

BOOK OF ZECHARIAH
THE MAN AMONG THE MYRTLE TREES
ZECHARIAH 1:7-17

Introduction

Approximately three months after **ZECHARIAH** instructed **GOD'S PEOPLE** to give themselves **WHOLLY TO THE LORD**, he received this mighty vision illustrating **JERUSALEM'S FUTURE**. (For the time frame compare *verses 1 and 7*.)

Just how literally this promise should be taken is evident from **GOD'S FIRST REVELATION** concerning the **FUTURE** of the city of **JERUSALEM**.

This **REMNANT** of **JEWS** had returned to **JERUSALEM**. They had started to **REBUILD THE TEMPLE** and had **TURNED TO THE LORD AGAIN!** **GOD'S** answer was not long in coming.

In fact, **HE TURNED BACK** to them and gave them a wonderful **REVELATION** about **JERUSALEM** (which is called "*the city of the great King*" by **JESUS** in *Matthew 5:35*).

The **CURSE** they had been under until then would be **REMOVED**, and again, they would be a **BLESSING!** (*Cf. Zechariah 8:13*)

Understand that a large number of **JEWS** will **TURN TO THE LORD** during the **GREAT TRIBULATION**. According to *Revelation 11:1*, they will also rebuild the **TEMPLE**. Then the **LORD WILL RETURN TO HIS PEOPLE**.

GOD'S PROMISES will also become a **PERCEIVABLE BLESSING, COMFORT, and LIVING HOPE** for those of us who **BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST** when we **DEDICATE OURSELVES COMPLETELY TO HIM**: "*Submit yourselves therefore to God...Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you*" (*James 4:7-8*).

So let's take a look at this **VISION** of **THE MAN AMONG THE MYRTLE TREES...**

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- I. WE SEE A VIEW OF JERUSALEM DURING THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES. (ZECHARIAH 1:8)**
ZECHARIAH saw a rider on a red horse who stopped in a *bottom* (or a *ravine* or a *hollow*) "*...among the myrtle trees.*"

The **MYRTLE TREE** symbolizes **JERUSALEM**, where many of them grow in the valleys. Characterized by their dark, green, glossy leaves, they are adorned with flowers. During **ZECHARIAH'S** time, they were often used as wedding decorations and at the **FEAST OF THE TABERNACLES** to make booths (*Nehemiah 8:15*). Perfume also was made from **MYRTLE TREES**.

The tree's green leaves signify **ISRAEL'S HOPE** and **FUTURE!** In that **FUTURE**, **JERUSALEM** will not fade. It will **BLOOM** before the **LORD** forever!

Where were these **MYRTLES** located? In a bottom, a shade, a hollow or a deep ravine! The "*bottom*" symbolizes **ISRAEL'S** position among the nations.

The **TIME OF THE GENTILES** began with **JERUSALEM'S** first invasion and destruction by the **BABYLONIANS**. Since that time, **JERUSALEM** never really has been free of being trodden down by the **GENTILES**.

We know that **JERUSALEM** was ruled by the **ROMANS** when **JESUS** came the first time. This **OCCUPATION** by **GENTILES** will last until **JESUS RETURNS** as **ISRAEL'S MESSIAH**: *Luke 21:24--"...and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."*

JERUSALEM (ISRAEL) is like the **MYRTLE TREE**, which grows modestly in a shady, low place. Accordingly, **ISRAEL** and her people are largely despised by the **GENTILE nations**.

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JERUSALEM is **CONTESTED** and **HATED!** Other **NATIONS** of the world would love nothing better than to both **ANNIHILATE** the **JEWS** and take the **PROMISED LAND** **GOD** gave the **JEWS** for themselves! (**Some GENTILES** are **OCCUPYING land that belongs to the JEWS!**)

WE SEE A VIEW OF JERUSALEM DURING THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES.

II. WE SEE A VIEW OF THE GENTILES' THOUGHTS TOWARDS JERUSALEM.

While **ISRAEL**, the **MYRTLE**, is despised by the **GENTILE NATIONS**, the **LORD** stands among the **MYRTLES** in the **bottom!** **HE** remains standing where others have passed by. Three times, we see reference to this:

"...He stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom..." (vs 8)

"And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said..." (vs. 10)

"And they answered the angel of the LORD that stood among the myrtle trees..." (vs. 11)

While the **NATIONS** of this world treat **ISRAEL** thoughtlessly, **THE LORD REMEMBERS THEM!**

As **MESSENGERS** of the **LORD OF HOSTS**, the **ANGELS** mentioned in *verse 11* were given the task of seeing how the **NATIONS** would behave toward **JERUSALEM**.

What did they see? *"...all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest."*

Can you see that this is a picture of their **INDIFFERENCE**, **THOUGHTLESSNESS**, and **SELF-CONFIDENCE**—*i.e. a presumptuous rest.* Nobody cared about **ISRAEL!** **PEACE AMONG THE NATIONS** was more important than siding with **ISRAEL!**

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There was no **TURNING TO THE LORD** and **HIS WORD!** And there was **NO TURNING TO HELP ISRAEL!**

That was the way it was in **ZECHARIAH'S** day and that is the way it largely is today! The world remains relatively silent when terrorists murder **JEWS** both inside and outside of their homeland!

There is little to no protest when the nations that surround **ISRAEL** and their representatives pour out their tirades of hatred on **ISRAEL**. By and large, hardly anyone lifts a finger in response to the many injustices directed toward **ISRAEL!**

But this same world condemns **ISRAEL** every time she makes a move — even when she is defending herself!

How different were the **LORD'S THOUGHTS?** **JERUSALEM** is mentioned 5 times in this passage. (5 is the number of **GRACE**) **GOD'S** feelings about the city are apparent: (*Vs 12, 14, 16, 17*)

Who among the powerful men of our world has like-minded **THOUGHTS** as these concerning **JERUSALEM?** This shows how far the **NATIONS** live from the **THOUGHTS** of the **LORD GOD!**

But understand that the **LORD** is still on **JERUSALEM'S** side, even if the **NATIONS** are **INDIFFERENT** and **THOUGHTLESS** toward them!

There will be a day in the near future when the **LORD TURNS TO JERUSALEM** again in **ALL HIS PERFECT GRACE!**

HE will have mercy upon **HIS CITY** and **PEOPLE!**

HE will again be very jealous for them!

HE will comfort them and **HE** will show he has chosen them!

III. WHAT WILL BE THE FINAL SOLUTION? (Vs 15)

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- A. The NATIONS Of The World Have A View Of A Final Solution!**
The **NATIONS** are eagerly searching to bring about their own *final solution* to their **JEWISH** problem.

But the *final solution* they are seeking for will never be allowed! **GOD'S** answer to **ANY** such attempt will always be **HIS DIVINE WRATH!**

- B. The LORD Has His Final Solution!**
The **LORD'S** *final solution*, will be **ISRAEL'S** *final liberation* from the pressure of the **GENTILE NATIONS!**

This *final liberation* will come when **JESUS** returns at the end of the **TRIBULATION PERIOD** to set up **HIS KINGDOM!**

Then, **HIS** thoughts against all the **NATIONS** against **HIS PEOPLE** will be realized! The time of the **GENTILES** will abruptly end!

GOD'S WRATH will come upon the **NATIONS** in such fury that they will cry out as recorded *Revelation 6:15-17*:
"And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

- C. What About Our Stance As BELIEVERS?**
BELIEVERS must not be indifferent where **JERUSALEM**

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is concerned! It is sad to say, but many professing **BELIEVERS** come up on the wrong side where **ISRAEL** is concerned!

The land of **ISRAEL** and the **JEWISH PEOPLE** must be dear to our hearts because they are dear to the **LORD!**

It is not by chance that **ZECHARIAH** was told twice that he should proclaim the **WORDS OF THE LORD!** (*Vs 14, 17*)

The **LORD** is angry with those who hate **JERUSALEM**, but **HE** will bless those who love her! (*Genesis 12:3*)

Psalms 122:6—"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee."

- IV. THE PERSON OF THE FINAL SOLUTION! (Vs 8)**
Who is this mysterious **MAN** who stands among the **MYRTLE TREES?** It is the **SON OF MAN, JESUS CHRIST, ISRAEL'S MESSIAH!**

HE is concerned about **JERUSALEM**, and **HE** is also concerned about you!

The **MAN** among the **MYRTLE TREES** appears suddenly on a red horse during the time of the **NATIONS**, in the middle of the night.

ISRAEL had no king at that time. The **JEWS** were busy rebuilding **JERUSALEM**, and were encountering violent resistance from their enemies. Even back during the time **JERUSALEM** was still being rebuilt, the **ARABS** were contesting the **JEWS** right to **JERUSALEM:**

Nehemiah 6:1—"Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah,

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and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;)... "

It's no different today! The **ARABS** have been raging against the **JEW'S** ever since **JERUSALEM** has been reclaimed by **ISRAEL!** Pressure from the **JEW'S** enemies is ever increasing. Their enemies are not only **ARABS**, but are also found in other **NATIONS** around the world.

This will continue until the end of the days when all the **NATIONS** will gather against **JERUSALEM**. Then **JERUSALEM** will become **A CUP OF TREMBLING** according to *Zechariah 12:2*.

When the city of **JERUSALEM** is at its lowest point ever, the **LORD** will take care of **HIS PEOPLE**, who are despised by the world. The **LORD'S RETURN** will bring about **ISRAEL'S SALVATION, LIGHT, and BLESSING!**

Why does the **LORD** stand among the **MYRTLES**? It may be a prophetic reference to *Isaiah 55:13*: "*Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.*"

There Will Be Blessing Instead Of Cursing! The **LORD**, who bore a crown of thorns, and over whose head was written, "*Jesus of Nazareth the king of the Jews*" (*John 19:19*), will see that the curse is removed and that **MYRTLES** grow in the place of thorns.

HE who bore the curse of the crown of thorns in **HIS** death stands among the **MYRTLES** because **JERUSALEM** will flourish eternally before **HIM** and through **HIM!**

The **LORD** stands by **ISRAEL!** And so if we stand with the **LORD**,

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we should stand by **ISRAEL** as well!

When **HE** comes at that time **HE** will wear a crown of ornaments instead of a crown of thorns: *Isaiah 61:10*—"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."

Let's return to the fact that the **MAN** is standing among the **MYRTLES** in the **BOTTOM (vs 8)**. Where is the lowest point of the earth's surface? Geographically, it is the **DEAD SEA**, but spiritually, it is **CALVARY**.

The **LORD** descended from heaven to earth to **RECONCILE** the world to **GOD**. **ISRAEL'S** future salvation also lies in **CALVARY**: "*...he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*" (*Philippians 2:8*).

MESSIAH stands in the **BOTTOM** among the **MYRTLE** trees to bring **SALVATION** to **HIS PEOPLE**. While the world stands against **ISRAEL**, the **LORD HIMSELF** will stand by them!

This **MAN** who appears on the scene is riding a red horse. Red symbolizes the color of **HIS BLOOD**, the color of victory; but it also represents the color of the **JUDGE** over all the **NATIONS!**

Here, this man is called "*the angel of the LORD.*" (*Vs 11*) Clearly, it is the **LORD HIMSELF** who stands among the **MYRTLE TREES**. The term "*angel of the LORD*" often refers to the **pre-incarnate LORD JESUS CHRIST WHO** is synonymous with **GOD (Genesis 22:15-17)**. **HE** is the visible manifestation of the invisible **GOD** in the **OLD TESTAMENT!**

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An **ANGEL** spoke to **ZECHARIAH** in *vs 9*. **ZECHARIAH** asked the **ANGEL** about the horse's significance: *"Then said I, O my lord, what are these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will shew thee what these be."*

The **ANGEL** wanted to answer him, but apparently he could not. He could only point to the **ONE** with the answer, the **LORD** as the **ANGEL OF THE LORD**: *"And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, These are they whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth" (vs 10).*

JESUS is the only **ONE WHO** can answer the most important questions in life!

Behind the **MAN** among the **MYRTLES** stands **GOD'S HEAVENLY HOSTS**. The **ANGELS** on the red, speckled and white horses show us that over the visible armies of this world is an invisible **HOST OF GOD** which is much mightier! It reminds us of the passage of Scripture in *2 Kings 6:16* that deals with **ELISHA** and his servant: *"And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them"*

This **LORD** who once wept over **JERUSALEM** will stand as a **HIGH PRIEST** and **ADVOCATE** for **JERUSALEM** and **JUDAH**, and **HE** prays for them: *(Vs 12-13)* If the **LORD HIMSELF** intercedes for **JERUSALEM** and **JUDAH** in such a moving way, should we love **ISRAEL** any less?

SCRIPTURE does not reveal what the **FATHER** said to the **SON**, but **HE** used kind, comforting words. We know that the **FATHER** always hears the **SON** (*John 11:42 and John 17*), and doubtless **HE** did so in this case as well.

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The timing of **JERUSALEM'S** final restoration is not mentioned anywhere in the **BIBLE**. (*Other than it will take place when JESUS returns. Nobody knows the day or hour this will take place.*)

Although we are not told **WHEN** it will take place, we are told **HOW!** Following **HIS PRAYER** and **GOD'S RESPONSE**, the **LORD** turned back to **ZECHARIAH** and commanded him to cry aloud for **JERUSALEM**, making it clear that **HE** had been heard! *(Vs 14-17)*

So it is with all **DIVINE AUTHORITY** that we can proclaim that the time is coming when the **LORD** will turn back to **HIS PEOPLE!**

What Is The Message That All Should Hear?

Let's summarize the seven statements concerning **JERUSALEM**:

1. *"I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy" (Vs 14)*
—The **DIVINE authority** — **GOD HIMSELF** — is with **Jerusalem**.
2. *"I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies" (Vs 16)*
—The **DIVINE love** is of **Jerusalem**.
3. *"My house shall be built in it" (Vs 16)*
—The **DIVINE presence** is back in **Jerusalem**.
4. *"A line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem" (Vs 16)*
(Jeremiah 31:38-40)
— The **DIVINE indivisibility** remains in **Jerusalem**.
5. *"My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad" (Vs 17)*
— The **DIVINE blessing** is back in **Jerusalem**.
6. *"The LORD shall yet comfort Zion" (Vs 17)*
—The **DIVINE kindness** is back in **Jerusalem**.
7. *"...And shall yet choose Jerusalem."* *(Vs 17)*
—The **DIVINE promise** will remain in **Jerusalem**. And, concerning the **NATIONS**, we read:
8. *"I am very sore displeased with the heathen..." (Vs 15)*
—The **DIVINE wrath** will fall over all those who hate **Jerusalem**.