Through the Bible

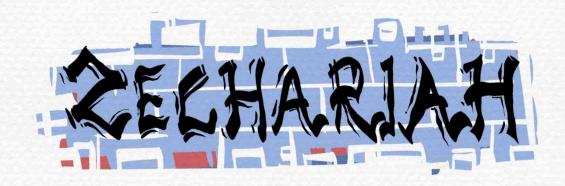
ZECHARIAH

Zac Poonen



Illustrations by Vinay Kuruvilla

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ZECHARIAH WAS A YOUNG MAN WHO PROPHESIED ALONG WITH HAGGAI WHEN THE PEOPLE CAME BACK FROM BABYLON AS A REMNANT TO BUILD THE TEMPLE. HAGGAI AND ZECHARIAH PROPHESIED TOGETHER. WE NEVER SEE TWO PROPHETS WORKING TOGETHER ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. TOWARDS THE CLOSE OF THE OLD-COVENANT PERIOD, GOD WAS PREPARING PEOPLE FOR THE NEW COVENANT -- IN WHICH NOBODY WORKS BY HIMSELF. ALTHOUGH ZECHARIAH WAS YOUNGER THAN HAGGAI, GOD GAVE HIM MUCH MORE TO PROPHESY. GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF AGE. HAGGAI WAS A GRACIOUS, GODLY, OLD MAN WHO NOT ONLY PUSHED ZERUBBABEL FORWARD (AS WE SAW EARLIER), BUT ALSO PUSHED YOUNG ZECHARIAH FORWARD.



ZECHARIAH HAD A BLESSED MINISTRY OF ENCOURAGING DISCOURAGED PEOPLE. THESE JEWS HAD JUST COME BACK FROM BABYLON WHERE THEIR FATHERS HAD BEEN SLAVES, AND THEY WERE POOR, FEARFUL AND DISCOURAGED. THEY WERE A BEATEN LOT. BECAUSE THEY RECEIVED HAGGAI'S MESSAGE, GOD SENT THEM MORE MESSAGES THROUGH ZECHARIAH.

THE LORD BEGINS BY TELLING HIS PEOPLE THROUGH ZECHARIAH THAT HE WAS VERY **ANGRY** WITH THEIR ANCESTORS WHO HAD BEEN TAKEN CAPTIVE TO YEARS EARLIER (I:2). IT WAS ONLY **AFTER** THEY WERE TAKEN **CAPTIVES** THAT THOSE ANCESTORS **REPENTED** LIKE MOST CHRISTIANS WHO REPENT ONLY WHEN THEY ARE **CHASTENED** BY THE LORD





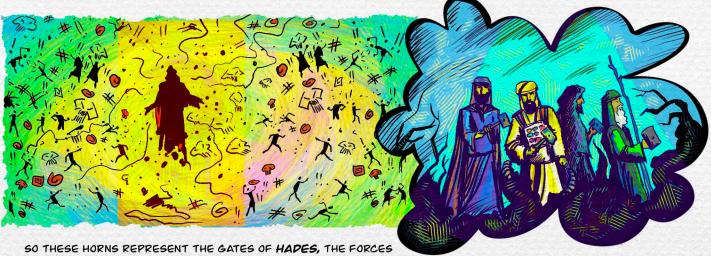
HAGGAI'S BURDEN WAS THE TEMPLE.
ZECHARIAH'S WAS NOT JUST THE
TEMPLE, BUT THE CITY OF
JERUSALEM ITSELF WHICH
SYMBOLISED THE CHURCH OF GOD.



MYRTLE TREES ARE LOW TREES AND SYMBOLISE
HUMILITY: BEHIND THE MAN WERE RED, BROWN AND WHITE
HORSES. "AND I ASKED, 'WHAT ARE THESE FOR?' AND THEY
SAID, 'WE HAVE PATROLLED THE EARTH.' THIS IS A PICTURE
OF GOD WATCHING EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS ON THE
EARTH. THE LORD SAYS 'MY LOVE FOR JERUSALEM AND

MOUNT ZION IS PASSIONATE AND STRONG.' SYMBOLICALLY, THIS REFERS TO THE CHURCH, THE BODY OF CHRIST ON EARTH THAT WILL BE BUILT, DESPITE ALL THE OPPOSITION OF SATAN AND HIS FORCES.

THE SECOND VISION WAS OF FOUR ANIMAL HORNS. THE HORNS REPRESENTED AT THAT TIME, THE WORLD POWERS THAT HAD RULED JUDAH AND ISRAEL AT SOME TIME -- EGYPT, ASSYRIA, BABYLON AND MEDOPERSIA. IN OUR TIME, THEY REPRESENT THE FORCES OF PARKNESS THAT ATTACK THE CHURCH FROM ALL FOUR SIDES -- NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST.



SO THESE HORNS REPRESENT THE GATES OF HAPES, THE FORCES

OF SPIRITUAL PEATH. THESE HORNS HAP "SCATTERED" GOD'S

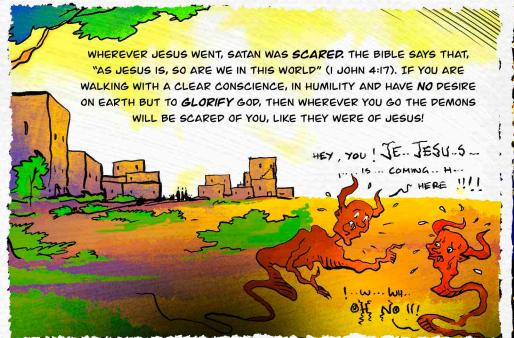
PEOPLE (1:19). THE WORK OF THE PEVIL IS ALWAYS TO SCATTER

AND PIVIDE BELIEVERS -- SEPARATING THEM BY GOSSIP,

SLANDER, MISUNDERSTANDING AND FALSE REPORT.

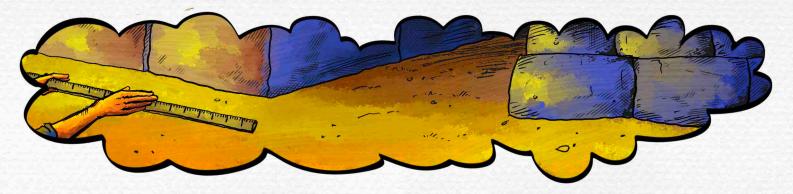


"AGAINST THESE FOUR HORNS THE LORD SHOWED ME FOUR BLACKSMITHS" (1:20). THESE BLACKSMITHS WOULD PESTROY THE HORNS. BLACKSMITHS ARE STRONG PEOPLE WHO HAMMER IRON INTO SHAPE. THE BLACKSMITHS HAP COME TO TERRIFY THE FOUR HORNS THAT HAP SCATTERED AND HUMBLED JUPAH. THEY WOULD THROW THOSE ENEMIES DOWN AND PESTROY THEM. THESE REPRESENTED GOD'S SERVANTS -- HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH, JOSHUA AND ZERUBBABEL. WE MUST BE SERVANTS OF GOD WHO TERRIFY SATAN (1:21). ONCE, WHEN I ENCOUNTERED A PEMON POSSESSED MAN, I ASKED MYSELF ONE QUESTION TO STRENGTHEN MY FAITH: "WAS THIS DEMON CONQUERED ON CALVARY, OR DID THIS ONE ESCAPE?" SATAN AND EVERY ONE OF HIS DEMONS WERE CONQUERED ON CALVARY.

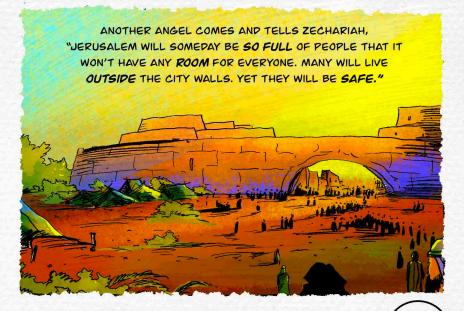




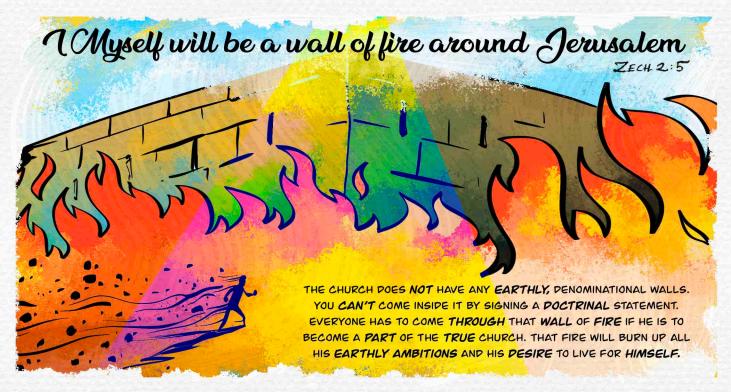
ISN'T IT WONDERFUL THAT WE CAN BE LIKE THOSE BLACKSMITHS IN GOD'S HANDS TO HAMMER THE DEVIL'S WORK AND TO DESTROY IT? AND WE MUST BECOME STRONGER AND STRONGER AS WE GROW OLDER -- AND NOT LIKE MANY PREACHERS NOWADAYS WHO BECOME FATTER AND RICHER AND LESS ANOINTED AS THEY GROW OLDER! YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD CLAIM IT FROM YOUTH ONWARDS. SAY, "LORD, I WANT TO BE ONE WHO TERRIFIES SATAN."



IN THE THIRD VISION, ZECHARIAH SEES A MAN GOING TO **MEASURE** THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF JERUSALEM (2:1--13). THIS VISION SYMBOLISES MAN DETERMINING THE **STRENGTH** OF A CHURCH BY THE **NUMBER** OF ITS MEMBERS. BUT THE **BODY** OF **CHRIST** HAS ONLY **ONE** MEMBERSHIP LIST -- THE BOOK OF **LIFE**. AND THE LORD TEACHES US HERE HOW TO **REALLY** MEASURE THE **CHURCH**.



THIS WAS A SMALL GROUP OF PEOPLE AND THEY WERE THINKING, "WHO WILL COME AND JOIN THIS **DESPISED** GROUP OF OURS? THE OTHER JEWS ARE ALL LIVING SO COMFORTABLY IN BABYLON, BUT HERE WE ARE, A SMALL, DESPISED GROUP TRYING TO BUILD GOD'S TEMPLE. WHO IS INTERESTED IN WHAT WE ARE DOING?" ALL OF GOD'S WORK STARTS VERY SMALL. BUT IF GOD CAN FIND LEADERS WHO WILL STAY TRUE AND NOT COMPROMISE HIS PRINCIPLES, THEN EVEN IF THEY ARE SMALL, ONE DAY FROM NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST THOSE WHO HAVE A HUNGER FOR GODLINESS AND REALITY, WILL GRADUALLY HEAR OF YOUR GROUP, AND COME AND JOIN YOU BECAUSE THEY WILL RECOGNISE THAT GOD IS IN YOUR MIDST AND THAT YOU HAVE LIFE.



ONLY WHAT CANNOT BE BURNT WILL GO THROUGH THE FIRE. "OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE" (HEBREWS 12:29).

"WHO CAN PWELL WITH THE CONSUMING FIRE?" (ISAIAH 33:14).





PREACHERS, THROUGH THE YEARS, HAVE
THROWN WATER ON THAT FIRE AND QUENCHED
IT SO THAT NOWADAYS ANYONE CAN WALK IN AND
JOIN THE CHURCH, WHILE STILL RETAINING ALL
THEIR WORLDLY IDEAS, THEIR WORLDLY
AMBITIONS AND THEIR LOVE OF THE WORLD. YOU
CAN BE CERTAIN THAT GOD IS NOT IN SUCH A
CHURCH, BECAUSE WHEREVER HE DWELLS, HE
WILL BE A WALL OF FIRE AROUND THAT CHURCH.

AND THEN GOD GOES ON TO SAY, "I WILL BE THE GLORY IN THE MIDST OF IT." IF WE WANT THE GLORY OF GOD TO BE IN OUT CHURCH, THEN WE MUST ALLOW HIM TO BE A WALL OF FIRE AROUND OUR CHURCH. THE TWO GO TOGETHER. IF WE SAY THAT GOD'S STANDARDS ARE TOO HIGH AND WE THROW WATER ON THE FIRE, THEN GOD'S GLORY WILL NOT BE IN OUR CHURCH EITHER. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN A CHURCH IS NOT RIGHT DOCTRINE BUT THE GLORY OF GOD. WHEN THE WALL OF FIRE GOES AWAY, THE GLORY GOES AWAY TOO.



EVERY BELIEVER HAS TO MAKE A **CHOICE** TO COME OUT OF BABYLON. THE RESPONSIBILITY IS THE **INDIVIDUAL'S.** WE HAVE TO PAY A **PRICE** TO BUILD A CHURCH LIKE THIS. WE **CAN'T** JUST **IMITATE** A PATTERN THAT WE HAVE SEEN SOMEWHERE AND TRY AND REPRODUCE THAT. GOD HAS TO **BURN** UP EVERYTHING THAT CAN BE BURNT UP IN OUR LIFE FIRST. MAKE SURE THAT YOU **PON'T** LOVE ANYTHING THAT **GOD** DOES NOT LOVE, AND THAT YOU **HATE** EVERYTHING THAT GOD HATES.





THE LORD THEN SAYS, "SHOUT AND REJOICE, FOR I AM COMING TO LIVE AMONG YOU" (2:10). AS A RESULT, MANY NATIONS WILL COME AND JOIN THEMSELVES TO THE LORD BECAUSE THEY SEE THAT GOD IS IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE (2:11).



THERE ARE TWO GREAT MOVEMENTS IN ISRAEL'S HISTORY -- ONE FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN, AND THE OTHER FROM BABYLON TO JERUSALEM. AND IN BOTH OF THESE, THERE IS A JOSHUA! THERE IS A JOSHUA WHO LED ISRAEL TO CANAAN AND THERE IS A JOSHUA WHO IS THE HIGH PRIEST IN JERUSALEM. THIS IS NOT JUST A COINCIPENCE. 'JOSHUA' IS THE HEBREW WORD FOR 'JESUS', MEANING 'SAVIOUR'. JESUS IS THE ONE WHO LEADS US TO VICTORY OVER EVERY GIANT OF SIN, AND HE IS ALSO THE ONE WHO INTERCEPES FOR US AS OUR HIGH PRIEST. THIS LEADER, JOSHUA, THE HIGH PRIEST, WAS STANDING BEFORE THE LORD AND SATAN STOOD THERE TO ACCUSE HIM. SATAN IS ALWAYS SEEKING TO ACCUSE AND HARM THE LEADERS. LET'S NOT BE HARSH IN JUDGING A LEADER, BECAUSE HE IS A BIGGER TARGET OF SATAN THAN WE ARE.



WE CAN SIN CONSCIOUSLY AND UNCONSCIOUSLY. ALL OF US WILL SIN UNCONSCIOUSLY AND ACCIDENTALLY UNTIL THE DAY WE DIE. LEADERS TOO CAN SIN IN THESE WAYS. NO LEADER ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD IS PERFECTLY CHRISTLIKE. WE CAN BECOME LIKE JESUS ONLY WHEN HE RETURNS.



EVEN THE APOSTLE **PAUL** HAD NOT REACHED THAT DEGREE OF PERFECTION. WHEN THEY **SLAPPED** PAUL IN THE COURT OF THE HIGH PRIEST, PAUL GOT **ANGRY** AND TOLD THE HIGH PRIEST, "**GOD** WILL **SMITE** YOU, YOU **WHITEWASHED WALL**" (ACTS 23:3).



BUT WHEN THEY MISTREATED *JESUS*, HE DID *NOT* THREATEN THE HIGH PRIEST. THIS WAS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN *CHRIST'S REACTION* AND *PAUL'S*. (HOWEVER, PAUL *CONFESSED* HIS *SIN* AND ASKED FOR *FORGIVENESS*, AND THUS SET THE *MATTER RIGHT* IMMEDIATELY).

THERE ARE **PEFECTS** IN THE GREATEST OF PROPHETS IN THE CHURCH. BUT WE SHOULD NOT ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE **PISTURBEP** BY THOSE PEFECTS. I AM **NOT** REFERRING TO SINS LIKE COMMITTING **APULTERY** AND LOVING **MONEY**.
THOSE ARE **SERIOUS** MATTERS AND ARE CERTAINLY **NOT UNCONSCIOUS** SIN!



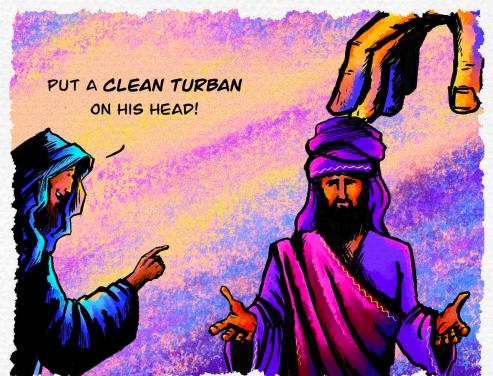


SATAN STOOD THERE TO ACCUSE JOSHUA TO THE LORD. BUT THE LORD REPLIED SAYING, "I THE LORD REJECT YOUR ACCUSATIONS" (3:2). WE HAVE AN ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER, JESUS CHRIST THE RIGHTEOUS. SOMETIMES WE ARE SO TAKEN UP WITH THE ACCUSER THAT WE FORGET ALL ABOUT OUR ADVOCATE WHO IS PRAYING FOR US. THERE ARE TWO MINISTRIES GOING ON IN HEAVEN RIGHT NOW. ONE IS SATAN'S, ACCUSING. HE ACCUSED JOB AND JOSHUA. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE IS ANOTHER MINISTRY GOING ON IN HEAVEN. "JESUS EVER LIVES TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR US" (HEBREWS 7:25). THE TWO MINISTRIES ARE A MINISTRY OF ACCUSATION AND A MINISTRY OF INTERCESSION. WHICH MINISTRY ARE WE PART OF ?



THE LORD REPLIED TO SATAN SAYING, "I REJECT YOUR ACCUSATIONS. THIS MAN IS A CHILD OF GOD. HE IS A BURNING STICK THAT I SNATCHED OUT OF THE FIRE." SINCE JOSHUA'S GARMENTS WERE FILTHY, THE ANGEL SAID, "TAKE AWAY HIS FILTHY CLOTHES." THIS IS A PICTURE OF JESUS OUR ADVOCATE PLEADING FOR US SAYING, "TAKE AWAY HIS FILTHY CLOTHES. PUT NEW CLOTHES ON HIM." AND JOSHUA STOOD THERE CLOTHED NOW IN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST. THAT IS HOW WE MUST SEE ALL OF GOD'S CHILDREN





AND NOW WE COME TO THE BEST PART. ZECHARIAH WAS SO EXCITED SEEING ALL THIS THAT HE JOINED THE LORD IN SPIRIT AND SAID, "LORD, THIS IS WONDERFUL. NOW PUT A NICE TURBAN ON HIS HEAD AS WELL." HE JOINED JESUS IN MAKING HIS FILTHY BROTHER GLORIOUS. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN PRACTICAL TERMS? IT MEANS THAT WHEN SOMEONE COMES ALONG AND ACCUSES A BROTHER TO ME, I REPLY SAYING, "BUT YOU KNOW HE HAS SOME GOOD QUALITIES TOO." AND I NAME SOME OF THEM. ALL OF A SUDDEN THE ACCUSER'S MOUTH IS SHUT. DON'T JOIN THE DEVIL IN CRITICISING GOD'S PEOPLE. INSTEAD PRAY FOR THEM, WHENEVER THE LORD REMINDS YOU OF A SINCERE SERVANT OF GOD, PRAY FOR HIM. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE SHOULD IGNORE ERROR OR OVERLOOK SIN.



IN THE FIFTH VISION, THE LORD SHOWED ZECHARIAH A GOLD LAMPSTAND WITH A BOWL ON TOP OF IT, TO HOLD THE OIL (4:I--I4). ON EACH SIDE OF THE LAMPSTAND WAS AN OLIVE TREE WITH A PIPE COMING FROM IT TO THE BOWL. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT TEMPLE, THE PRIESTS HAD TO POUR OIL INTO THE LAMPSTAND EACH DAY TO REPLENISH THE OIL USED UP. BUT HERE THE OIL FLOWED FROM THE TREES DIRECTLY TO THE LAMPSTAND. THIS LAMPSTAND IS A PICTURE OF THE CHURCH AND THE FLOW OF OIL SYMBOLISES THE CONTINUOUS MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ANOINTING THE CHURCH (REVELATION I:20). THE TWO TREES SYMBOLISE ANOINTED SERVANTS OF GOD WHOM THE LORD USES TO KEEP THE CHURCH FRESH AND SPIRIT-FILLED AT ALL TIMES (4:I4). THEY ARE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT THEMSELVES AND IN TOUCH WITH THE SPIRIT ALWAYS. EVERY TIME YOU MEET THEM, OIL FLOWS OUT OF THEM TO BLESS YOU. THE CHURCH NEEDS MANY SERVANTS OF GOD LIKE THAT. HAGGAI AND ZECHARIAH WERE TWO SUCH MEN WHO COULD WORK TOGETHER. EVERY SERVANT OF GOD NEEDS TO HAVE HIS MINISTRY BALANCED BY THE MINISTRY OF ANOTHER SERVANT OF GOD.



ONE PERSON EMPHASISES GRACE AND THE OTHER EMPHASISES TRUTH. BUT TOGETHER, THEY MANIFEST THE GLORY OF GOD THAT WAS SEEN IN CHRIST AND THE LAMPSTAND OF THE CHURCH BURNS BRIGHTLY (JOHN 1:14). WHERE TWO BROTHERS CAN WORK TOGETHER LIKE THAT FOR THE BUILDING OF THE CHURCH -- BOTH FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, WITHOUT COMPETITION, JEALOUSY, PERSONAL AMBITION, OR ANY DESIRE TO SHOW ONESELF BETTER THAN THE OTHER BUT ONLY DESIRING THAT THE LAMPSTAND SHOULD BURN, THEY CAN BUILD A CHURCH AGAINST WHICH THE GATES OF HELL WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO PREVAIL. THIS COULD BE ANY TWO BROTHERS OR A HUSBAND AND WIFE WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE LORD.





IN CHAPTER 2, WE SAW THE MINISTRY OF GOD THE FATHER BEING A WALL OF FIRE ROUND ABOUT THE CHURCH. IN CHAPTER 3, WE SAW THE MINISTRY OF GOD THE SON AS THE ADVOCATE OF GOD'S LEADERS AND GOD'S PEOPLE. IN CHAPTER 4, WE SEE GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT FILLING AND ANOINTING THE CHURCH. SO WE SEE THE WHOLE TRINITY IN THESE THREE CHAPTERS.

THIS WAS WHAT THE LORD SAID TO ZERUBBABEL,
"IT WON'T BE BY HUMAN MIGHT OR POWER, BUT
BY MY SPIRIT. EVERY MOUNTAIN WILL BE
FLATTENED IN FRONT OF YOU" (4:6). WHEN THE
CHURCH MOVES FORWARD IN THIS WAY, FILLED
WITH THE SPIRIT, THE GATES OF HELL WILL NOT
BE ABLE TO PREVAIL AGAINST IT.



THEN WE COME TO THE SIXTH VISION OF A FLYING SCROLL. (5:3, 4). THIS IS A PICTURE OF JUDGEMENT ON THOSE WHO PISOBEY GOD'S LAWS, THAT ENTERS EVERY HOUSE AND EXPOSES SIN.



IN THE SEVENTH VISION ZECHARIAH SAW A BASKET FOR MEASURING GRAIN (A SYMBOL OF BUSINESS) WITH A HEAVY LEAD COVER ON IT. WHEN THE COVER WAS LIFTED, ZECHARIAH SAW A WOMAN NAMED "WICKEDNESS" SITTING INSIDE. TWO WOMEN THEN CAME TO TAKE THE BASKET TO BABYLON TO BUILD A TEMPLE THERE FOR IT (5:5--II). THIS VISION SYMBOLISES THE FALSE CHURCH IN WHICH CHRISTIANITY HAS BECOME A MEANS OF FINANCIAL PROFIT -- WHERE RELIGION AND BUSINESS GO HAND IN HAND (SEE "BABYLON" IN REVELATION I7 AND I8). THE WOMAN HIDDEN INSIDE THE BASKET INDICATES THAT THE HIDDEN MOTIVATING FORCE BEHIND MUCH THAT IS CALLED CHRISTIAN WORK TODAY IS THE DESIRE TO MAKE MONEY. BUT MOST PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE THE DISCERNMENT TO SEE THROUGH THIS. MANY CHRISTIANS HAVE A LID THAT COVERS THEIR OWN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS IN FINANCIAL MATTERS. BUT THE LORD SHOWS HIS PROPHETS THE CORRUPTION THAT IS FOUND AMONG HIS PEOPLE.



WE HAVE TO ENSURE THAT THIS BABYLONIAN SPIRIT IS NOT PERMITTED TO COME INTO THE CHURCH. IN THE PAYS OF JESUS, PEOPLE PID BUSINESS INSIDE THE TEMPLE AND MADE MONEY IN THE NAME OF RELIGION. THE ISRAELITES COULD NOT SEE WHAT WAS GOING ON. THEY NEEDED SHEEP AND POVES FOR THEIR OFFERINGS AND FELT THAT THESE SELLERS WERE SERVING THEM. BUT JESUS COULD SEE WHAT WAS GOING ON UNDER THE LEAD COVER -- THE MOTIVE BEHIND THE SELLING OF THOSE POVES AND SHEEP. THEY WERE OUT TO MAKE A NEAT PROFIT FOR THEMSELVES. JESUS SAW THIS AND DROVE THOSE RELIGIOUS RACKETEERS OUT OF THE TEMPLE.





IN THE EIGHTH VISION, ZECHARIAH SEES FOUR CHARIOTS COMING BETWEEN TWO BRONZE MOUNTAINS (6:1--8). BRONZE IN THE BIBLE SYMBOLISES THE JUPGEMENT OF GOD ON SIN. THE ALTAR IN THE TABERNACLE WHERE THE ANIMALS WERE SACRIFICED, WAS MADE OF BRONZE. THEY LOOKED LIKE UNCONTROLLED HORSES. BUT GOD HAD CONTROL OF THEIR REINS. THERE WERE RED, BLACK, WHITE AND GREY HORSES, AS IN REVELATION 6. ZECHARIAH ASKED, WHAT THESE REPRESENTED. THE REPLY WAS, "THESE ARE THE FOUR SPIRITS OF HEAVEN WHO STAND BEFORE THE LORD OF ALL THE EARTH. THEY ARE GOING OUT TO DO HIS WORK" (ZECHARIAH 6:5). SOME WERE GOING NORTH, SOME TO THE WEST AND SOME TO THE SOUTH. THEY WENT ACROSS THE EARTH AND MINISTERED GOD'S JUPGEMENT. MAYBE GOD SENT A FLOOD IN ONE PLACE AND AN EARTHQUAKE IN ANOTHER AS A JUPGEMENT.









THEN THE LORD TELLS ZECHARIAH THAT CERTAIN PEOPLE WOULD BRING HIM GIFTS OF SILVER AND GOLD FROM THE JEWS IN BABYLON. ZECHARIAH WAS TO ACCEPT THEIR GIFTS AND MAKE A CROWN FROM IT FOR JOSHUA THE HIGH PRIEST (6:10, 11). HE WAS ALSO TO ENCOURAGE JOSHUA BY PUTTING THE CROWN ON HIS HEAD AND TELLING HIM THAT THE LORD SAYS, "HERE IS THE MAN CALLED THE BRANCH. HE WILL BUILD THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD. HE WILL RULE AS KING. HE WILL ALSO SERVE AS PRIEST FROM HIS THRONE, AND THERE WILL BE PERFECT HARMONY BETWEEN THE TWO" (6:12, 13). THIS WAS A PROPHECY ABOUT CHRIST WHO WOULD BUILD THE TRUE TEMPLE OF GOD -- THE CHURCH. CHRIST WOULD ALSO BE THE FIRST KING-PRIEST. UNDER THE OLD COVENANT, NO-ONE WAS ALLOWED TO BE A KING AND A PRIEST. KING SAUL TRIED TO BE BOTH AND LOST HIS KINGDOM THEREBY (I SAMUEL 13:9--13). KING UZZIAH ALSO TRIED TO BE BOTH KING AND PRIEST AND GOT LEPROSY (2 CHRONICLES 26:16--23). JESUS WAS THE FIRST ONE WHO WAS TO BE A KING AND A PRIEST. NOW HE HAS MADE US KING-PRIESTS ALONG WITH HIM (REVELATION 1:6).



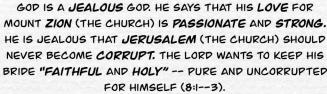


THE LORD THEN GAVE ZECHARIAH SOME MESSAGES ON FASTING, HYPOCRISY AND PISOBEPIENCE IN CHAPTERS 7 AND 8. THE MESSAGE THAT THE LORD HAD PROCLAIMED THROUGH ALL THE PROPHETS WAS THE SAME: "BE FAIR AND HONEST. SHOW MERCY AND KINDNESS TO OTHER PEOPLE. DON'T OPPRESS THE POOR, THE WIPOWS, THE ORPHANS AND THE FOREIGNERS. DON'T HARM EACH OTHER. ONLY THEN WILL YOUR FASTING (AND BREAKING OF BREAD) ETC. BE OF VALUE. OTHERWISE IT IS OF NO USE." (7:9, IO). GOD CARES GREATLY FOR THE POOR AND THE WEAK AND THE OPPRESSED. BUT MOST OF THE WELL-KNOWN PREACHERS IN THE WORLD PREACH ONLY IN THE BIG CITIES, WHERE THE RICH PEOPLE ARE -- AND THEY PREACH "THE PROSPERITY GOSPEL" TO THEM. JESUS HOWEVER CAME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR (LUKE 4:18; MATTHEW II:5). GOD CARES SPECIALLY FOR THE POOR, FOR THE WIPOWS AND ORPHANS, AND FOR THE HELPLESS. EVERY TRUE SERVANT OF GOD WILL CARE FOR THEM TOO.



THE ANCESTORS OF THE JEWS DID **NOT**LISTEN TO THIS MESSAGE BUT TURNED **AWAY**FROM IT. THAT WAS WHY THE LORD **PUNISHED**THEM AND **SCATTERED** THEM (7:11).







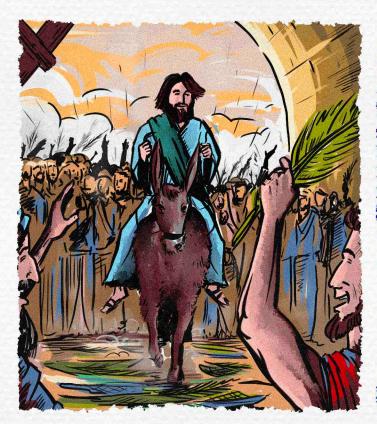
HE GOES ON TO SAY THAT IN THE CHURCH, THERE WILL BE OLD MEN AND WOMEN AND YOUNG BOYS AND GIRLS (8:4, 5). THERE WILL BE NO GENERATION GAP IN THE TRUE CHURCH OF CHRIST. HOWEVER OLD I MAY BE, I WANT TO BE ABLE TO COME POWN TO THE LEVEL OF THE YOUNGEST BOYS AND GIRLS IN THE CHURCH. WHEN WE VISIT A HOME, LET US LEARN TO TALK TO THE CHILDREN TOO, NOT JUST TO THE OLDER FOLKS.



THE OTHER THING WE SEE HERE IS THAT IN THE CHURCH, THE BOYS AND GIRLS WILL BE PLAYING GAMES (8:5). THEY WILL NOT BE PRAYING ALL THE TIME. WE MUST ENCOURAGE GAMES IN THE CHURCH, BECAUSE THAT IS HOW IT WILL BE PURING THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST. A FELLOWSHIP IS BUILT UP BETWEEN PEOPLE WHEN THEY PLAY GAMES TOGETHER. IT BUILDS A BOND BETWEEN PEOPLE. PRAISE GOD FOR A BALANCEP GOSPEL! THE LORD GOES ON TO SAY, "ALL THIS MAY SEEM IMPOSSIBLE TO YOU NOW, A SMALL AND PISCOURAGED REMNANT OF GOD'S PEOPLE. BUT DO YOU THINK THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME, THE LORD ALMIGHTY?



GOD SAID "I WILL BRING MY PEOPLE HOME AGAIN TO LIVE SAFELY IN JERUSALEM (THE CHURCH). THEY WILL BE MY PEOPLE, AND I WILL BE FAITHFUL TOWARD THEM AS THEIR GOD" (8:6, 8). SO GOD TELLS US TO TAKE HEART AND TO WORK UNTIL HIS CHURCH IS COMPLETED AND PERFECTED. "SO PON'T BE AFRAID OR PISCOURAGED, BUT INSTEAD GET ON WITH REBUILDING THE TEMPLE (THE CHURCH)!" (8:9--13). IT WAS SUCH A MESSAGE OF ENCOURAGEMENT THAT STIRRED PEOPLE IN ZECHARIAH'S DAY TO WORK HARD AND IT IS THE WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT THAT WILL STIR PEOPLE TO BUILD THE CHURCH TODAY.





ZECHARIAH FIRST EXPRESSES THE LORD'S BURDEN OF JUDGEMENT AGAINST A NUMBER OF NATIONS FOR THEIR PRIDE AND ARROGANCE (9:1--8). IN CONTRAST TO THE "PRIDE OF THE PHILISTINES" (9:6), THE KING OF JERUSALEM WOULD COME IN GREAT HUMILITY RIDING ON A PONKEY AND NOT ON A HORSE (LIKE EARTHLY KINGS DID). "BEHOLD, YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU.... HUMBLE, AND MOUNTED ON A PONKEY.... I WILL REMOVE THE BATTLE CHARIOTS FROM ISRAEL AND THE WARHORSES FROM JERUSALEM, AND I WILL DESTROY ALL THE WEAPONS USED IN BATTLE. YOUR KING WILL BRING PEACE" (9:9, 10). THE SPIRIT OF BATTLE WOULD BE REPLACED BY THE SPIRIT OF PEACE BY THIS HUMBLE KING. IT IS IN THIS SPIRIT OF HUMILITY AND PEACE ALONE THAT THE CHURCH CAN BE BUILT.



THEN COMES A PROPHECY OF SALVATION FROM HELL THROUGH THE **BLOOD** OF CHRIST: "BECAUSE OF THE COVENANT I MADE WITH YOU, SEALED WITH BLOOD, I WILL **FREE** YOUR PRISONERS FROM **DEATH** IN A WATERLESS DUNGEON" (9:II).



AFTER THIS COMES A PROPHECY ABOUT THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST: "THE LORD WILL APPEAR ABOVE HIS PEOPLE ... THE SOVEREIGN LORD WILL SOUND THE TRUMPET; HE WILL GO OUT AGAINST HIS ENEMIES LIKE A WHIRLWIND.... THE LORD ALMIGHTY WILL PROTECT HIS PEOPLE, AND THEY WILL SUBPUE THEIR ENEMIES.... WHEN THAT DAY ARRIVES, THE LORD THEIR GOD WILL RESCUE (RAPTURE) HIS PEOPLE, JUST AS A SHEPHERD RESCUES HIS SHEEP. THEY WILL SPARKLE LIKE JEWELS IN A CROWN. HOW WONDERFUL AND BEAUTIFUL THEY WILL BE!" (9:14--17). ZECHARIAH SPEAKS MUCH ABOUT THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

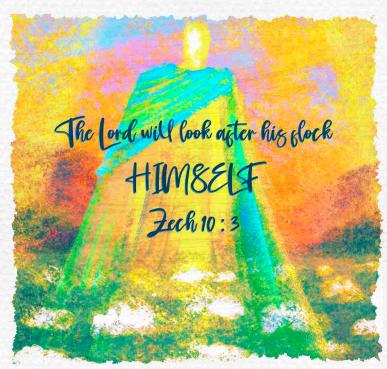


ZECHARIAH THEREFORE URGED GOD'S PEOPLE TO "ASK THE LORD FOR RAIN AND HE WILL GIVE IT" (10:1). THIS IS THE GREAT NEED IN OUR TIME -- TO ASK GOD TO POUR OUT HIS SPIRIT UPON US EXACTLY AS HE SENDS RAIN ON THE PARCHED GROUND. HE WILL CERTAINLY GIVE US THAT OUTPOURING, JUST AS ZECHARIAH PROPHESIED!

THEN ZECHARIAH WARNS US AGAINST FALSE PROPHETS WHOM HE CALLS "DIVINERS (FORTUNE-TELLERS)" WHO SPEAK ABOUT FALSE VISIONS THAT THEY CLAIM TO HAVE SEEN (10:2).



DON'T BE DECEIVED BY THESE FALSE PROPHETS IN CHRISTENDOM. DON'T BE FRIGHTENED BY THEIR THREATS OR THEIR WARNINGS. AND DON'T BE DECEIVED BY THEIR PROMISES OF PROSPERITY EITHER. THE VERY FACT THAT THEY WANT YOUR MONEY PROVES THAT THEY ARE FALSE PROPHETS AND AGENTS OF SATAN.



IT IS BECAUSE PEOPLE LISTEN TO THESE FALSE PROPHETS
THAT THEY "WANDER LIKE LOST SHEEP WITHOUT ANY
SHEPHERD TO PROTECT THEM" (10:2). THEREFORE THE
LORD SAYS, "MY ANGER BURNS AGAINST THESE
SHEPHERDS, AND I WILL PUNISH THESE LEADERS. THE
LORD ALMIGHTY WILL LOOK AFTER HIS FLOCK
HIMSELF" (10:3).



"FROM JUDAH WILL COME THE CORNERSTONE, THE TENT PEG,
THE BATTLE BOW, AND ALL THE RULERS. THEY WILL BE LIKE
MIGHTY WARRIORS IN BATTLE, TRAMPLING THEIR ENEMIES IN
THE MUP UNDER THEIR FEET. SINCE THE LORD IS WITH THEM AS
THEY FIGHT, THEY WILL OVERTHROW EVEN THE HORSEMEN OF
THE ENEMY" (10:4--5). THE CORNERSTONE, TENT PEG AND
BATTLE BOW ARE ALL PICTURES OF CHRIST. THE MIGHTY
WARRIORS ARE A PICTURE OF THE SAINTS OF GOD. THE ENEMIES
ARE SATAN AND HIS HOSTS AND THE LUSTS IN OUR FLESH. WHEN
THE LORD IS WITH US, EVERY ONE OF THESE ENEMIES WILL BE
OVERTHROWN AND TRAMPLED UNDER OUR FEET (ROMANS 16:20).





"I WILL STRENGTHEN JUPAH AND SAVE ISRAEL; I WILL REESTABLISH THEM BECAUSE I LOVE THEM" (10:6). THE LORD WILL UNITE THE GROUPS OF HIS PEOPLE WHO ARE SEPARATED FROM EACH OTHER (LIKE JUPAH AND ISRAEL) AND BRING JEWS AND GENTILES TOGETHER AND ESTABLISH THEM INTO ONE BODY.

IN CHAPTER II, WE READ AGAIN ABOUT
GOOD SHEPHERDS AND EVIL SHEPHERDS.



THE EVIL SHEPHERDS ARE THE ONES WHO ARE INTERESTED IN MAKING MONEY. THEY WEEP WHEN THE LORD EXPOSES THEM AND THEIR MEANS OF MAKING MONEY IS GONE (II:3). THEY HAD OPPRESSED THEIR FLOCK AND SLAUGHTERED THE SHEEP FOR PROFIT (II:4--7).





WE READ THEN ABOUT GRACE AND UNITY. "I TOOK TWO SHEPHERD'S STAFFS, NAMING ONE GRACE AND THE OTHER UNION, AND I FED THE FLOCK AS I HAD BEEN TOLD TO DO" (II:7). THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT MESSAGES REQUIRED IN THE CHURCH TODAY ARE CONCERNING "GRACE" AND "UNITY". GRACE WILL LEAD US TO VICTORY OVER SIN (ROMANS 6:14). OVERCOMING SIN IS THE CLEAREST PROOF THAT WE HAVE COME FULLY UNDER GRACE, WHEN WE GET FORGIVENESS OF SINS, WE RECEIVE A LITTLE BIT OF GRACE. BUT WHEN WE COME UNDER GRACE FULLY, SIN CANNOT RULE OVER US. THE FIRST IS LIKE A CUP OF WATER, THE SECOND LIKE A RIVER OF WATER. THOSE WHO EXPERIENCE THIS GRACE AND THE HOLY SPIRIT BEING POURED ON THEM MUST THEN COME TO UNITY WITH EACH OTHER.



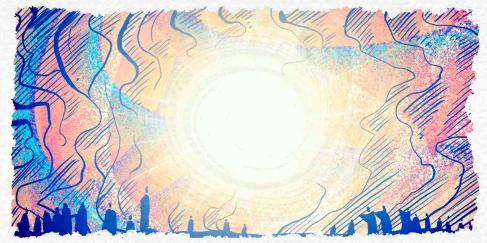
THEN COMES A PROPHECY
ABOUT THE BETRAYAL OF
CHRIST BY JUPAS, "GIVE ME
WHATEVER I AM WORTH.... SO
THEY COUNTED OUT THIRTY
PIECES OF SILVER. AND THE
LORD SAID TO ME, 'THROW IT
TO THE POTTERS..' SO I TOOK
THE THIRTY COINS AND THREW
THEM TO THE POTTERS .."
(II:12, 13).



GOP THEN PROMISES TO POUR OUT THE SPIRIT OF GRACE AND PRAYER -- OR THE SPIRIT OF GRACE AND GROANING -- UPON HIS PEOPLE (I2:10). IN ROMANS 6, WE READ ABOUT THE SPIRIT OF GRACE. IN ROMANS 8, WE READ ABOUT THE SPIRIT OF GROANING. THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES AS A SPIRIT OF GRACE HELPING US TO OVERCOME SIN. HE ALSO COMES AS A SPIRIT OF GROANING, MAKING US PRAY AND CRY OUT TO GOD TO BUILD THE CHURCH.



IN THAT DAY A FOUNTAIN WILL BE OPENED FOR CLEANSING FROM SIN. BUT FOR THAT FOUNTAIN TO BE OPENED, THE SHEPHERD WILL HAVE TO BE STRUCK DOWN (13:1, 7). THE PROPHECIES HERE REFER TO SOME THINGS THAT HAPPENED AT THE FIRST COMING OF CHRIST AND SOME THINGS THAT WILL HAPPEN AT HIS SECOND COMING. WHEN CHRIST RETURNS IN GLORY, GOD WILL "REMOVE ALL THE FALSE PROPHETS AND THE UNCLEAN SPIRITS THAT INSPIRE THEM.



AND THEN, ZECHARIAH, LIKE MOST OF THE PROPHETS, PROPHESIES ABOUT THE REMNANT THAT WILL STAND TRUE TO THE LORD IN THE LAST DAYS (13:8, 9). THE LORD SAYS CONCERNING THIS REMNANT, "I WILL BRING THEM THROUGH THE FIRE AND MAKE THEM PURE, JUST AS GOLD AND SILVER ARE REFINED AND PURIFIED BY FIRE. THEY WILL CALL ON MY NAME, AND I WILL ANSWER THEM. I WILL SAY, 'THESE ARE MY PEOPLE,' AND THEY WILL SAY, 'THE LORD IS OUR GOD.'" (13:9).



IN THE LAST CHAPTER, ZECHARIAH SPEAKS ABOUT THE COMING PAY OF THE LORD WHEN JESUS WILL RETURN AND STAND ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES AND THAT MOUNTAIN WILL BE SPLIT INTO TWO (14:3, 4). THE NATIONS WILL BE GATHERED FOR BATTLE AROUND JERUSALEM AT THAT TIME (14:2). THE CONFLICT FOR JERUSALEM THAT IS RAGING TODAY IS BUT THE FIRST STAGES OF THAT BATTLE THAT WILL ERUPT THERE JUST BEFORE THE RETURN OF OUR LORD. IN THE DAY THE LORD RETURNS, THE NORMAL SOURCE OF LIGHT WILL STOP SHINING AND THE LORD HIMSELF WILL BE THE LIGHT (14:6, 7). THE ENEMIES OF THE LORD WILL BE DEFEATED. THE LORD WILL THEN REIGN FROM JERUSALEM AS KING OVER ALL THE EARTH (14:9, 16).