

6. The oil contained in the bowl of the menorah symbolized _____ as the source of God's light to His people.
7. The human weaknesses of those to whom Zechariah spoke were manifest largely as _____.
8. Show the appropriateness of this part of Zechariah's message being addressed to Zerubbabel.
9. What was Zerubbabel's relationship to Darius?
10. Along with permission to build the temple, Zerubbabel was charged by Darius to _____.
11. Who are "those who have despised small things?"
12. What is the meaning of the two olive trees in Zechariah's vision?
13. How does the vision of the Menorah and the olive trees relate to the Jewish objection to the doctrine of the trinity?
14. In the symbolism of this vision, the Spirit is poured into the work through _____.
15. The Spirit who directed the rebuilding of the temple by Zerubbabel also directs us today in the building of _____.

CHAPTER XXXII

A VISION OF A FLYING SCROLL

ZECHARIAH 5:1-4

RV . . . Then again I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, a flying roll. And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits. Then said he unto me, This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole land: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off on the one side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off on the other side according to it. I will cause it to go forth, saith Jehovah of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name; and it shall abide in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.

LXX . . . And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked and behold a flying sickle. And he said to me. What seest thou? And I said, I see a flying sickle, of the length of twenty cubits, and of the breadth of ten cubits. And he said to me, This is the curse that goes forth over the face of the whole earth: for every thief shall be punished with death on this side, and every false swearer shall be punished

on that side. And I will bring it forth, saith the Lord Almighty, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that swears falsely by my name; and it shall rest in the midst of his house, and shall consume it, and the timber of it, and the stones of it.

COMMENTS

WHAT THE PROPHET SAW . . . v. 1-2

Zechariah lifted up his eyes. This is the phrase which introduces four of the prophet's eight visions. In the present vision what is seen is described as a flying scroll measuring thirty feet long by fifteen feet wide.

The angel again asks what the prophet sees to which the prophet answers very literally by describing the flying scroll. Unlike the previous visions, the angel makes no attempt to get Zechariah to interpret this one. Whether this be because of the prophet's inability to understand the others, or because of the extremely onerous nature of the meaning of the flying scroll we cannot be sure.

WHAT THE VISION MEANT . . . v. 3-4

At least in this instance Zechariah seems justified in not being able to understand. Here, for the first time, the Law is depicted as a curse.

The overwhelming significance of this truth and of its appearance in the Old Testament Scriptures cannot be overstated. For centuries both Jews, in attempting to justify their rejection of the Christian faith, and liberal theologians in their attempt to discredit the New Testament, have held that the evaluation of the law as a curse is the peculiar theology of Paul. (cf. *Galatians 3:13*) That Paul is not the originator of this thought becomes apparent here!

The curse of the law is that it makes no allowance for human infirmity. By it comes the accurate knowledge of sin, but by it comes no remedy for sin. By it comes the just wrath of God upon the sinner, but by it comes no forgiveness of sin. (cf. *Romans 7:7-24*)

The curse of the law is not limited to the Jew alone. The scroll goes forth over the whole earth.

Paul will make this universal indictment of God against all men crystal clear. In *Romans 2:14-15*, the apostle shows that all men are in fact under the law, aside from Christ. The Jew because he has the written oracle of God. The Gentile because, while not having the

written law, he became a law unto himself. This is because every person has in his conscience the awareness of right and wrong. True, the Gentile without the revealed Law of God does not *know* what is, *in fact*, right or wrong. Nevertheless, he is aware that there is right and that there is wrong. He stands guilty because he does not live up to what he believes is right and wrong and in this failure violates the fundamental principle upon which the Law rests.

This is seen in the modern sociological fad called the New Morality. Based upon a philosophy called existentialism, the New Morality is the practical expression of situation ethics.

In simple terms, this amounts to the denial of *established* right and wrong as written in the Ten Commandments. It is at its root the denial of the authority if not the very existence of God. *But the New Morality does not deny the basic principles of right and wrong.* It simply says there is no *pre-determined* right and wrong. Right and wrong must be determined subjectively within the framework of the existing situation.

Paul would say that the situationist stands guilty of breaking the law in that, having become a law unto himself, he proceeds to violate even his own understanding of right and wrong.

No individual, whether he accepts the written law or becomes a law unto himself, consistently does in every situation of life what he believes is right. Thus the curse of the law covers the whole earth.

In Zechariah's vision, two particular commandment violations become the target of God's wrath expressed in the curse of the law symbolized by the flying scroll. They are the infraction of the eighth commandment, "*Thou shalt not steal,*" and the ninth commandment, "*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*" (cf. *Exodus 20:15-16*)

The latter, swearing falsely in the name of God, is an affront to the majesty of God. The former, entering a neighbor's house to steal his personal property, is a violation of the dignity of the neighbor's humanity! Jesus will teach that the very foundation of the law is the recognition of these two sacred truths.

According to Him, the whole law hangs on the first and second commandments, *ie.* "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God and thy neighbor ... as thyself.*" (*Matthew 22:34-ff*) To swear falsely in God's name or to steal another's personal possessions is to strike at the very foundation of morality as it is revealed by God in the Law.

The effect of this curse is deadly. The sinner himself will be "cut off," and his household will be destroyed. The phrase "cut off" is a covenant term. (cp. *Exodus* 17:14, 12:15,19, *Leviticus* 7:20,21,27, 17:4,9,14, etc.)

To violate the commandments of God is to be cut off from the covenant relationship with Him. A Jew in this condition was no different from a Gentile who was completely ignorant of the covenant. (cf. *Ephesians* 2:11-12) Hence . . . "there is no distinction." (*Romans* 3:22)

Not only does the sinner suffer as a result of his own disregard for God's majesty and human dignity, his family suffers also. Zechariah pictures the curse of the law as entering and abiding in the sinner's home, even to the consuming of the wood and masonry.

The same principle is stated in *Exodus* 34:6-7. "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."

If we consider this in terms of the family being held accountable for the father's sins, we shall miss the point altogether. What is intended is the self-evident truth that what effects a man effects his family also, and nothing effects a man more adversely than his own sin.

We deceive ourselves if we believe that the effects of our sinning are confined to ourselves. *Deuteronomy* 8:15-18 spells this out in great detail. "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee; Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep."

Conversely, obedience to God brings blessings on others than ourselves. *Proverbs* 3:33 says, "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just."

The man who deliberately, habitually blasphemes God's name and/or disregards the human dignity of his neighbor through the violation of his property rights brings the curse of God not only upon himself but those with whom he lives.

Chapter XXXII—*Questions*

A Vision of a Flying Scroll

1. Describe Zechariah's sixth vision.
2. How is Zechariah justified in not being able to understand this vision?
3. What is the significance of the depicting of the law as a curse in this particular passage?
4. Discuss this in relation to Romans 2:14-15.
5. How is the universal acknowledgement of the fact of right and wrong demonstrated in "the New Morality?"
6. How do such people "break the law" of God?
7. What two commandment violations are the target of God's wrath in the vision of the flying scroll?
8. What is the effect of the curse symbolized in this vision?
9. Compare Zechariah 5:1-4 and Exodus 34:6-7.
10. Are the effects of our sins confined to ourselves?

CHAPTER XXXIII

A VISION OF A WOMAN IN A
FLYING BASKET

ZECHARIAH 5:5-11

RV . . . Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth. And I said, What is it? And he said, This is the ephah that goeth forth. He said moreover, This is their appearance in all the land (and, behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead); and this is a woman sitting in the midst of the ephah. And he said, This is Wickedness: and he cast her down into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof. Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there came forth two women, and the wind was in their wings; now they had wings like the wings of a stork; and they lifted up the ephah between earth and heaven. Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? And he said unto me, To build her a house in the land of Shinar: and when it is prepared, she shall be set there in her own place.

LXX . . . And the angel that talked with me went forth, and said to me, Lift up thine eyes, and see this that goes forth. And he said, This is their iniquity in all the earth. And behold a talent of lead lifted up: and behold a woman sat in the midst of the measure. And he said, This is iniquity. And he cast it into the midst of the measure, and cast the weight of lead on the mouth of it. And I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold, two women coming forth, and the wind was in their wings; and they had stork's wings: and they lifted up the measure between the earth and the sky. And I said to the angel that spoke with me, Whither do these carry away the measure? And he said to me, To build it a house in the land of Babylon, and to prepare a place for it; and they shall set it there on its own base.

COMMENTS

WHAT THE PROPHET SAW

The angel commands Zechariah to lift his eyes to receive the seventh in the series of visions. It, like the one just previous, will be seen in the sky.

In preceding visions the prophet occasionally had difficulty grasping the meaning of what appeared. This time he cannot believe his eyes! "What is it . . . ?" is his exclamation. There in the sky is a flying basket and in it sits a woman! Pressing upon her is a talent of lead weight. (An ephah is a basket of approximately $3\frac{1}{4}$ pecks. A talent weighs approximately 118 lbs. troy.)

The angel informs the prophet that this is the appearance of the ephah and the woman as they go forth over all the land.

So saying, he declares the woman to be Wickedness and, forcing her into the basket, he casts the lead weight in on top of her. Whereupon two winged women appear and lift the basket up into the sky.

In answer to the prophet's inquiry, the angel says that they are bearing her away to build her a house in Shinar where she will set up her own place.

WHAT THE VISION MEANT!

Unlike the previous visions of Zechariah, the angel gives us very little explanation of the meaning of this vision, other than to say that the woman is wickedness (v. 8) and that the ephah bearing her is going forth over the whole land. We must therefore proceed with caution in our attempt to explain its meaning.

It has been suggested that we have here a picture of Judah sending her sin to Babylon (*Shinar . . . cp. Genesis 10:10, Daniel 1:2*) where the ephah will be worshipped. This latter is based upon the assumption that "house" in verse eleven means temple. The ephah, whose liquid capacity is about six gallons, is taken to mean the base of an image upon which the woman will stand as a goddess.

Another interpretation sees the ephah as a small barrel with a leaden disk as a lid. The woman is trying to escape, which is why the angel pushes her into the ephah and casts the lead on top of her. The two flying females are considered demonic. Shinar, or Babylon, becomes the site of a temple where the woman will be worshipped as personified evil.

Yet another interpretation has the ephah alluding to the previous vision of theft and falsification. "This is their appearance" (v. 6) is thus seen as representing what the Jews have done and what they shall suffer.

Shinar is here seen, not as Babylon, but as the total Gentile world into which the Jews are to be totally dispersed.

In all this is seen the total removal of sin from the holy land. The house is seen as the capital of the world of wickedness as opposed to the kingdom of God and the woman is somehow identified as "the man of sin." (*II Thessalonians 2:3*)

What such interpretations show, more than anything else, is the ludicrous extremes to which men's theological systems take them in the study of apocalyptic Scriptures.

The angel does give us some insight into this vision, and it is here we must begin to understand it. In verse six he said, "This is the ephah that goeth forth."

The ephah, as previously indicated, was a basket with the capacity of $3\frac{1}{4}$ pecks, just less than our standard bushel. The law made strict provision for its use, giving interpretation regarding just measure in trade. (*Leviticus 19:36*) The "ephah that goeth forth" is the measure used in the trading or selling of such commodities as are sold at a certain price per ephah.

The angel indicates that the ephah is "their appearance in all the land." The word appearance in the original is literally "eye."

There was then lifted up a talent (literally a disc) of lead.

Concerning the woman, the angel said, "This is wickedness." So saying he put her in the basket and placed the lead upon it. Notice, the woman is wickedness as an abstract principle, not wicked people.

So we have a legal measure filled with wickedness and upon it a heavy (118 lb.) lid. Obviously, the reason for such a lid is to prevent the escape of the basket's content, which is evil. This much is plain.

The angel gives no explanation as to the identity of the two women with stork's wings. He does say they are bearing the full measure of evil to the land of Shinar where a house (or temple) is to be built in which the woman (evil) will be set in her own place (literally on her own base).

There is Scriptural evidence that Shinar is synonymous with Babylon. (cp. *Genesis 10:10*) The term Shinar is used for obvious reasons. Babylon was now in the hands of Darius, ruler of the Medo-Persian empire. To have used the common name would have been to incur, unnecessarily, the wrath of the emperor whose good offices had permitted the return of the exiles and who was encouraging the reconstruction of the temple. For our purposes, it is important only to know that Shinar is Babylon.

Babylon is used throughout the apocalyptic literature of the Bible to depict the false religion which is inevitably the source of evil and therefore the enemy of God and His people. She is associated with enforced evil and idolatry.

In *Revelation 17:5* she is called mother of harlots, dressed in haughty splendor and drunken with the blood of the martyrs. The evils which have come out of her idol worship and opposition to God's people are called the wine of her fornication. Her name there is "Mystery, Babylon, the Great, Mother of Harlots and of the abominations of the Earth."

Mystery alludes to the mystery religions which originated in Babylon. (See Chapter 4, *Baal Worship*) *Babylon the Great* to her temporal power (which in *Revelation* becomes symbolic of Rome), *Mother of Harlots* to the fact that she had spawned the false religions of the world, and *the abominations of the earth* to the overall offensiveness of Babylon before God.

So the full measure of the wickedness which spread across the land of Judah was to be sent back to its source where it would be set up on a pedestal and worshipped, as indeed it had always been, wickedness and immorality being the soul and expression of the idolatry throughout the ancient world.

Keeping in mind that the writing of the book of Zechariah was intended to move the people to the rebuilding of the temple, the force of this vision is obvious. The wickedness which the people have

brought with them from Babylon must be recognized for what it is. It must be sent on the wings of the wind back, full measure, where it came from. In Babylon, wickedness is the object of worship. In God's land among God's people it has no place at all. It must therefore be removed.

Chapter XXXIII—Questions

A Vision of a Woman in a Flying Basket

1. Describe Zechariah's seventh vision.
2. What is an ephah?
3. What is the weight of the talent?
4. Where did the woman in the flying ephah go?
5. The woman in the ephah is declared by the angel to be _____.
6. What is the significant difference between this and the other visions as recorded by Zechariah?
7. Discuss several possible interpretations of this vision as suggested above.
8. What is shown by such interpretations?
9. What is the significance of the fact that the ephah was a *legal* measure?
10. Shinar is Scripturally synonymous with _____.
11. Babylon, throughout the Bible, especially in apocalyptic literature, is used to depict _____.
12. *Mystery* alludes to _____.
13. The full measure of wickedness was to be sent _____.
14. What was the force of this vision to those who had the task of rebuilding the temple?

CHAPTER XXXIV

A VISION OF WAR CHARIOTS

ZECHARIAH 6:1-8

RV . . . And again I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of brass. In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; and in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grizzled strong horses. Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these, my lord?