

# Zechariah

## Chapter 2

### V. Vision 3: The Man with a Measuring Line - Zechariah 2:1-13

**2:1 I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand. 2:2 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. 2:3 And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, 2:4 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: 2:5 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. 2:6 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. 2:7 Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest [with] the daughter of Babylon. 2:8 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. 2:9 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. 2:10 Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. 2:11 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. 2:12 And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. 2:13 Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.**

As we have noted in the previous chapter, each of these eight visions in Zechariah are meant to comfort Israel in the troublesome post-exilic times they were experiencing. Although there was general peace in the lands controlled by the Persian Empire, Israel was experiencing adversity on every side in their attempts to rebuild the temple. A cursory reading of Nehemiah and Ezra will reveal that only a small portion of the Jews in captivity returned to their devastated homeland. It was during this critical time that God raised up Haggai and Zechariah to encourage the Israelites to rebuild the temple and restore worship.

The first vision of Zechariah, the Riders Among the Myrtle Trees, encourages the Jews in the fact that God has remembered them and is ready to intervene in their behalf. The second vision promises ultimate deliverance for Israel. Although they would be scattered by four different powers, God has his hammerers who would destroy these powers at the appointed times.

This third vision promises the weary Israelites that the future of Jerusalem is glorious. Although Jerusalem was in desolation, there was coming a day when it would be enlarged far beyond its current boundaries.

It is interesting to note that the second vision of Zechariah is an expansion of the idea put forth in Zechariah 1:15 and this vision is an expansion of the idea in Zechariah 1:16.

### **Zechariah 2:1**

This verse starts out with the characteristic phrase "I lifted up mine eyes". We have already noted that this phrase introduces several of the visions. No doubt Zechariah lowered his eyes in quiet meditation after each of these visions.

The subject of this vision is "a man with a measuring line". The measuring line was used by workmen who were in the process of laying out various building projects. A similar use of this term is found in Ezekiel 40-48 and Revelations 21:15. See also Zechariah 1:16.

### **Zechariah 2:2**

The purpose of this man is made clear by Zechariah's question, "Whither goest thou?". The answer is given by this man as "to measure Jerusalem to see what is the breath thereof and what is the length thereof".

### **Zechariah 2:3**

The vision gets somewhat more complicated at this point with the introduction of another angel. We have already mentioned that Zechariah's visions are being interpreted by one angel whom we have designated the "interpreting angel". In this verse, the interpreting angel goes out to meet another angel. Although we are not told the identity of this other angel, we can infer that it is probably the angel of the Lord because of the content of the message given in verse 4 following.

### **Zechariah 2:4**

This angel, whom we have identified as the angel of the Lord, now tells interpreter angel to return to Zechariah with a message of promise about Jerusalem. By the way, the "this young man" can refer to none other but Zechariah.

A couple of notes are due here regarding the identity of the figures in this vision. We see three different personages spoken of if we do not count Zechariah. We see the man with the measuring line, the interpreter angel, and the angel with the message. Some scholars interpret the man with the measuring line as the angel of the Lord. However, 1) the man with the measuring line is not identified as the angel of the Lord, and 2) the term "man" would hardly have been used to speak of the preincarnate Christ in a passage such as this. Therefore, we can make the identification of this "man" to be an angel or as an actual man who serves to color the background of the vision.

The interpreter angel cannot be the angel of the Lord. We infer this from the fact that the angel of the Lord is seen as a distinct personage in the first vision as opposed to the interpreting angel. This same distinction holds true in the fourth vision.

This leaves the question as to the identity of the third angel. We can get a clue as to his identity from the content of the message he delivered to the interpreter angel. Note the following:

- vs. 2:5 "For I, saith the Lord ... "
- vs. 2:6 "for I have spread you abroad"
- vs. 2:8 "for thus saith the Lord of hosts ... "

vs. 2:8 "after he has honored me and sent me against the nations ... "  
vs. 2:9 "For, behold, I will shake ... "  
vs. 2:10 "for, lo, I come ... "  
vs. 2:11 "I shall dwell in the midst of thee ... "

From the above, we can conclude two things: 1) the angel with the message is giving a verbatim quote from the Lord, or 2) the angel with the message IS the angel of the Lord, the second person of the Trinity. I prefer the latter conclusion since it makes the best sense in interpreting this vision and the contents of this message.

Turning our attention back to the vision we now are given the content of the message given to the interpreter angel for relay to Zechariah. This message is one long and glorious promise regarding the future of Jerusalem and the restoration of it's glory and prominence.

The first element of this message is that Jerusalem will be inhabited as a "city without walls". In those days, cities were usually build on a hill and surrounded by a wall for protection. All of the fields and vineyards would be around the city outside the walls. At night, the inhabitants of the city would retire within the walls for protection from robbers and wild animals. From this, we see that the wall represented security and protection. However, most cities were very small due to the effort and difficulty involved in building the walls. In fact, the Jerusalem of David's day occupied an area no larger than a few city blocks.

The statement that Jerusalem would be inhabited as "towns without walls" refers to the size of the inhabited area of Jerusalem. What is really meant is that the little towns around Jerusalem would be merged into the metropolis area due to the number of people and cattle. It is sort of like the area of Los Angeles. When one goes to "Los Angeles" he can be in one of several different cities. Thus we see a clear reference here to the population explosion that will engulf Jerusalem. By the way, at that time Jerusalem was virtually uninhabited due to the small number of Jews who had returned from captivity.

#### **Zechariah 2:5**

At this point, the Jew hearing this vision would be concerned because the lack of a wall would invite disaster. One of the first things done by Nehemiah was to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem for protection from enemies. If Jerusalem is to be inhabited as towns without walls, where will the security and protection offered by a wall come from?

The answer is given by the angel of the Lord to the effect that God himself will protect the city. The "wall of fire" reminds us of the pillar of fire that protected the Jews in their wanderings in the wilderness. However, the protection does not stop there. Not only will God be a wall of fire around the city, but he will dwell there in his Shekinah glory. What is even better than having God around the city is to have him in the midst of the city.

#### **Zechariah 2:6**

Verses 6 through 9 give us an example of prophetic foreshortening. What we mean by this is that we find prophecies with an immediate fulfillment mixed with prophecies which have a far future fulfillment. This will become more evident as we look at these four verses.

This verse contains the call of God to the dispersed Israelites who have been scattered to the four winds. When Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians, the Jews in the rest of the land scattered everywhere. This scattering also occurred when the Northern Kingdom fell to the Assyrians in around 732 B.C.. It is interesting to note that the regathering of Israel is a frequent subject of prophetic passages in the Old Testament.

The call is for the Jews to return from the north. This refers to the geographical fact that the only land route to Jerusalem was from the north. To the south of Jerusalem lies the hostile Judean desert, to the east lies mountains, and to the west lies the Mediterranean Sea. This is the reason invading armies were always seen as coming from the north.

### **Zechariah 2:7**

This is a continuation of the call given in verse 6. In this we see the immediate aspect of this prophecy. One of the primary settlements of Jews was in the land of Babylon. It is of historical note that Babylon fell to the Persians somewhat peacefully and as a result the city proper was not destroyed. However, during the time of Darius, there were at least two revolts that resulted in great devastation. It is these near future devastations that we see in view here. However, the call to return to Jerusalem extends down through the centuries to our time just prior to the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom.

### **Zechariah 2:8-10**

Verses 8 and 9 are somewhat difficult to understand in the Authorized version of the Bible. A better rendering of these verses is given in the New International Version which reads as follows:

**After he has honored me and has sent me against the nations that have plundered you - for whosoever touches you touches the apple of his eye - I will surely raise my hand against them so that their slaves will plunder them. Then you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me.**

This verse contains immense truth if we make the identification of the speaker as being the angel of the Lord.

The statement "After he has honored me" can refer only to the exaltation of Christ which he obtained as a result of his death on the cross. Note the following verses in John 17:

**1. Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may also glorify thee:**

**5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was,**

**24. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world.**

We are also reminded of the verse in 1 Peter 1:11 where we read:

**Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.**

From these two passages, and many others in the New Testament, we find that Christ has been glorified and honored because of his death on the cross for the sin of the world. Hebrews 12:2 states that "for the joy that was set before him" Christ endured the cross. It was the future prospect of glory that enabled Christ to endure the sufferings he did.

This argument is further strengthened by the fact that the Hebrew word for honor, *kabor*, can also be translated "glory".

Part of Christ's glory is the fact that God has exalted him above every name. The first thing that Christ does upon his return is to destroy those who war against his chosen people (Zechariah 14). We see this born out in verse 9, "I will surely raise my hand against them". Although God used the heathen nations as instruments of judgment against Israel, that does not vindicate those nations of their own evil and the fact that they were much more harsh toward Israel than God originally intended.

Israel is often spoken of as the "apple of God's eye" (Deuteronomy 32:10 and Psalms 17:8). The "apple of the eye" refers to the pupil which is the most sensitive part of the eye. God is saying that Israel is a most precious possession, and whoever bothers Israel is poking God in the eye.

In verse 9 the vision skips from the immediate future to the distant future, to a time immediately preceding the Millennial Kingdom. Although this verse had a somewhat immediate fulfillment in the judgment against each of the nations that had spoiled Israel, the full and final fulfillment is yet future.

Once Christ comes in judgment against these nations, Israel will know that God has sent him. In Zechariah 12:10 we read that when Christ comes in judgment to defend Jerusalem that "they shall look on him whom they have pierced". The truth of Christ's divinity and Messiahship will not be in question when he delivers Israel.

### **Zechariah 2:10-13**

The time spoken of by these verses is the distant future.

Verse 10 is a promise of the personal presence of God amidst his people. This is fulfilled in the Millennium when Christ himself will rule from Jerusalem.

It is a glorious truth that Israel will not be the only people to inherit the Kingdom of God, but other people will as well. One of the major misconceptions of the Jews was that they were to be the only recipients of the blessings of God. However, we see here that "many other people" will be joined to the Lord in that future day of glory.

The promise regarding the personal presence of God is repeated in verse 11. This was the hope of Israel, to have the Messiah in residence with them in the city of Jerusalem. Also note that the statement "and you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me unto thee" is repeated. When the Messiah comes in glory, there will be

no possibility of mistaking him for who he was. The first time, Israel did not recognize him, the second time they will not repeat the mistake.

Verse 12 is the capstone of this promise. Although Jerusalem is lying in ruins and Judah is in desolation, there is coming a future day when the city will enjoy the presence of God. God has not forgotten his chosen city.

There can be no mistake regarding the special place in the mind of God that Jerusalem occupies. Time and time again in the Old Testament we find Jerusalem as being referred to as his city. It is in Jerusalem Christ died for the sin of the world, it is in Jerusalem that Christ will personally return to establish his Kingdom, and it is Jerusalem that will be the capital of the earth during the Millennium.

### **Zechariah 2:13**

The natural question at this point for the Jew is "how do I know that all of these promises regarding Jerusalem will be fulfilled?". The answer is given here in this verse.

The basis of certainty of this promise regarding the future glory of Jerusalem is in God's character. All flesh is told to "be silent" because the Lord is rising out of his habitation to action. This undoubtedly encouraged the Jews listening to the account of this vision. God may take his time rising to action, but when he does, what he says will surely come to pass.