

# INTRODUCTION

## ZECHARIAH'S VISIONS

The overwhelming emphasis upon the eschatological in Zechariah Chapters 8-14 and of their messianic import has left the initial visions of Zechariah and his concluding prophecy (Zechariah Chapters 1-6), which is intrinsically linked to the previous eight visions, as prophetically perfunctory and nearly peripheral in their eschatological bearing, aside from references to “My Servant” and “The Man” whose name is the BRANCH. This tome will revolutionize that perception and accord major prophetic significance to these eight visions and especially to the concluding prophecy and substantiate this promised prophetic adjustment by integrating the overall content of his visions with the most eschatological portions of the Bible; namely, Daniel and Revelation.

The three sections of Zechariah consist of the initial eight visions and his culminating prophecy of the coronation of Joshua the High Priest (Chapters 1-6); Chapters 7 and 8 where the Holy City is linked to justice and obedience; and, Chapters 9-14, which deal with Zion’s restoration, and the triumph of the Millennial Reign of Messiah. We will focus our studies on Zechariah’s eight visions and culminating prophecy by delving into two and one-half millennia of antiquity. Here, an ancient seer awaits a most visionary evening! By the way, this will not be “casual reading” – you’ll have to slog your way through this material—it is not written with pop culture in mind.

The visions shown to Zechariah (the **Prophet**) involve a celestial and terrestrial series of prophetically-divine **revelations**; for Zechariah was not dreaming here, nor as the great expositor, Dr. J. Vernon McGee, in his commentary on Zechariah suggests: Having reflections arising from a bad stomachache—hence a wild dream, a nightmare!<sup>4</sup> No, Zechariah was wide-awake when he was introduced to God's Eternal Plan and Purpose **throughout the ages**—i.e., **what is the Lord of the whole earth saying, seeking?** Why was Zechariah repeatedly questioned on what he was seeing and its meaning? And, why is the **scope** of at least one of the visions (the fifth vision) of particular significance, standing out, as it would appear, from the rest of the visions? So all-inclusive and virtually “cosmic” in its import is his fifth vision; i.e., the vision of the Lampstand and the Two Olive Trees. Somehow, symbolism associated with this fifth vision exceeds the expectations of the other visions for “. . . *the eyes of the Lord, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth . . . who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.*” (Zechariah 4:10b and 14b).

You're upon a witness stand—you're being questioned, giving testimony. *"Do you not know what these are?"*)—The questioning appears redundant and troubling both to Zechariah, and, quite frankly, to those who read the prophet's writing style—as if there were a growing frustration on the part of the one imparting the vision to Zechariah over Zechariah's inability to discern the profound nature of the vision or, perhaps, the questioning's design enlarges the human capacity, signaling the profound meaning incorporated within each unveiling. The dialogue—the give and take between Zechariah and the Angel of the Lord, in the preceding chapters and visions—seems perfunctory compared to the "cross-examination" Zechariah faces in the midst of the fifth vision (not to delimit the significance of the previous visions in any way).

Furthermore, these questions to Zechariah are compounded by his own questioning throughout the chapter (a sort of give and take on what is really being shown)—*"What are these, my lord?"* (Zechariah 4:4). In addition to this exasperating exchange is the further need for insight, as demonstrated through the revelation of the *"seven eyes"* of Zechariah 3:9. These seven are again alluded to in Zechariah 4:10, to wit: *"These seven rejoice to see . . . they are the eyes of the Lord."* Therefore, the answer to all this questioning of the visions finds its resolution **through** the *"eyes of the Lord."* In other words, it takes **divine revelation** and **illumination**— *"The eyes of the Lord"* to **see** what God is truly desiring upon the earth, and for that matter, within the heavens! Thus, for Zechariah to **see**, not only this fifth vision, but the "divine continuity" of all the visions, he will need a divine comprehension of the vision, **he must have the eyes of the Lord**—for human wisdom and understanding simply cannot fathom the incomprehensible nature of these visions—and, in particular, the vision of the lampstand which **illuminates** the two sons of oil in Zechariah 4 (the fifth vision).

The eight visions of Zechariah (Zechariah 1:7-6:8), culminating in the great prophecy of the crowning of Joshua the High Priest as King (Zechariah 6:9-15) are timeless Scriptures, which, though "ancient manuscripts," speak not only to an immediate generation of Israelites returning from Babylonian captivity—but provide profound insight and revelation which bespeaks of immediate, on-going, and ultimate prophetic conclusions throughout recorded history, and beyond, but especially for the here and now.

The Image seen in Daniel's prophetic writings, is further advanced in Zechariah's vision of the 4 Horns and 4 Craftsmen in Zechariah 1:18-21. Here, their judgment is revealed. But, the final Craftsman, and the final destruction of the Image in Daniel by the *"stone (that) was cut out of the mountain without hands"* (Daniel 2:45) will *"break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever"* (Daniel 2:44b). The divine fact that the ultimate demise of this aforementioned civilization, which awaits its final judgment by the stone cut

out of the mountain without hands, is a foreboding charge against that same “Great Mountain” (to be made a plain) seen in Zechariah 4 and against Satan, the Accuser of Joshua, in Zechariah 3. Zechariah certainly knew of Daniel and the vision of the Image, and was himself intimately acquainted with the captivity and the oppressive hand of Gentile World Power.

Again, although we will examine all of Zechariah’s eight visions and prophecy, this writer finds a central focus on the fifth vision of Zechariah 4 (The Lampstand and the Two Olive Trees)—which is enhanced by Zechariah’s third vision (Zechariah 2:1-13; The man with the measuring line: God’s City), and from his fourth vision (Zechariah 3:1-10; The high priest: God’s cleansing). The vision given in Zechariah 4 is intensely “interdependent” upon the other visions just mentioned. Visions three and four (of measuring the temple, and of Joshua) constitute both the people and the person, whereas in vision five both are gloriously combined.

Throughout these eight visions (Note: These are *not* prophecies, but *visions*), there is a deep awareness of two worlds: The Gentile World Powers (i.e. the nations), along with God’s dealings and judgments upon them, as well as the forces of evil behind those same powers; and His Person and Work by the Spirit, upon His people to accomplish His plan and purpose for the ages; thwarting the intentions of the Gentile World Powers and of the Great Mountain whose unseen efforts permeate and orchestrate the conflicting, frustrating and evil intent of those powers.

You cannot enter Zechariah’s visions as a casual spectator seated in some nosebleed section of a vast coliseum—no, you have come to participate, not as a spectator, but as a pivotal player in this divine drama. The more you hear the roar of the crowd, the more you realize that a “great cloud of witnesses” is actually cheering you on, to run and finish this race—to live out what Zechariah saw. Friend, you are in the arena, not the gallery. Simultaneously, your participation is that of a witness! Witness? Yes, you’re not a spectator, remember—you’ve come to participate. The coliseum you’ve entered is really a gigantic courtroom, filled with a heavenly host, who has been summoned to hear your testimony—testimony both for and against. The participatory drama your living has continued through human history—now, you are at its conclusion, its culmination—its final trial. The stage, upon which you stand, in the center of this vast audience, awaits your witness, testimony—yes, your prophecy! Forget trying to get a seat to watch, to clamor up into the stands.

You cannot grasp the “participatory profundity” of Zechariah’s visions without linking them to the *Two Witnesses* in Revelation 11. There is this mandatory connectivity between our understanding of Zechariah Chapters 2

through 4 and the unveiling of the identity of these Two Witnesses—all these chapters (Zechariah 2 through 4) are *intrinsically bound* to Revelation 11 (i.e., their “ministering to us” is clearly amplified in Revelation 11), as well as Revelation Chapter 1, viz., they are united in their interpretations to the extent that to comprehend the “universality” within the visions of Zechariah we need those of John; and, to grasp the divine import of those visions within the Revelation (“The Unveiling”) of Jesus Christ, we need Zechariah’s. The two are mutually inclusive, complimentary, and prophetically intertwined! Likewise, to assimilate the “conflict of the ages” and God’s dealings with the Gentile World Powers and their involvement in this divine drama, we need Zechariah chapters 1, 5 and 6, and most of the Revelation, let alone significant portions of other Hebrew and Christian Scriptures to “decipher” the meaning of these visions and prophecy.

Not only will Messiah be illuminated in our studies of these visions, but also the antithesis of Messiah—the anti-Messiah (i.e., Antichrist) will be viewed. You will see him as Satan accusing Joshua the High Priest; observe the flight of His people from anti-Messiah’s dominion—“*from the land of the north . . . up, Zion! Escape, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon*” (Zechariah 2:6-7) as the Great Mountain (Zechariah 4:7), who before, Zerubbabel shall be made a plain! Likewise, you shall see that curses on either side of the flying scroll shall expose this “thief and liar” from the beginning (Zechariah 5:3); and with deliberate description you shall witness the demise of his accomplice and image (i.e., “masterpiece”), the Woman of Wickedness, who within her commercial imprisonment (the ephah) shall be transported in flight by these same Two Witnesses, viz., the Two Women with wings of a stork, to the Plain of Shinar (Babylon), there to be placed upon her base, from whence she came (Zechariah 5:5-11)!

Assisting us in the unveiling of this anti-Messiah, Robert Duncan Culver, in his celebrated classic, *Daniel and the Latter Days*, greatly enhances our understanding of the techniques used by Bible prophets wherein they will take an historic figure who is “prophetically morphed” – there is an **adumbrative** (i.e., faintly indicating or typifying)—a future figure seen in the immediate discussion of the character or object at hand. When discussing the “morphing” of Antiochus Epiphanes in Daniel 11:20-45 into the Antichrist (as seen in Antiochus Epiphanes), and again in “the prince who is to come” of Daniel 9:26-27 (as both Titus of Rome (70 A.D.) and ultimately as the future end times’ Antichrist/Beast)), Culver is able to expound upon this method of “adumbrative exegesis” by collaborating his discussion with the support of other writers who understand this “prophetic technique” -

“To one acquainted with the technique of the prophets this will not appear strange. It is one of the commonest of phenomena to

find events of similar nature, but separated widely in time, united in one prophetic oracle. Barnes calls it the ‘law of prophetic suggestion.’ Delitzsch said that prophecy is ‘apotelesmatic.’ This being the case, Keil is correct when he says: ‘These circumstances . . . show that in the prophetic contemplation Daniel 11:20-45 there is comprehended in the image of one king what has been historically fulfilled in its beginnings by Antiochus Epiphanes, but shall only meet its complete fulfillment by the Antichrist of the end’ (Commentary, 462, 463).”<sup>1</sup>

Likewise, there is ample evidence within Zechariah’s visions of that which is, and that which is to come in its fullness. We shall encounter this prophetic technique, wherein portions of Zechariah 4 will give us a most **graphic adumbration**—a direct proto-type of the **Son of Man** fully revealed in Revelation 1. We shall discover the focus of this most glorious vision, prior to *“the stone that I have laid before Joshua: Upon the stone are seven eyes”* which shall in Zechariah 3 exponentially unveil to us “My Servant the BRANCH” whose prophetic enhancement is all the more illuminated by what we now behold in Zechariah 4.

Moreover, through the diffusion of this prophetic Lampstand in Zechariah 4, the illumination of the Two Witnesses and Two Prophets (Revelation 11); the Two Sons of Oil and the Two Olive Trees (Zechariah 4); the Two Golden Pipes; *“the Two Olive Trees and the Two Lampstands”* of Revelation 11; the Two Women (Zechariah 5); and the Two Mountains of Bronze (Brass) (Zechariah 6)—shall be illuminated! Without this light from what I shall call “The Universal Lampstand,” we cannot see who are the Two Witnesses, the Two Prophets; we cannot see our involvement in Zechariah’s visions. But remember, always remember, it was to *“us they* (e.g., Zechariah, Daniel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, etc.) *were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into”* (I Peter 1:12).

But, contrariwise, as the universal lampstand illuminates our path, we clearly see through “the eyes of the Lord” – God’s move among His people; His dealings with the Gentile World Powers; His preparation of both Israel and the Church to accomplish His divine purpose and plan; the redemption alone found in Joshua, our High Priest, whose name is The Branch; the Messiah, standing in the midst of the Seven Golden Lampstands; the pending judgment and the Book of Seven Seals (i.e., “the flying scroll”), yet to be unfurled upon the face of the whole earth; the judgment of Mystery Babylon through the testimony of the Two Mountains of Bronze upon the four corners of the earth, which judgment will bring rest to His Spirit.

What you shall behold in Zechariah are “timeless” prophecies which, at once, are present in his time, but immediately catapult their reality into the prophetic future—a future which now envelopes us. It’s as if you are staring into a picture which is three dimensional in nature—you see but you don’t see the three dimensional figures. Finally, and all at once, your eyes grasp the three-dimensional figures and commence to see one three-dimensional figure after another—somehow your vision has sorted through the confusion and comprehends the three-dimensional figures—they were always there, but now you witness their fullness—they jump out at you! Even as Robert D. Culver in *Daniel and the Latter Days* explains:

“The entire picture of the events which shall close human history, as such, is very frequently presented in such a way that one might receive the impression that all would happen at once. This is particularly true of most of the Old Testament prophecies . . . this is due, not to the fact that God made it a matter of revelation that the events were to be of short duration, but to the fact that the element of time simply is not usually present in the prophecy, and time was not the subject of revelation.

“There have been various ways of describing this characteristic. As to cause, on the human level, the explanation lies in the fact that the prophets were primarily seers, that is, men who saw revelations. What they saw they described. But, time is one element that cannot be put in a picture, either of past or future events. The element of space, or depth, is difficult to transcribe on a picture. So, while the prophets were given to know the nature of coming events, they were not usually given the time of them. This feature of Bible prophecy has been frequently called the lack of perspective. Dr. Arno Gaebelein declares that ‘prophecy is history prewritten.’ Pettingill entitles his commentary on Daniel, ‘History Foretold.’ Now, if history concerns anything it is the precise relations of events in time and, that certainly in past time. So prophecy, even though it does predict historical events, certainly is not a preview of history taken in the strict sense. Even where time is made a subject of revelation, as for instance seventy weeks of Daniel 9 and of the thousand years in Revelation 20, great gaps in chronology are omitted, which disqualify these prophecies for the technically historical character sometimes assigned to them.”<sup>2</sup>

In sum, the aforementioned timeless nature and pertinence of the visions of the prophets, is not confined, nor limited, to time and space. Their speaking is

multi-dimensional or fifth dimensional—it operates in a sphere nearly akin to the cosmology of “string theory” – wherein the very dimensions of the universe are unraveling; where the unseen universe, beyond all time and space, alone has meaning and substance. Even so, Zechariah, and the other prophets, illuminate their divine realities to all generations—but, in particular, to the parameters of history is their significance now experienced and revealed.

Finally, regarding our hermeneutic or interpretation of Scriptures, we are alerted by the Spirit of God to these verses, enabling us in our understanding:

***“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation (i.e. “Origen”) for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (II Peter 1:20-21).***

***“Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow, to them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into” (I Peter 1:10-12).***

We are reminded of the words of Harry Ironside, one of the Church’s cherished expositors of Holy Writ, and former Sr. Pastor of Moody Memorial Church in Chicago, in reference to the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ:

***“He is said to have ‘signified it’—that is, He made it known by signs or symbols. It is important to bear this in mind. Revelation is a book of symbols. But the careful student of the Word need not exercise his own ingenuity in order to think of the meanings of the symbols. It is important to recognize the principle that **every symbol used in Revelation is explained or alluded to somewhere else in the Bible.** Therefore, he who desires God’s mind as to this portion of His Word must study earnestly with prayerful attention to every other part of Holy Scripture. Undoubtedly this is why so great a blessing is in store for those who read and hear the words of this prophecy and keep the things written therein (Revelation 1:3).”<sup>3</sup>***

I quote Ironside regarding his commentary on Revelation, for what can be said of the meaning of the Revelation, can be said of all Scripture—for “***no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation.***” Perhaps a parable, a symbol, a cipher, a type, a shadow, a pre-figure, an adumbration, but, taken as a whole, and under the Spirit’s illumination, there flows a divine compliment so marvelous, so awesome in its scope and understanding, that passes all human knowledge, wisdom and bears witness, that the truth shall prevail . . . shall be comprehended by human vessels. In essence, the Scriptures amplify each other, illuminate, substantiate, confirm, and validate themselves—to the “unlearned” or skeptic, who “***having eyes to see, they see not; having ears to hear, they hear not***” – the Spirit’s mosaic cannot be seen, nor His symphony heard:

***“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding (or “the inner eyes of your heart”) being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power”*** (Ephesians 1:17-19).

Before we commence on our timeless journey, the writer has taken literary license in the capitalization of many proper nouns in an effort to draw attention to the beings and/or entities behind the symbols, types and shadows; unfortunately, his consistency in this task militates against normal English rules of capitalization—you’ll have to bear with him. Furthermore, this work is, once again, a compilation of sundry efforts; consequently, its flow appears erratic at times—notwithstanding the writer’s humble attempts at continuity.

Finally, this effort is not a strict attempt at classical exegetical studies of God’s Word—purposefully, it is written in an eclectic manner, with commentary, bathos, exegesis, analysis and, at times, serves up “poetic justice” even humor (or attempts thereof) upon Biblical themes as they relate to God’s people and the world in which we live. Assuredly, it is not written in a pop-style akin to Hal Lindsey’s *Late Great Planet Earth*.<sup>4</sup> Nor is it purely theological. It would be remiss to exclude political and social ramifications, as if they could be cordoned off, and placed outside the pale of eschatology—the prophets directly addressed the social, religious, economic and political realities of their day, this author intends to do likewise, because they likewise spoke of our day!

The writer was persuaded as a teenager of the grace found in our Lord Jesus Christ. Though being confirmed in the American Lutheran Church, his salvation was not assured until his sister, a former member of the motorcycle gang, The

Hell's Angels, pointed out that Christ longed to be his "personal Savior" and he surrendered to the grace of God. Today, after being born and raised in Sacramento, California, he is a family man married for some thirty-five years, with three grown children, having attended scores of higher educational institutions, and whose profession as a math teacher and school administrator supplements his many years in his family's building contracting business. He honorably served in the military during the Viet Nam Era and credits Multnomah School of the Bible (MSB), in Portland, Oregon for his strong Premillenarian perspective—having attended MSB for three years.

Now, we are anxious to begin our journey—for standing in the ravine, amongst the myrtle trees, is a man upon a red horse, followed by three horses: red, sorrel, and white—ready to take us throughout the whole earth!

