

BOOK OF ZECHARIAH
JUDGMENT BEFORE CHRIST'S RETURN
ZECHARIAH 5:1 - 6:8

Introduction

Zechariah's **first five visions** were encouraging ones of hope for the future of the Messianic kingdom.

The **next three visions** concern the judgments that will come upon Israel and the world **before** Jesus returns in glory. Sin must be judged and removed before the Lord of hosts, Who is also described as "...*the Lord of all the earth*" (chapter 6:5), returns.

A kingdom of God cannot exist without **justice**. The Scripture reveals that the Lord will take up His reign and rule with a rod (or scepter) of iron.

Revelation 12 and Isaiah 9 both allude to this: *Revelation 12:5—"And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne"*

Isaiah 9:7—"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this"

**I. THE FLYING ROLL AND THE SINS OF THE INDIVIDUAL.
(Zechariah 5:1-4)**

The first four verses of Zechariah make it clear that ultimately, every sin will be revealed before the un-bribable heavenly Judge.

Zechariah lifted up his eyes and saw (verse 1).

We must also dare to lift up our eyes and see sin as God sees it.

We live in a world where it seems that every sin and every perversity is tolerated, or even worse, is made light of.

Yet, by and large, the Word of God is no longer tolerated.

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However, man will not be asked for his opinion, about the time in which he lived, or about the prevailing trend of that day when he stands before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Instead, he will be asked whether or not he was obedient to God's Word. It is the only source that applies, which is why Zechariah saw a roll (or scroll) that was so large that no human hand could hold it. This roll (or scroll) symbolizes God's infallible Word (verse 2).

Since twenty cubits equal about 34 feet, ten cubits would equal 17ft. It is certainly no coincidence that the halls of Solomon's Temple, where the Law was read aloud, had the very same measurements as the scroll Zechariah saw.

1 Kings 6:3—"And the porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits was the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house; and ten cubits was the breadth thereof before the house."

The scroll was not rolled up, but was spread out so that it covered the porch of the Temple.

When God's judgments are poured out over the world, the Word of God will be unrolled, or opened, and will be the only measure by which the Lord will judge. Everything, including the judgments contained in the Holy Scriptures, will be fulfilled.

Let's recall how the Great Tribulation judgments begin: The Lamb of God will break the seven seals of the book (***Revelation 5:5-7 and 6:1—onward***), unleashing severe judgments upon this earth.

The **seven seal judgments** followed by the **seven trumpet judgments** followed by the **seven vial or bowl judgments**.

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Then in the end, we read in *Revelation 20:12*—*"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works"*

Zechariah saw a flying scroll that united both heaven and earth; it was God's heavenly Word of judgment upon the earth. The curse (or judgment) of the flying scroll covered the entire land; nobody could escape it (*verse 3*). This judgment during the Great Tribulation will affect the land of Israel, but it will also come upon all the nations of the world.

The Word of God was sent to show the way of salvation and forgiveness of all who believe the message of it. However, for those who continually reject it and do not repent, it will become a curse and will lead to judgment—as 2 Thessalonians 2:10, 12 puts it: *"...with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved...That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in un-righteousness"*

Those who do not believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be judged according to it: *Romans 2:16*—*"In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."*

Two terms that can be used to sum up the Ten Commandments written on the two stone tablets are used here: *"...every one that stealeth"* and *"...every one that swareth"* (*Zechariah 5:3*).

Taking advantage of our neighbors is classified as theft. But stealing God's glory, pursuing idols, or making a god of this world and all its offers are also considered theft. Even the selfish use of things God has given us, such as talents and material gifts, will be judged.

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Lies that are taken so lightly today will also be judged relentlessly: *Revelation 21:8*—*"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death..."*

Revelation 21:27—*"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life"*

During the revelation of the Antichrist, who personifies lies, many people, including the Jews, will believe the lies, forsake God and deny Him!

2 Thessalonians 2:9—*"...Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders."*

People have seemingly gotten away with sinning for a long time, but soon, time will run out. The day will come when all that is hidden will be revealed and judged by God. Those who do not believe in Jesus Christ will be condemned according to God's law:

1 Timothy 1:9-10—*"...Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine."*

No one will be spared from God's divine judgment, particularly during the Great Tribulation, but also, even now. It will arrive like an uninvited guest and will remain in the night of great distress. It will consume *"...the timber thereof and the stones thereof"* (*verse 4*).

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The Old Testament instructed that a house contaminated by leprosy should be destroyed in exactly the same way:

Leviticus 14:45—"And he shall break down the house, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house; and he shall carry them forth out of the city into an unclean place"

The Church is considered a house or temple, as is the individual believer. God will destroy anyone who defiles the Temple.

(1st Corinthians 3:16-17).

That is why *Ephesians 4:28* says: *"Let him that stole steal no more,"* and *verse 25* says, *"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour."*

This is even more necessary because the time has come when judgment will begin at the house of God (*1st Peter 4:17*).

Surrendering our lives to Christ is the only way to avoid God's judgment. The forgiveness of sins and removal of the curse is only found in Christ. The balance of sin is immediately brought down to zero: *Hebrews 8:12—"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."*

JUDGMENT BEFORE CHRIST'S RETURNS-PART 2:

II. THE EPDAH AND THE SINS OF THE NATIONS.
(Zechariah 5:5-11)

God's future judgment will not only come upon the individual, or Israel, but upon the entire endtime Babylon.

At that time, the *ephah* was the largest measurement for items such as grain. Zechariah explains that a woman called *"wickedness"* (verses 7-8) sat in this *ephah*. Subsequently, the godlessness of the end-time anti-Christian economy and politics is described.

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The Jews returning to Israel from Babylon brought with them the heathen spirit of trade, which had no moral basis. Profit was more important than morals. God was not happy with that attitude, which is why these words are written in *verse 6*: *"This is their resemblance through all the earth"* and *verse 8*: *"This is wickedness..."*

Since that time of Israel's return from Babylon, a large number of secular Jews have been involved in world trade. We know that godlessness in trade and economics has the political scene in its clutches today and contributes in almost unsurpassable measure to the corruption of the nations. It will reach its climax in endtime Babylon, but the road is being paved today.

Someone once very fittingly said, *"It is not inflation that is destroying the nations, but godlessness, which is the cause of inflation."*

The concentration of evil will manifest itself in the end-times, primarily in the economic sphere, drawing all mankind under its spell. That is what the *ephah* symbolizes in *verse 10 and 11*.

Zechariah describes two women as having wings like a stork (vs 9). The stork is a creature among the list of unclean beasts the Israelites were not permitted to eat. In fact, *Leviticus 11:13-19* explain that the bird was considered an abomination.

The powers of uncleanness will promote the sins of anti-Christian Babylon. End-time Babylon will become the earthly site of the revelation of the godless economy. However, the believing remnant of Israel as well as the other Tribulation saints should play no part in this anti-Christian Babylon, which is why a cover of lead is placed on the *ephah* (verse 8).

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Revelation 17 (Religious Babylon) and 18 (Commercial Babylon) refer to this end-time Babylon as a "woman" or a "harlot."
Revelation 17:1-5 and *18:4* explain that the Jews are to flee from this Babylon. The merchants of the earth will have become rich through the opulence of this Babylon. The entire Babylonian system will be destroyed in one hour (*Revelation 18:3, 10, 17-18 and onward*).

We were given a foretaste of this time element on September 11th, 2001 when the World Trade Center was attacked. Remember how both of the towers collapsed within the span of just one hour?

Scripture reveals that the Antichrist will have such great power over the end-time economy that nobody will be able to buy or sell without him (*Revelation 13:17*).

James offers a warning about this: *James 5:1-3*— "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days"

JUDGMENT BEFORE CHRIST'S RETURN-PART 3:

III. THE APOCALYPTIC JUDGMENT OF THE ENDTIMES.
(Zechariah 6:1-8)

Apocalyptic judgment is God's response to the increasing godlessness found in economics, politics and religion. The four chariots are drawn by different colored horses (*verses 1-3*).

These chariots also represent spirits (*verse 5*). As they stand before the Lord, they are probably angels carrying out God's judgment on earth.

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Horses and chariots are often mentioned in the Bible in connection with power, war and judgment (compare *Revelation 6, Jeremiah 46:9-10, Joel 2:3-11 and Nahum 3:1-7*).

The Lord's return is described in *Revelation 19*, where it is prophesied that He will come for judgment with His heavenly armies on horses to establish His kingdom (Revelation 19:11-16).

The angels of judgment written about in *Zechariah 6* came from between two mountains (*verse 1*) which probably refer to Mount Zion and the Mount of Olives because they are directly connected with Jesus' return. The Valley of Jehoshaphat lies between the two mountains, which is also mentioned often in Scripture in connection with the Lord's judgment upon the nations (*Joel 3:2*).

The two mountains are described as brass, referring to a strength and stability which nothing can shake (it also refers to judgment): *Isaiah 2:2*—"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it" (*Isaiah 2:2*).

The chariots now go off for judgment in three separate directions:

- The black and white horses go north (*verse 6*).
(Rome, Assyria, Babylon always attacked Israel from the North. In the North is also Gog and Magog)
- The grisled horses go south (*verse 6*) (*Egypt*)
- The strong, red (bay) horses go all over the earth (*verse 7*).

The horses are not limited to going in one direction. This picture fits the description of the judgments on the nations in the Tribulation Period.

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According to *Daniel 11:40* and following, the kings of the North and South will arise to wage war against Israel.

As we've said, the North is believed to refer to Babylon, which has always attacked Israel from that direction. It also refers to Assyria (Syria), which lies north of Israel. If we extend the definition of "north" a little farther, it stands for the power of Gog from the land of Magog in the far North. *Ezekiel 38 and 39* explain that God will destroy this power.

Micah 5:6 also says: *"And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders."*

The king of the South (Egypt) will be overcome and judged by the Lord (*Daniel 11:42*), which is summed up in *Zechariah 10:11*: *"...And the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the scepter of Egypt shall depart away."*

According to the book of Revelation, the apocalyptic judgments will come upon the entire world (*verse 7*). But only when the chariots go to the land of the north does the Spirit of God find rest (*verse 8*). Why? Because God's judgment upon the nations will end, and the Lord will return.

Therefore, the land of the North means "*Babylon*," which was the basis for a world-ruling power, the godless collaboration of the nations in rebellion against God (the Tower of Babel).

Nimrod was the founder of Babylon (Genesis 10:8-10) and the first despot on earth. However, all the ungodly powers and the power of the last despot on earth will ultimately be united under the term "Babylon" (Revelation 17-18).

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Israel was always attacked from the North by her enemies, even by the Romans. Therefore, verse 8 can be seen as a summary which says that judgment over all enemy nations opposing Israel and the Anointed (Psalm 2) have reached their ultimate fulfillment.

Subsequently, the Lord's Spirit and jealousy for His people have been quieted. Remember how the Lord said: *"I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy. And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease"* in *Zechariah 1:14-15*.

The Lord will appear in His glory now that judgment has been fulfilled and the Lord's Spirit and jealousy have been quieted. Israel will be led to rest in the kingdom of her Messiah, Jesus Christ: *Hebrews 4:9*—*"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God"*

The nations will also enter into His rest: *Isaiah 11:10*—*"And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious"*

Practically all of God's endtime judgments on earth are mentioned in *Zechariah 5:1—6:8*:

- the judgment upon the people of the end-times;
- the judgment upon end-time Babylon;
- the judgment upon the enemies from the north of Israel;
- the judgment upon the south; and
- the judgment upon the entire earth.

But, whoever believes on Jesus and gives his life to Him will not come into judgment! The Lord said this in *John 5:24*: *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (or judgment); but is passed from death unto life."*