

# TTB - Zechariah

## Who?

- His name means “he whom God remembers”
- He was of priestly descent, - a son of Berechiah, and grandson of Iddo (Zechariah 1:1, Zechariah 1:7), the chief of one of the priestly families, that returned from exile along with Zerubbabel and Joshua (Nehemiah 12:4)
- Note: This is not the same Zechariah that is mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 23:35.
  - “...so that upon you will fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.”
  - That “son of Berechiah” is not in all of the manuscripts of Matthew, and is not present in the parallel passage in Luke 11:51, which just says Zechariah.
  - The Zechariah mentioned by Jesus is actually Zechariah the son of Jehoiada, whose death is recorded in 2 Chronicles 24:20–22
- Zechariah the prophet is mentioned in Ezra 5:1-2:
  - When the prophets, Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them, then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak rose up and began to rebuild the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them, supporting them.
- And also in Ezra 6:14:
  - And the elders of the Jews were successful in building through the prophecy of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo.

## Structure

- **[SLIDE]** Introductory Prophecy (Zechariah 1:1-6)
- Four prophetic announcements:
  - A series of seven visions (Zechariah 1:7-6:8)
  - An answer about a question regarding one of the commemorative fast days (Zechariah 7:1-14 and 8)
  - A נִשְׁפָּט *massah* (pronouncement, i.e., a prophecy of threatening import) about the land of Hadrach, the seat of the ungodly world-power (ch. 9-11)
  - A *massah* concerning Israel (ch. 12-14)

## When?

- **[SLIDE]** Zechariah 1:1 says, “In the eighth month of the second year of Darius...”
  - This is Darius the Great, also known as Darius I, who was the father of Xerxes I.
- Darius ruled starting in 522 BCE, so Zechariah began his ministry as a prophet in 520 BCE.
- The latest date we have for Zechariah’s ministry is from 7:1
  - 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.
- So, we know for sure that his ministry lasted for a minimum of two years, but the two final parts of the book came at some indeterminate time after those two years.

## Historical Context

- 539 BCE — Decree of Cyrus
- 538 BCE — First return of the exiles, temple work begins

- 530-520 BCE — Work on the temple was interrupted, during the reign of Cambyses II
  - Note that King Artaxerxes in Ezra 4:8 is actually Cambyses II
- 522 BCE — Darius became king
- **[SLIDE]** August 27, 520 BCE\* — Haggai's first prophecy
  - Ezra 1:1 — “In the second year of Darius the king, on the first day of the sixth month”
  - <http://www.cgsf.org/dbeattie/calendar/?roman=-519> — All date equivalencies between the Hebrew/Babylonian calendar this far back and the Gregorian calendar are approximate, but should be pretty close
  - See also <https://calendarhome.com/calculate/convert-a-date> for different dates
- September 16, 520 BCE — Temple rebuilding begins
  - Ezra 1:15 — “on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of Darius the king.”
- October 16, 520 BCE — Haggai's second prophecy
  - Ezra 2:1 — “On the twenty-first of the seventh month”
- November 520 BCE — Zechariah's first prophecy
  - Zechariah 1:1 — “In the eighth month of the second year of Darius...”
- December 17, 520 BCE — Haggai's third prophecy
  - Haggai 2:10 — “On the twenty-fourth of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius”
- February 14, 519 BCE — Zechariah's second prophecy
  - Zechariah 1:7 — “On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, that is, the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius”
- December 6, 518 BCE — Zechariah's Third prophecy
  - Zechariah 7:1 — “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.”
- February 19, 515 BCE — Temple construction is completed (Ezra 6:15, “on the third day of the month Adar, it was the sixth year of the reign of King Darius”)

## The Introductory Prophecy

- So, in August of 520 BCE, the prophet Haggai said that it was time to rebuild the temple.
- In September, the construction started.
- In October Haggai prophesied again, encouraging the people in their work.
- Then in November, Zechariah received a prophecy.
- Given this context, it is important to see what Zechariah prophesies to the people of Israel.
  - **[READ Zechariah 1:2-4]**
  - He reminds them of the sins of their fathers, and calls them to repentance.
- Why repentance? Why would they need that reminder?
  - You would think that they remembered the reason for their exile. You would think that as they are building the temple again they would already be living in repentance.
  - However, the call to repentance is a never-ending call. It is especially important when we are working on the things of God that we are reminded of the need for repentance.
- Just one month later, “On the twenty-fourth of the ninth month”, Haggai says, “from this day upward/backward” (Haggai 2:15) things were not good, and you were not blessed. However, “from this day on I will bless you.” (Haggai 2:19)
  - Apparently Zechariah's call to repentance worked.

## The Visions

- I am going to have to go fairly quickly through the content of this book if we want to make it all the way through. So, I'm going to pick up on some of the highlights of the book that I think are important or helpful.

- Following the introductory prophecy, Zechariah has a series seven visions that start in chapter 1 and go all the way up through the end of chapter 6. These visions were given to Zechariah in a single night. In the Visions, the LORD is present and talking with Zechariah, and the visions were interpreted by a mediating angel or messenger.
- There are times when “the Angel of the LORD” is also seen in the visions, interacting with the mediating angel and with Zechariah. In these visions he is sometimes identified with the LORD directly, and he is sometimes distinguished from the LORD.
- This event happened exactly five months after the building of the temple had been resumed, and two months after Haggai’s final prophecy that the LORD would bless and glorify the Jewish people. This blessing and glorification was shown to Zechariah in these visions, along with some of the features of the future kingdom of God.

## The First Vision: Horses

- **[READ Zechariah 1:8]** What are the red, white, and reddish-brown horses, standing among myrtle trees in a hollow or ravine?
  - The colors of these horses is connected to two other times when horses of these colors are sent out like this.
  - **[READ Zechariah 6:1-3]**
  - The color of the horses is connected with the mission which the riders had to perform. This is confirmed by Revelation 6, where a great sword is there given to the rider on the red horse, to take away peace from the earth so that people will kill one another, and a crown to the rider upon the white horse, who goes forth to conquer (Revelation 6:2). The rider on the pale horse receives the name of Death, and has power given to him to slay one quarter of the earth with sword, famine, and pestilence (Revelation 6:8). While it is true that these specific effects are not attributed to the riders in Zechariah’s vision, but that is their mission nonetheless.
  - Their mission was to take an active part in the agitation of the nations, if any agitation existed, and to guide the nations to God’s divinely appointed end. At this time, though, they report that there is no agitation, “all the earth is still and quiet.” (Zechariah 1:11)
- Upon hearing that the rest of the earth is at peace, the angel then asks the LORD when he is going to finally take pity on Jerusalem, to which the LORD replies with “gracious words, comforting words.”
  - The Hebrew here is דְּבָרִים טוֹבִים *devarim tovim*, good words, or words which promise good, i.e., salvation.
  - This connects to the promise in Jeremiah 29:10, which says, “For this is what the LORD says: ‘When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word ( דְּבָרִי הַטוֹב *d’varei hatov*) to you, to bring you back to this place.’”
- God then affirms His promise to rebuild the temple and to return His presence to Jerusalem.

## The Second Vision: Horns

- The second vision is connected to the first.
- The horn is a symbol of power.
- The angel interprets the four horns to the prophet first of all as the horns which have scattered Judah; then literally, as the nations which have lifted up the horn against the land of Judah to scatter it.
  - Just like the visions in Daniel 2, 7, and 8, these are the four empires that rose up in succession against the Jewish people and afflicted them: The Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians, and the Greeks.
- Then the LORD shows him four workmen or smiths who are sent to throw down the horns or nations.
  - They symbolize the instruments "of the divine omnipotence by which the imperial power in its several historical forms is overthrown" (Kliefoth, quoted in K&D).

## The Third Vision: Man with a Measuring Line

- The third vision shows Zechariah a man holding a measuring line, like a measuring tape or string, who is being sent to measure Jerusalem and prepare for its expansion.
- The angel says that Jerusalem will dwell as פְּרָזוֹת *perazot*, open country. This means that it will be built without the need for walls. This also means that it will be much larger than it could be if it were encircled by walls.
- How will the city be protected? The LORD says, “I will be a wall of fire to her on all sides, and I will be the glory in her midst.” (Zechariah 2:5)
  - That is to say, will fill the city with His glory.
- The confirmation that this will happen is then explained:
  - The people of Israel are told to flee from Babylon because God is going to bring destruction on that nation.
  - **[READ Zechariah 2:8]** The nations that plunder Israel are going to be a source of glory for God — as in glory in battle, destroyed by him.
  - The phrase “the apple of the eye” is בַּבַּת עֵינַי *bavat ayin* (literally, the gate, or more probably the pupil of the eye, which is the object we most carefully preserve and protect. It is a figure of speech used to denote someone’s dearest possession
  - God applies this term to the nation of Israel as early as Deuteronomy 32:10:
    - He [God] found him [Israel] in a desert land, And in the howling wasteland of a wilderness; He encircled him, He cared for him, He guarded him as the apple of His eye.
- **[READ Zechariah 2:8-11]**
  - Notice that the one speaking here is the Angel of the LORD, not the mediating angel who gives the interpretations of the visions. The LORD is speaking through the Angel of the LORD, but there are times when the messenger speaks of himself.
  - “For behold, I am going to wave My hand over them so that they will be plunder for their slaves. Then you will know that the LORD of armies has sent Me.”
  - “Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the LORD of armies has sent Me to you.”
  - The Angel of the LORD is the one doing the work that’s being described. He is the one who defeats the nations. He is the one who calls the nations to join themselves to the LORD.
  - This Angel of the LORD is none other than the Messiah himself, who will subdue the nations and dwell among Israel.
  - After the nations are subdued, then “many nations will join themselves to the LORD on that day and will become My people”
    - This is the sign of the coming redemption that we also see in **[READ Micah 4:2]**
- Note verse 12:
  - “And the LORD will possess Judah as His portion **in the holy land**, and will again choose Jerusalem.”
  - Once again, God promises to give the land of Israel to the Jewish people, saying that He will possess the Jewish people as his portion.
  - The term “the holy land” is used here and also in Psalm 78:54, which says, “So He brought them to His holy land,”
    - If you ever wanted to know why the Holy Land is called that, it’s from these two verses.

## The Fourth Vision: The Courtroom

- The fourth vision shows a courtroom drama, with the high priest, whose name is Joshua, standing before the Angel of the LORD, who is depicted as dispensing justice.
- Beside Joshua is the adversary.

- Now, it's important to note that the text here does not give us a proper noun, a name. Most English translations say "Satan," but the Hebrew says, הַשָּׂטָן, *ha-satan*, which is best translated "the accuser."
- Michael Heiser talks about this more in his book *The Unseen Realm*, but we tend to put more meaning back into these texts than they originally had when we picture the super-powerful being "Satan" interacting in these events.
- The accuser is just that, an adversary, a prosecuting attorney, the one who brings accusations against the defendant in the case.
- In this situation, we are seeing a frivolous case brought against the high priest. The sins with which he is being accused are not defined, but they likely have to do with his own office as high priest.
- The LORD then rebukes the accuser, and defends Joshua by calling to the stand Jerusalem, which has been delivered like a log being pulled out of the fire.
  - If Jerusalem has been pulled from the fire, how much more so the High Priest.
- After the accuser is rebuked, the Joshua is cleansed of the guilt against him, and symbolically clothed in garments of glory.
  - Zechariah speaks up and tells them to put הַצִּיץ הַזָּהָב הַטָּהוֹר *hatzanif hatahor*, the pure headband, on his head.
  - This is a reference to the צִיץ זָהָב טָהוֹר *tzitz zahav tahor*, the golden plate that was placed on the forehead of the high priest, which we learn about in Exodus 28:36:
    - "You shall also make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engravings of a signet, 'Holy to the LORD.'
  - In asking for the pure headband to be placed on the head of Joshua, he is asking that Joshua should not only be dressed splendidly, but that he should be confirmed as being holy, and therefore qualified to accomplish the atonement of the people of Israel.
- After Joshua is purified, the LORD prophesies that He will bring the Branch. Who is the Branch?
  - The Branch is another name for Messiah
  - **[SLIDE]** It comes originally from Isaiah 11:1–2 — Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch ( נֶצֶר *netzer*) from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
  - It also appears in Jeremiah 23:5–6 — "Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch ( צֶמַח *tzemach*); And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land. "In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will live securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The LORD Our Righteousness.'
  - And it comes up again in Zechariah 6:12–13 — The LORD of armies says this: "Behold, there is 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 majesty and sit and rule on His throne.

## The Fifth Vision: The Golden Lampstand and the Olive Trees

- In chapter 4, Zechariah has a vision of a golden lampstand similar to the one that stood in the Temple. However, there are some differences.
- On the left and right of the lampstand are two olive trees. These trees are attached to the branches of the lampstand via pipes, with the oil flowing through the pipes to the lampstands from the trees.
- The explanation of this vision is pretty straightforward.
- The mediating angel connects the olive trees to the two key figures in Jerusalem at this time, Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest. Both of these men were anointed by God to be in their roles, thus the connection to olive oil, which is used for anointing, and the explicit statement in verse 14 that "These are the two anointed ones, who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth."

- The vision is one of comfort and exhortation for Zerubbabel and Joshua. They were embarking on a massive project to build the temple, and God was saying that they would complete the work he had given them to do.
- Now, Bible teachers often try to extrapolate every prophecy possible to connect it to Jesus. I'm not going to do that with this passage. The prophecy is not clearly related to the work of Jesus, and I think it's too much of a stretch to try to impose that on the text.

### Sixth Vision: The Flying Roll, and the Woman in the Ephah

- The scroll that Zechariah sees flying in the sky is said to be 20 cubits long by 10 cubits wide.
- These are the same dimensions as the holy of holies in the temple.
- Scholars debate the significance, but it appears to mean that the sinners who are being judged by the scroll will have to be measured with the measure of the holy of holies, meaning that they might be cut off from the congregation of the Lord, which appeared before God in the holy of holies.
- The scroll flies *עַל־פְּנֵי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ*, *al p'nei khol-ha'aretz*, over the face of the whole land. This is a reference to the land of Israel, where the judgement will be executed. The vision shows that these sinners are “purged away” or separated from the righteous.
- The second part of the vision shows the further fate of these sinners.
- An ephah is a dry goods measurement. It equals about 22 liters or 4.9 gallons. What's being described here is a basket of some kind with a lead lid on the top covering it.
- The meaning is this: Just like in an ephah of grain the separate grains are all collected together, so will the individual sinners across the land be brought into a heap, when the curse goes out over the whole land.
- The woman who is seen sitting in the ephah is described as *הַרְשָׁעָה* *ha-rishah*, Wickedness embodied.
- The ephah is then carried by two women with wings to “the land of Shinar.”
  - According to Genesis 10:10 and Genesis 11:2, Shinar is the land in which Nimrod founded the first empire, and where the human race built the tower of Babel which was to reach to the sky.
  - The intention here is not to take the name Shinar literally, as in pointing to Babylon. The ungodliness is being carried away out of the sphere of the people of God, and being taken to a permanent settlement in the sphere of the powers that are hostile to God.
- So, the double vision of this chapter shows the separation of the wicked from the congregation of the LORD, and their banishment into and concentration within the ungodly kingdom of the world.
- Again, I'm not going to speculate on or extrapolate some supposed future interpretation here.

### The Seventh Vision: The Four Chariots

- The four chariots are explained in Zechariah 6:5 by the interpreting angel to be the four winds (*רְחוֹת*, *ruchot*, the plural form of *ruach*, spirit or wind) of heaven, which go out after they have received commands from the LORD.
- These chariots go out from the two mountains, which are Mount Zion and the Mount of Olives, the two main mountains that make up the city of Jerusalem.
- The color of the horses has the same significance as we saw in chapter 1, only now we see a black horse added to the mix.
- The chariots execute judgment upon the enemies of the kingdom of God. Red, as the color of blood, points to war and bloodshed; the speckled color to pestilence and other fatal plagues; and the black color to famine. The fourth chariot is drawn by white horses, to point to the glorious victories of the ministers of the divine judgment.
- These teams of horses are sent North, to the land of Babylon, and south, to the land of Egypt, to execute God's judgement on those nations that have oppressed Israel.

## Closing of the Visions

- At the end of the visions, the LORD tells Zechariah to go greet some representatives from Babylon who have brought gifts for the building of the temple. He is to take some of the silver and gold that they brought and make a crown to place on the head of Joshua the High Priest.
- This whole passage is EXTREMELY messianic.
  - First of all, the high priest is not supposed to wear a crown like a king.
  - Second, the LORD immediately talks about the Branch (*tzemach*) again.
  - **[READ Zechariah 6:12-13]**
  - This appears to be, in the initial context, a reference to Zerubbabel, who was the governor but was also a descendant of David. However, that interpretation only goes so far.
- Abarbanel, a Portuguese rabbi in the 1400s, says:
  - This was not said about the Second Temple, but about the final future Temple. And he will bear the glory, meaning the one who will build the Temple of the Lord, who will sprout from under Zerubbabel, will bear the glory of kingship, not Zerubbabel. He will sit and rule on his throne, a throne of kingship, not Zerubbabel, who will not be a king and will not sit on a throne of kingship, as if to say, and therefore he will not receive the crown as the one who will sprout from under him will receive it. And also, at that future time, the priest will sit on his throne, for there will be no jealousy or competition between the Messiah king and the High Priest in the future to come.
- Malbim, a rabbi in the 1800's, says:
  - "...although Zerubbabel is also building the Temple now, there is a difference between them, for he, meaning the Messiah who will sprout from under him, will build the Temple of the Lord and will also bear the glory of the Lord. This is not the case with Zerubbabel, who is building now but does not bear this glory.... It can also be interpreted that he will sit on the throne of the Lord's glory, for the Messiah will sit on the throne of the Lord as king."
- It is important to note that the Hebrew of verse 13 does not actually indicate that the Branch will be both priest and king.
  - Those two roles are descended from two different families: Kingship from David, Priesthood from Aaron.
  - The Messiah cannot be both priest and king. The writer of Hebrews acknowledges this:
    - Hebrews 7:14 — For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses said nothing concerning priests.
  - The Hebrew text of verse 13 indicates that there are two people here, the King Messiah and the legitimate Aaronic priest, and that there will be peace between these two leaders.
  - Metzudat David, a rabbinic commentary written in the 1700's, says, "The High Priest from your lineage [Zechariah was, himself, a priest], who will serve then, will be before the throne of the Messiah, for he will come to him and submit to him. This explains why the crown placed on his head is made of silver, because the greatness of the High Priesthood does not equal the greatness of kingship, for the High Priest will submit to the king and be subordinate to him, and he will come before him."
- The prophecy here is that the Messiah will come back and will rebuild the temple, and that he will serve as the King of Israel in the Messianic era. And when he does this, there will be a high priest serving in the temple who will submit to the Messiah's rule.

## Commemorative Fast Days

- On December 6, 518 BCE, the town of Bethel in Judah sent representatives to the priests and prophets asking them a halakhic question.
  - This is in keeping with the commandment of God in Deuteronomy 17:8-13, where he tells the Jewish people to address questions to the priests and teachers of their day.
- The question is about the observing specific fast days.

- There are four minor fast days observed by the Jewish people that are connected to the destruction of the First and Second Temples. (There is one additional minor fast day connected to the story of Esther.)
  - **Fast of the 4th month (observed on Tammuz 17):** In 586 BCE, on the 9th of Tammuz, the Babylonians under Commemorates the day that daily offerings in the First Temple were suspended during Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem. Then, on Tammuz 17 in 69 CE the Romans breached the Walls of Jerusalem, which led to the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. The rabbis have combined these two remembrances into one fast day, observed on the 17th of Tammuz. This fast kicks off a three week period called Bein haMetzarim ("between the straits", i.e. between the days of distress), or just referred to as The Three Weeks, which end at Tisha b'Av.
  - **Fast of the 5th month (observed on the 9th of Av):** Commemorates the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 586 BCE and again in 70 CE (2 Kings 25:8-21; Jeremiah 52:12-13; Ezekiel 20:1; Zechariah 7:3-5; 8:19)
  - **Fast of the 7th month (the fast of Gedaliah on Tishri 3):** Commemorates the assassination of Gedaliah (the governor of Judah appointed by Nebuchadnezzar) in 587 or 586 BC (2 Kings 25:22-26; Jeremiah 40-43; 41:1; Zechariah 7:5; 8:19)
  - **Fast of the 10th month (Tebet 10):** This fast is kept as a memorial of the day when Nebuchadnezzar began his 1½-year siege against Jerusalem in 587 BC which ended with the destruction of the temple and the exile of the Jews to Babylon (2 Kings 25:10; Jeremiah 39:1; 52:4; Ezekiel 24:1-2; Zechariah 7-8; 8:19).
- In Zechariah 7 the people of Bethel ask if they need to continue fasting on the 9th of Av, since the new temple is being built. This was still a few years before it was completed, but you can imagine the people being excited as they saw it coming to fruition.
- The LORD turns the question back on the people, asking them how sincere they were when they were fasting on that day and on the fast of Gedaliah in the seventh month.
- He turns it into a teaching opportunity to remind the people that fasts are supposed to lead to repentance, which leads to true justice, kindness, and compassion.
- **[READ Zechariah 7:12]**
  - The people made their hearts hard, just like Pharaoh.

## Future Peace

- Then, the prophecy continues, and the LORD talks about how He is going to treat Jerusalem, Israel, and the Jewish people in the future.
- These prophecies are not just about the time of Zechariah. They are pictures of the coming Kingdom of Messiah and the Age to Come. They are prophecies that have not yet come to fruition, and that point to the love God has for His people.
- **[READ Zechariah 8:3]**
- **[READ Zechariah 8:6-8]**
- **[READ Zechariah 8:11-13]**
- What are the signs that these days of peace and restoration are here? The LORD gives two signs.
- First, He comes back to the question about the fast days.
  - **[READ Zechariah 8:18-19]**
  - The Fast days will become days of joy and gladness.
- Second, he says that the peoples of the earth, the Gentiles, will come to seek the LORD
  - **[READ Zechariah 8:20-23]**
  - This is a key element in the prophecies of the Bible. In addition to the most-repeated prophecy that the Jewish people will be brought back to their land and will live under the rule of the Davidic King again, the nations are always depicted as coming to join with the Jewish people in seeking the LORD.
  - For example, see Isaiah 2:1-4, and the prophecy coming in Zechariah 14



- Note regarding this prophecy that this has NOT been fulfilled yet. The prophecy is that the peoples will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD
- As part of this seeking of the LORD, He also says that 10 men from all the nations will grasp the **כַּנָּף**, *kanaf*, the corner, of a Jew's garment.
  - Most English translations don't capture the picture being expressed in this passage accurately. We should point out a few important points.
  - 1. The Hebrew text says that the men of the nations will grab hold of the garment of a Jewish man. While some translations will try to universalize this language by translating "men" as "people," the Hebrew is explicit for a reason, as we will see.
  - **[SLIDE]** 2. **כַּנָּף** is not just a garment, it's a specific part of a Jewish man's garment. The word means "wing" or "extremity," and it's pointing to the corners of Jewish man's garment, which is where the fringes, tzitzit, are tied.
    - This commandment is found in Numbers 15:37–41.
    - Tzitzit are strings that are tied in a specific way on the corners of 4-cornered garments that are worn by Jewish men.
    - These tassels represent the commandments of God, and are meant, according to Numbers, to be a reminder of the commandments of God.
    - The picture being painted in the prophecy is purposeful: The nations are grabbing hold of the commandments of God and saying that we want to cast our lot with the Jewish people because we know that God is with them'
  - 3. The prophecy says that the men from the nations will grab hold of the tzitzit.
    - The first implication of this is expounded upon by the ancient sages, who said that the numbers are extravagant.
    - Rashi says that the text means that ten men from each of the seventy nations will grab hold of each of the four corners. "This equals seven hundred for each corner.... two thousand and eight hundred" total. The implication is that the ratio of Gentile to Jew will be high.
  - 4. In Hebrew, the text says that the men from the nations will grab hold of the tzitzit. garment of "a Jew," not "the Jews," not "a few Jews," but "a Jew."
    - Who is the one Jew who represents the rest of Israel? The Messiah!
    - So, while we can take the text to mean that the nations will join with the Jewish people (which it does mean in the plain meaning), we can also take it to mean that the nations will join with the Jewish Messiah.

## Massah to Hadrach

- **[SLIDE]** Chapter 9 kicks off a **מַסָּח** *massah* (literally "a burden," figuratively a pronouncement, or a prophecy of threatening import) about the land of Hadrach, the seat of the ungodly world-power, which continues through chapter 11.
- There is considerable debate about what Hadrach (**הַדְרָחַ**) actually is. There is no known city by that name, though there are scholars who say that's what the prophet is referring to.
  - One theory, held both by the ancient rabbis and by the church father Jerome, is that Hadrach is a symbolic name formed by the prophet himself, consisting of the word *chad* (meaning sharp, brave, ready for war) and *râkh* (soft, tender).
  - Due to the mention of Damascus, Tyre, Sidon, and Philistia, it appears to refer to a wide swath of land north and of Israel that is not from one specific nation or people group.
- The land of Hadrach is laid upon with a pronouncement, but the LORD also uses the opportunity to compare this land of ungodly power to the people of Israel.
- He also uses the opportunity to predict the coming of the messiah to Israel, and to once again prophecy about the inclusion of the Gentiles alongside the Jewish people.

- **[READ Jeremiah 9:9-10]**
- Again, these are prophecies about the coming Messianic Era, when the messiah will reign in Jerusalem, the world will be at peace, and the nations will be under his dominion.
- Then the LORD reminds Israel, his people, that they will have their fortunes restored double after the final exile, as a result of the LORD's covenant with David, the great king from whom the Messiah comes.
- In chapter 10, He once again prophesies that He will return the Jewish people to the land of Israel.
  - **[READ Jeremiah 10:6]**
  - Note that this prophecy includes both the southern nation of Judah and the northern nation of Israel.
  - The LORD is promising to return even the "Lost" tribes of Israel back to the land of Israel, and to make them prosperous again.
- He even says, "I will whistle for them and gather them together..."
- Chapter 11 continues the *massah* against this seat of ungodly world power, but in it the LORD expresses his displeasure with the foolish shepherds of His own people.
- The chapter is broken into three parts:
  - the threat of judgment (Zechariah 11:1-3);
  - the description of the good shepherd (Zechariah 11:4-14);
  - and the sketch of the foolish shepherd (Zechariah 11:15-17).
- A key element here in chapter 11 is God allowing Israel to be injured by the nations as a result of their own disobedience and rejection of him. They, his flock, responded to his salvation from the ungodly world power with ingratitude, so he opened up a path for them to be destroyed.
- To do that, he had to release the nations from a treaty that he had made with them requiring them not to hurt or destroy Israel.
- Note verses 12 and 13, which are a prophecy that was fulfilled in Matthew 26 with the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot.
  - The context here is that the Jewish leadership (the shepherds of Israel) responded to the salvation of the LORD with contempt, and paid 30 pieces of silver as a way of saying "that's the value of your salvation."
  - In the same way, the payment of thirty pieces of silver to the betrayer Judas was the wages with which the Jewish leadership repaid Jesus for what He had done for the salvation of Israel.

## The Future Redemption

- The book of Zechariah ends with a prophecy about the future redemption of Israel and, by extension, the entire world under the King Messiah.
- The redemption is preceded by Jerusalem, Israel, and the Jewish people being "a cup that causes staggering."
  - **[READ Zechariah 12:2-3]**
- The nations will rise up against Israel, but they will not succeed
  - **[READ Zechariah 12:4]**
  - Many theologians point to how God rescued the modern state of Israel from the invading Arab countries around it in 1948, 1967, and 1973 as a partial fulfillment of this prophecy. At the very least the miraculous events that happened during those wars were signs of God's continued protection of His people.
- In the end, the nations that rise up against Israel will be defeated. The LORD Himself will fight for them and protect them.
- Then, the Messiah comes into view in the prophecy.
  - **[READ Zechariah 12:10-11]**
  - The ancient rabbis developed the idea that there would need to be two messiahs, one, the Messiah son of Joseph, who fulfills the prophecies that talk about the spiritual redemption and restoration of

Israel, and the other, the Messiah son of David, who comes as the ruling and reigning king and glorious conqueror.

- What's interesting is that even the ancient rabbis in the Talmud (Sukkah 52a), who came after the time of Jesus and did not believe that he was the Messiah, point to this passage and say that it is talking about the Messiah son of Joseph, who dies on behalf of the people while protecting them.
- This concept of two messiahs is, in our own understanding, fulfilled in the one man, Yeshua of Nazareth.
  
- Note the language here: They will look on ME, and mourn for HIM. The LORD is associating himself with the slain Messiah.
- When the Messiah returns from his exile, the Jewish people will recognize that he is who he said he is, and they will mourn and repent.
- What happens next? After repentance comes cleansing.
  - **[READ Zechariah 13:1-2]**
- In chapter 14 we take a step back in the timeline, and again talk about the nations coming against Jerusalem to battle against it.
- This is the Battle of Gog and Magog, the battle of the nations against the Messiah and his chosen people.
  - **[READ Zechariah 14:2-3]**
- **[SLIDE]** But the Messiah will return, and will set his feet on the Mount of Olives, which is the mountain directly to the East of Jerusalem, and water will flow from underneath the city.
- **[READ Zechariah 14:3-5]**
- There is much more we could say about this, but let's look at the last part of chapter 14.
  
- **[READ Zechariah 14:9]**
- In that day, the name of the LORD will be unified once again, and He will be the only ruler over the entire world.
  - This is the Messianic Kingdom, the reign of the Messiah on the earth for 1000 years.
- And the nations that remain, the gentiles around the world, will be under the reign and rule of the King of Israel, too.
  
- **[READ Zechariah 14:16 and 14:19]**
- **[SLIDE]** In the end, all of the nations of the earth will come to worship the LORD in Jerusalem and to celebrate the feast of Sukkot, the Feast of Booths.
  - Why Sukkot?
  - Sukkot is called *zeman simchateinu*, "The time of our rejoicing"
  - The sages used to say, "He who has not seen the rejoicing during the festival... in the Temple has never seen true joy in all his life"
  - Solomon dedicated the first Temple on the Feast of Sukkot (2 Chronicles 7:8-10).
  - Sukkot is sometimes called the Festival of Clouds because the Aramaic word used in the Targums in place of the word *sukkah* is *metalaya*, which can also be translated as "clouds."
  - This is connected to the cloud that led the people of Israel through the wilderness.
  - It is also related to the prophecies Isaiah makes about the age to come.
    - Isaiah 4:5-6 -- 5 then the LORD will create over the entire area of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a **cloud** by day, and smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy. 6 And there will be a **shelter [sukkah]** to give shade from the heat by day, and refuge and protection from the storm and the rain.
  - It is also known as the Feast of the Nations:
    - In Numbers 29 Hashem instructs the priests to offer 70 bulls on the altar during Sukkot. The rabbis interpret these 70 bulls as an offering for the 70 nations of the earth.
    - b. Avodah Zarah 3a -- [In the end of days] The gentiles say before Him: Master of the Universe, give us the Torah afresh and we will perform its *mitzvot*. The Holy One, Blessed be He, says to

them in response: ... The opportunity for performing mitzvot has already passed, and it is now too late to ask to perform them. But even so, I have an easy *mitzvah* to fulfill, and its name is *sukkah*; go and perform it.

- The prophecy ends with another wonderful picture of the Messianic Kingdom.
  - **[READ Zechariah 14:20-21]**
  - There will be so much holiness in Jerusalem that even the bells on the horse bridles will be inscribed with the words that are written on the headband of the high priest, holy to the LORD.
  - Abarbanel says, “And because the pots in which they will cook in the Temple will not suffice for them, all of Jerusalem will be like the Temple for them. Therefore, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to cook the peace offerings in them.”
- Keil and Delitzsch say, regarding the last verse:
  - The Canaanites are mentioned here, not as merchants..., but as a people laden with sin, and under the curse (Genesis 9:25; Leviticus 18:24.; Deuteronomy 7:2; Deuteronomy 9:4, etc.), which has been exterminated by the judgment. In this sense, ... the term Canaanite is used to denote the godless members of the covenant nation, who came to the temple with sacrifices, in outward self-righteousness. ... to Israelites, who were Canaanites in heart.