

8. Who is the fourth, almost forgotten, power involved in the pre-exilic history of Judah?
9. Discuss the term smiths in 1:20-21.
10. Why did the returning Jews hesitate to attempt the building of the temple?

CHAPTER XXIX

A VISION OF A MEASURING LINE

ZECHARIAH, CHAPTER 2:1-13

RV . . . And I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, 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. 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 villages without walls, by reason of the multitude of men and cattle therein. For I, saith Jehovah, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and I will be the glory in the midst of her. Ho, ho, flee from the land of the north, saith Jehovah; for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heavens, saith Jehovah. Ho Zion, escape, thou that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon. For thus saith Jehovah of hosts: After glory hath he sent me unto the nations which plundered you; for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. For, behold, I will shake my hand over them, and they shall be a spoil to those that served them; and ye shall know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me. Sing and rejoice, o daughter of Zion; for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith Jehovah. And many nations shall join themselves to Jehovah in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And Jehovah shall inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land, and shall yet choose Jerusalem. Be silent, all flesh, before Jehovah; for he is waked up out of his holy habitation.

LXX . . . And I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a man, and in his hand a measuring line. And I said to him, Whither goest thou? And he said to me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth of it, and what is the length of it. And, behold, the angel that spoke with me stood by, and another angel went forth to meet

him, and spoke to him, saying, Run and speak to that young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be fully inhabited by reason of the abundance of men and cattle in the midst of her. And I will be to her, saith the Lord, a wall of fire round about, and I will be for a glory in the midst of her. Ho, ho, flee from the land of the north, saith the Lord: for I will gather you from the four winds of heaven, saith the Lord, even to Sion: deliver yourselves ye that dwell with the daughter of Babylon. For thus saith the Lord Almighty; After the glory has he sent me to the nations that spoiled you: for he that touches you is as one that touches the apple of his eye. For, behold, I bring my hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to them that serve them: and ye shall know that the Lord Almighty has sent me. Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Sion: for, behold, I come, and will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall flee for refuge to the Lord in that day, and they shall be for a people to him, and they shall dwell in the midst of thee: and thou shalt know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to thee. And the Lord shall inherit Juda his portion in the holy land, and he will yet choose Jerusalem. Let all flesh fear before the Lord: for he has risen up from his holy clouds.

COMMENTS

The first two of Zechariah's visions were intended to reassure the people that their security was guaranteed during the time they would be pre-occupied with building the temple and the city of Jerusalem. In the vision of the horses the prophet was reminded of the patrolling power of Persia which held the world in an enforced peace. In the vision of the horns and smiths he was assured that God's power was equal to any threat which might be directed upon them.

Now, to motivate them to apply themselves to the task, God shows Zechariah a vision of the future glories of Jerusalem.

(Verse 1-2) The prophet sees a man with a measuring line. This is a figure used elsewhere in prophetic Scripture. It first appears in *Ezekiel 40:3-4*.

There Ezekiel sees a vision of a man holding a line and a measuring rod standing at the gate. His purpose is to give specifications for the rebuilding of the city and particularly of the temple. Ezekiel's temple roughly follows the general design of the original built by Solomon, though with significant variations.

The measuring rod is twice mentioned again in the apocalypses of

John. (*Revelation 11:1, 21:15-17*) John is given a measuring rod and told to go measure the temple of God and the worshippers.

The final reference to such measurement is found in *Revelation 21:15-17*. This time the measuring rod is in the hand of the angel who uses it to measure the New Jerusalem.

In every reference using this figure, that which is to be measured is either the temple (*Ezekiel 40:3-4*), the city (*Revelation 21:15-17* or both (*Zechariah 2:1-ff*). In each case the purpose of the measurement is to call attention to the special glory of that which is measured.

(Verses 3-5) The first angel who is interpreting the vision to Zechariah, and who holds the measuring line, is met by a second angel who instructs him to run and say to "that young man" (*ie.* Zechariah) that Jerusalem shall be a city without walls because of the multitude of people and animals that inhabit it.

The city is to spread out far beyond its previous location. Judea is hereafter to be marked by unwallled villages (*cp. Ezekiel 38:11*). The Lord Himself will be a "wall of fire" around His people.

The people had been more concerned for their security than for God's work. As the man in the vision, they had been ready to measure for the walls which would circumscribe the holy city. It was a normal approach to city building in that day. An unwallled city was unheard of and the walls must be built before it would be safe to build ought else.

The tragedy of a wall about a city is that it not only protects, it also confines and limits. God will have none of it. His ideal is inclusion rather than exclusion, expansion rather than restriction. His great designs for His people are not to be restricted by a tape line. He will Himself be their protecting wall.

Not only so, He would be the glory within her. Haggai saw the glory of the restored people in terms of tributary silver and gold (*Haggai 2:8-ff*). Zechariah sees their glory in the Divine Presence.

(Verses 6-9) The overwhelming vision of an unlimited, unwallled city with God's presence as its glory and protection gives rise to two lyrical epilogues in which Zechariah looks beyond the immediate restoration to the Messianic fulfillment of its purpose. (*v. 6-9 and 10-13*) God had not chastened His people and delivered them from the chastisement simply for their own sakes. What they would restrict with a measuring line He would make available to all men.

In verse 6, He calls to those of the northern kingdom who have been scattered to the four winds to return . . . flee back to Him.

In verse 7, He calls to those of Judah who have remained in Babylon to escape to Zion.

(Verse 8) God has not forgotten His covenant purpose, the people are still "the apple of His eye." (cp. *Deuteronomy 32:10, Psalms 17:8, Proverbs 7:2*)

(Verse 9) Having already assured those who have returned of His presence and protection, He follows His plea to the others with the same reassurances. A simple wave of God's hand can defeat any foe of His people and cause their enemies to be plunder to those who have been slaves.

(Verses 10-13) In the second epilogue the prophet moves from concern with the immediate task of rebuilding which confronted the returnees from Babylon to the future glory of the Messianic kingdom in which many races would come to the Lord.

In verse 8, the word "*After glory He hath sent me into the nations,*" and in verse 9, "*Ye shall know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me*" can only be Messianic in intent.

Now, in verse 10, the Lord promises to dwell personally in the midst of His people. Here is "the promise of the Father" which was fulfilled in the coming of the Holy Spirit to live in the church. Elsewhere God had promised to pour out His Spirit on all flesh. (cp. *Acts 1:4, Joel 2:28-ff, Acts 2:16-ff*)

(Verse 11) Paul would write the Galatians and say the purpose of our redemption was "that upon the Gentiles might come the blessings of Abraham in Jesus Christ" that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (*Galatians 3:13-14*)

Peter would preach that "to you is the promise and to your children and to all who are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto Him." (*Acts 2:39*)

In the first epilogue to the third vision, (*Zechariah 2:6-9*) the Lord calls the dispersed of Israel to return that He may live in and protect them. In the second epilogue (*Zechariah 2:10-12*) these are called to rejoice because of His indwelling. In verse eleven the promise reaches beyond the faithful remnant of Israel. "*Many nations shall join themselves to Jehovah in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee and thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me unto thee.*"

It would be difficult to imagine a more vivid or graphic prediction of the universal outreach of God through the church. That which God had promised to Abraham is to become not alone the possession

of his physical descendants. Many from everywhere will come and He will also live in and protect them.

Even a cursory reading of the book of Acts will reveal the fulfillment of this promise in the church. Beginning on Pentecost when "devout men from every nation under heaven" heard the gospel and were baptized into Christ, the church in one short generation embraced men and women of every ethnic origin. It began with the receiving into fellowship of Hellenists (*Acts 6:1*). It grew with the conversion of the Samaritans (*Acts 8:4-ff*). The outreach broadened with the inclusion of the Ethiopian proselyte (*Acts 8:26-ff*). It passed the supreme milestone with the reception of the Roman centurion (*Acts 10*). And the all inclusive nature of the church, God living in men of every race, became the distinguishing mark of God's people in Antioch (*Acts 11:20-ff*). As a consequence they received a new name which, more than anything else, calls attention to God's love for all men. (*Acts 11:26*, cp. *Isaiah 62:1-3*)

Immediately following the establishment of universal outreach in the Acts record is the account of Peter's angelic release from prison and the awful death of Herod, both of which demonstrate the truth that the Lord is indeed a wall of fire around His people so long as they are faithful to His purposes.

In the second half of *Zechariah 2:11* is yet another affirmation that the proof of the divine mission of Messiah would be His people. The fulfillment of this "promise of the Father" is the main thrust of the book of Acts as Luke narrates the continuing work of the Christ in His people. That which He began in the days of His flesh, Luke records in the third gospel. In *Acts 1:1* he refers to this as the record of what "Jesus began." Acts is the record of what He continues as through the church, His new body, He fulfills the second half of what the Old Testament had ascribed as His work. In the days of His flesh, according to the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms, the Messiah must "suffer, and rise again from the dead . . ." The same Old Covenant Scriptures taught that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (*Luke 24:45-47*)

Zechariah is one of those prophetic books in which this is stated. By this, wrote Zechariah, "*thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts sent me unto thee.*"

(Verses 12-13) The beginning of Messiah's dwelling in the midst of His people was Jerusalem (*Luke 24:47 (b)*). The heavenly Jerusalem (cp. *Hebrews 12:22*) had its beginning in the earthly city to be rebuilt

by Zechariah's people. The real temple (*Hebrews 9:8-9*), of which the rebuilt temple was a type, a fore-shadowing, was established in the shadow of its material counterpart. (*Acts 2*)

So in Messiah's people God would "yet choose Jerusalem" when men from every nation "are come to Mount Zion, and into the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem . . . to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven . . ." (*Hebrews 12:22-23*)

The waking of Jehovah out of His habitation is a statement of His fulfillment of His promised purpose.

Chapter XXIX—Questions

A Vision of a Measuring Line

1. What was the purpose of Zechariah's first two visions?
2. What is the purpose of the third vision?
3. Describe what Zechariah saw in the third vision.
4. Where else is the measuring rod mentioned in Biblical apocalypse?
5. What is the message of the second angel to Zechariah?
6. The people had been more concerned for _____ than for God's Word.
7. What is the tragedy of a wall about a city?
8. Without a wall, how is Jerusalem to be protected?
9. In response to the third vision Zechariah writes two "lyrical epilogues which look beyond the rebuilding to _____."
10. What is the significance of "the apple of His eye?"
11. What is the promise of Jehovah in 2:10?
12. Discuss 2:11 in connection with Galatians, chapter 3.
13. Discuss 2:11 in light of the spreading of the church as recorded in Acts.
14. What proof of the divine mission of the Messiah is given in 2:11?
15. The beginning of Messiah's dwelling in the midst of His people was in _____.