

Blessed Hope Bible-Presbyterian Church
Adult Sunday School
4 February 2018

Visions of Zechariah

Zechariah 1:18-21 (KJV) ¹⁸ Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns. ¹⁹ And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What *be* these? And he answered me, These *are* the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. ²⁰ And the LORD shewed me four carpenters. ²¹ Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These *are* the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up *their* horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.

Zechariah 2:1-13 (KJV) ¹ I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand. ² 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. ³ And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, ⁴ And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited *as* towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein: ⁵ For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her. ⁶ Ho, ho, *come forth*, and flee from the land of the north, saith the LORD: for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the LORD. ⁷ Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest *with* the daughter of Babylon. ⁸ For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. ⁹ For, behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me. ¹⁰ Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. ¹¹ And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee. ¹² And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. ¹³ Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.

(1) VISION 2: FOUR HORNS AND FOUR CARPENTERS

Zechariah 1:18-21 (KJV) ¹⁸ Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns. ¹⁹ And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What *be* these? And he answered me, These *are* the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. ²⁰ And the LORD shewed me four carpenters. ²¹ Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These *are* the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up *their* horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.

James 5:16b (KJV) ¹⁶ ... *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

A horn is a symbol of power. The power of the horn is in its effectiveness as a defensive weapon. Horns are pointed bony structures on the heads of male sheep, goats, deer, cattle, oxen. They give the animal a regal look and provide such an impressive endowment that their imagery was widely employed to represent power and pride. Therefore, the idiom “to lift up the horn” is to be proud of conscious strength. “To have horns coming out of the hands” is to have power in one’s hands.

The number “*four*” alludes possibly to the four cardinal points of the compass that includes every possible direction. The enemies of God’s people come in all directions. Wherever the people of God turn, there is a power to oppose them. Such was the situation of the Jews then: with the Assyrian, Chaldean and Samaritan on the north, the Egyptian on the south, the Philistine on the west, and the Ammonite and Moabites on the east. They were encircled by foes. It is still the same for Israel today.

To counter the enemies of the Church, Rev Ting Li Mei, “the praying saint of China,” formed prayer bands. Each prayer band came together as a praying circle. His converts all over China made up these prayer bands. Their motto was “Trusting the Lord (we) get victory.” In Rev Ting’s own words, “we are surrounded by thousands and ten- thousands of angels.” This is the picture of the four carpenters that broke the four horns into pieces. For every enemy, there is an instrument that God raised to counteract it. Hence, although on all sides there were enemies to oppose the erection of the Temple and the completion of the city, God provided a neutralizing counteracting power adequate to destroy them all. What a tremendous boost of morale for God’s ailing children. All who endeavour to serve God will face the Adversary’s wrath. Pray unceasingly!

The Church’s corporate prayer meeting is God’s appointed powerhouse to counteract all enemies of the Church. Help me, Lord, to attend my church prayer meetings faithfully.

(2) VISION 3: THE FUTURE GLORY OF JERUSALEM

Zechariah 2:1-5 (KJV) ¹ I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand. ² 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. ³ And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, ⁴ And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein: ⁵ For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.

This third vision is a continuation of the first in Zechariah 1:16-17. The measuring line signifies the blessings of God in the enlargement of Jerusalem. The stretching forth of a line refers to the work of rebuilding the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. The man with the measuring line in his hand is the angel of the Lord, the pre-incarnate Christ. In the first vision, the pre- incarnate Christ was sitting on the red horse signifying His abiding presence with His children. Now Zechariah saw Him holding a measuring line in His hand, as the Architect of architects. The purpose is to measure Jerusalem. By way of application, with regard to the growth of the Church, Christ the Head is the Author and Definer of this enlargement.

The angel that talked with Zechariah is the interpreting angel (Zech. 1:9). He was met by another angel who instructed the interpreting angel to “run” in order to describe the future glory of Jerusalem to the young man Zechariah. The urgency to uplift a downtrodden heart is the command to “run.” Do you know of someone in trouble amidst the economic crisis? This is the urgent message from the Lord to lend a practical helping hand of encouragement and hope.

This is a vision of the Millennial Kingdom when Christ will rule for a thousand years with peace on earth. The Prince of Peace (Isa 9:6) who is also called Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev 5:5) will destroy all of Israel’s enemies to establish His undisputed global rule from Jerusalem. His saints will rule with Him. The presence of God will guard the city and be her walls. There will be no need for defense with Jesus’ rule, all will be at peace. Jerusalem will be a glorious picture of abundant prosperity and populace (Isa 49:19-20, Ezk 38:11). What an encouragement to those with feeble hands sowing the gospel seed. Sow in tears and reap in joy.

With Jesus is present hope and future glory. Thank You, Lord, for revealing the glorious future that gives us strength to work hard for You today.

(3) THE APPLE OF HIS EYE

Zechariah 2:6-9 (KJV) ⁶ Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the north, saith the LORD: for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the LORD. ⁷ Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon. ⁸ For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. ⁹ For, behold, I

will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me.

Psalm 17:8 (KJV) ⁸ *Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,*

“For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.” (Zech 2:8)

God loves Israel with an everlasting love. The pupil or apple of the eye is very precious. This expression is used to describe a person who is very dear to God (Ps 17:8; Zech 2:8).

A wayward child is chastised by a loving father. This is always done to correct sin that is heinous in the sight of God. God made a way back for Israel after 70 years of captivity. The human yoke was lifted. The oppression will not go on forever without relief as Israel cried out in utter despair. It is out of love that the rod is used. Israel is precious to God and that is why they have to be pruned and trimmed so that the next growth will be even greater.

When we see a beautiful garden in an estate, we admire its beauty and praise God for His wonderful creation. Blooming flowers and sprouting shoots budding are the result of the careful work of the gardener. Observe that the gardener has to exercise consistent care to water the plants daily, adding fertilizers and pruning, choosing the type of plants most suited to give the overall beauty in the garden. The weeds that harm the plants will be removed by the gardener with great passion. The word “*touch*” in this context means “to harm.” God will not allow His children to be bullied without protecting them like the pupil of His own eye. Shaking the hand (v 9) is an expression of His power to vindicate. God Himself undertakes to protect His precious and vulnerable children. The Lord uses such an intimate term of endearment to emphasize His great love for His people.

God is a God of promise. He keeps His Word to protect His children, even when that seems impossible. Dear Lord, thank You for this great privilege to be Your child under Your protection.

(4) SING AND REJOICE

¹⁰ *Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD.*

¹¹ *And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee.* ¹² *And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again.* ¹³ *Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.*

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD.” (Zech 2:10)

Looking on the bright side is the thrust of these verses. A single bitter word may disquiet an entire family for a whole day. One surly glance casts a gloom over the whole family, while a smile, like a gleam of sunshine, may light up the darkest and weariest hours. Like unexpected flowers, which spring up along our path, full of freshness, fragrance and beauty, do kind words and gentle acts and sweet dispositions make glad the home where peace and blessing dwell. The men who disturb and distress the world are usually not those born and nurtured amid the blessed influences of Christian homes, but rather those whose early life may have been a scene of trouble and vexation, who started wrong and whose course is one of trouble and disaster.

The command to Israel to sing and rejoice is most needful amidst weariness and toil. God blesses the cheerful person. Over and above every other social trait stands cheerfulness. Man recognizes the cheerful influence in a woman more quickly than dazzling genius or enslaving beauty. The overarching cause for rejoicing, Zechariah observed from the vision, is God’s presence indicating His care and love. This is the

divine recipe of sunshine in one's life no matter what the outward circumstance may be. This is the abundant life that Jesus promised to all His disciples.

Dear friends, the harder the task, the more need of singing. A hopeful spirit will discern the silver lining in the darkest cloud, for in all our planning and doing, with all its attendant discouragements, shines the light of Divine promise and help. God will give the increase! Press to the mark!

"I have no understanding of a long-face Christian. If God is anything, He must be joy." O Lord, let joy be the echo of Your life within me.

(5) VISION 4: POWER OVER THE DEMONIC WORLD

"And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" (Zech 3:1- 2)

You will notice that the visions are all connected by the conjunction "and" to paint a beautiful motion picture of a most loving God who looks not only at the big picture but also the details. From a big picture, the vision now zooms in on the details.

As high priest, Joshua represented Israel before God. What distinguished him from all other men was his unique privilege to enter the Holy of Holies once a year to offer sacrifice on the Day of Atonement. The Temple was under construction. The day is coming that the Temple rites will be performed. Even the high priest himself needed to be cleansed. Israel as a nation needed to be cleansed from their unrighteousness. Zechariah saw Satan opposing Joshua the high priest accusing him before the angel of the Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ. Did he succeed? No! Our Lord defending Joshua rebuked Satan. Jerusalem is God's chosen city for the habitation of His chosen people, Israel. Satan resists the will of God to rebuild Jerusalem in an effort to thwart God's plan. Will he succeed? Certainly not!

The returning remnant to Jerusalem, after 70 years in Babylon, has suffered much and is still suffering. They are like a piece of half burnt wood snatched out of a fire. A little longer, it would be too late to salvage any part of it. Our Lord Jesus with righteous anger defended Israel against the onslaught of Satan to bring Israel down. Jesus has power over the demonic world, Satan being the chief. What tremendous comfort to know that we can call on Jesus who is able to defend us against the all evil spiritual forces of this world.

"And Jesus rebuked the devil; he departed out of him." May I always come to You, Lord Jesus, for You are God.

(6) VISION 4: FORGIVENESS & RECONSECRATION

Zechariah 3:3-5 (KJV) ³ Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. ⁴ And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. ⁵ And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by.

There was a black spot on one of the walls of the room Martin Luther (the 16th century reformer) occupied during his imprisonment. When suffering from great depression, he declared on 14th May 1521: "I do see myself insensible and hardened, a slave to sloth, rarely, alas! praying – unable to utter a groan for the Church, while my untamed flesh burns with devouring flame." One night, during his mournful solitude, the great reformer dreamt that Satan appeared to him with a long scroll, in which were carefully written the many sins and transgressions of which he was guilty from his birth, and which the evil one proceeded to read out, mocking that such a sinner as he should ever think of being called to do service for God, or even of escaping himself from hell. As the long list was being read out, Luther's terrors grew, and his agonies of

soul increased. At last, however, rousing himself, he jumped up and exclaimed: "It is all true, Satan, and many more sins which I have committed in my life which are known to God only; but write at the bottom of your list, "***The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sins***" and grasping the inkstand on his table he threw it at the devil, who soon fled, the memorial of it being left in the ink-splash on the wall.

The mystery of God's salvation plan is revealed here for us. Joshua the high priest stood before our Lord in filthy garments signifying the filthiness of sin that plagued the nation of Israel. It is interesting that in verse 2 we see that it was our Lord Jesus that chose Jerusalem as His capital for all eternity and Israel, His people. Do they deserve it? No! They were thoroughly guilty breaking the commandments over and over again. Yet for the promise He had made to Abraham, He will enable Israel again to inherit the land. The sin-stricken conscience is forgiven, depicted by a change of garment, a time of re-consecration! The full priestly gear was placed on him - a clean garment and a pure, clean headwear (mitre). What a moment of joy!

He that demands mercy, and show none, ruins the bridge over which he himself is to pass. (Thomas Adams, 1612-1653) Thank You, Lord, for saving my soul!