death of Christ and the scattering of the disciples (13:7; Matthew 26:31). Verses 8 and 9 suggest that two thirds of the people of Israel will perish during the end times. "It will come about in all the land, 'declares the LORD', that two parts in it will be cut off and perish; but the third will be left in it. And I will bring the third part through the fire, refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is my God'" (13:8-9). This passage may be a reference to the Jewish remnant that will be refined and tested during the Great Tribulation. God will bring a portion of this Jewish remnant to a safe haven for the last half of the Tribulation period (Revelation 12:6, 14).

*Zechariah 14; The Lord's second coming, Armageddon, description of Millennium (14:1-21)

- The climactic and triumphant return of the Messiah is described in this chapter. At the close of the Great Tribulation, Jesus Christ will return to rescue His people, to judge the wicked and to rule His earthly kingdom (refer to section 47, Jesus Christ's Second Coming to Earth). "Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you" (14:1). "For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city" (14:2). "Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle" (14:3). "In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south" (14:4). You will flee by the valley of My mountains... Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!" (14:5). During the war of Armageddon (Revelation 16:13-21), Jesus will return in the same way that He ascended into heaven (Acts 1:11) and His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives which will split toward Jerusalem's Old City. The Jewish remnant will flee into the newly created valley and will be protected by the Messiah. The "holy ones" that accompany Jesus are angels (Matthew 25:31) and may also include believers from heaven.

- "In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night... living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea... And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one. All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site... People will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security" (14:6-11). The land around Jerusalem will be changed to a plain, probably as a result of the great earthquake of the seventh bowl judgment, where the cities of the nations will fall, every island will disappear and the mountains will not be found (Revelation 16:17-21). While the mountains of the world are crumbling and the cities of the nations are falling, Jerusalem will actually rise up. During the Millennium, Jerusalem will be rebuilt, Messiah's temple will be constructed and Jesus will be king over all the earth. "Now this will be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth" (14:12). "It will come about in that day that a great panic from the LORD will fall on them; and they will seize one another's hand, and the hand of one will be lifted against the hand of another" (14:13). "Judah also will fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered, gold and silver and garments in great abundance" (14:14).

- The millennial kingdom is described at the end of this chapter (14:16-21). "Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths" (14:16). "And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them" (14:17).