

# Zechariah

## Introduction

**1:1** In the eighth month of Darius'<sup>1</sup> second year,<sup>2</sup> the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah,<sup>3</sup> son of Berechiah son of Iddo, as follows:

**1:2** The LORD was very angry with your ancestors.<sup>4</sup> **1:3** Therefore say to the people:<sup>5</sup> The LORD who rules over all<sup>6</sup> says, "Turn<sup>7</sup> to me," says the LORD who rules over all, "and I will turn to you," says the LORD who rules over all. **1:4** "Do not be like your ancestors, to whom the former prophets called out, saying, 'The LORD who rules over all says, "Turn now from your evil wickedness,'" but they would by no means obey me," says the LORD. **1:5** "As for your ancestors, where are they? And did the prophets live forever? **1:6** But have my words and statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, not outlived your fathers?<sup>8</sup> Then they paid attention<sup>9</sup> and confessed, 'The LORD who rules over all has indeed done what he said he would do to us, because of our sinful ways.'"

<sup>1</sup> **sn** Darius is Darius Hystaspes, king of Persia from 522-486 B.C.

<sup>2</sup> **sn** The eighth month of Darius' second year was late October – late November, 520 B.C., by the modern (Julian) calendar. This is two months later than the date of Haggai's first message to the same community (cf. Hag 1:1).

<sup>3</sup> **sn** Both Ezra (5:1; 6:14) and Nehemiah (12:16) speak of Zechariah as a son of Iddo only. A probable explanation is that Zechariah's actual father Berechiah had died and the prophet was raised by his grandfather Iddo. The "Zechariah son of Barachiah" of whom Jesus spoke (Matt 23:35; Luke 11:51) was probably the martyred prophet by that name who may have been a grandson of the priest Jehoiada (2 Chr 24:20-22).

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb "fathers" (so KJV, NAB); NIV "forefathers" (also in vv. 4, 5).

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Heb "to them"; the referent (the people) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>6</sup> **sn** The epithet LORD who rules over all occurs frequently as a divine title throughout Zechariah (53 times total). This name (יהוה צבאות, *YHWH ts'va'ot*), traditionally translated "LORD of hosts" (so KJV, NAB, NASB; cf. NIV, NLT "Lord Almighty"; NCV, CEV "Lord All-Powerful"), emphasizes the majestic sovereignty of the Lord, an especially important concept in the postexilic world of great human empires and rulers. For a thorough study of the divine title, see T. N. D. Mettinger, *In Search of God*, 123-57.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** The Hebrew verb שׁוּב (*shuv*) is common in covenant contexts. To turn from the LORD is to break the covenant and to turn to him (i.e., to repent) is to renew the covenant relationship (cf. 2 Kgs 17:13).

<sup>8</sup> **tc** BHS suggests אֲתֵכֶם (*'atkhem*, "you") for the MT אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם (*'avotekhem*, "your fathers") to harmonize with v. 4. In v. 4 the ancestors would not turn but in v. 6 they appear to have done so. The subject in v. 6, however, is to be construed as Zechariah's own listeners.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Heb "they turned" (so ASV). Many English versions have "they repented" here; cf. CEV "they turned back to me."

## The Introduction to the Visions

**1:7** On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, the month *Shebat*, in Darius' second year,<sup>10</sup> the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berechiah son of Iddo, as follows:

## The Content of the First Vision

**1:8** I was attentive that night and saw a man seated<sup>11</sup> on a red horse that stood among some myrtle trees<sup>12</sup> in the ravine. Behind him were red, sorrel,<sup>13</sup> and white horses.

## The Interpretation of the First Vision

**1:9** Then I asked one nearby, "What are these, sir?" The angelic messenger<sup>14</sup> who replied to me said, "I will show you what these are." **1:10** Then the man standing among the myrtle trees spoke up and said, "These are the ones whom the LORD has sent to walk about<sup>15</sup> on the earth." **1:11** The riders then agreed with the angel of the LORD,<sup>16</sup> who was standing among the myrtle trees, "We have been walking about on the earth, and now everything is at rest and quiet." **1:12** The angel of the LORD then asked, "LORD who rules over all,<sup>17</sup> how long before you

<sup>10</sup> **sn** The twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month...in Darius' second year was February 15, 519 B.C.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb "riding," but since this verb in English is usually associated with horses in motion rather than standing still, the translation uses "seated." Cf. NAB "the driver of a red horse."

<sup>12</sup> **tc** The LXX presupposes הַהָרִים (*heharim*, "mountains") rather than the MT הַחֲדָסִים (*hahadassim*, "myrtles"), probably because of reference to the ravine. The MT reading is preferred and is followed by most English versions.

<sup>13</sup> **sn** The Hebrew שְׂרָקִים (*sr'qqim*) means "red" (cf. NIV, NCV, NLT "brown"). English translations such as "speckled" (KJV) or "dappled" (TEV) are based on the reading of the LXX (ψαροί) that attempts to bring the color of this horse into conformity with those described in Zech 6:2-3. However, since these are two different and unrelated visions, this is a methodological fallacy.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb "messenger" or "angel" (מַלְאָךְ, *mal'akh*). This being appears to serve as an interpreter to the prophet (cf. vv. 13, 14).

<sup>15</sup> **sn** The stem used here (Hitpa'el) with the verb "walk" (הִלַּךְ, *halakh*) suggests the exercise of dominion (cf. Gen 13:17; Job 1:7; 2:2-3; Ezek 28:14; Zech 6:7). The LORD is here about to claim sovereignty over the nations. Cf. NAB, NASB, NRSV, NLT "to patrol"; TEV "to go and inspect."

<sup>16</sup> **sn** The angel of the LORD is a special being who throughout the OT represents God himself and on occasion almost approaches divine hypostatization or incarnation (cf. Gen 18:2, 13, 17, 22; Exod 23:20-21; Josh 5:13-15; Judg 6:11-24; 13:2-20).

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb Note that here the angel of the LORD is clearly distinct from the LORD who rules over all himself.

have compassion on Jerusalem<sup>1</sup> and the other cities of Judah which you have been so angry with for these seventy years?"<sup>2</sup> **1:13** The LORD then addressed good, comforting words to the angelic messenger who was speaking to me. **1:14** Turning to me, the messenger then said, "Cry out that the LORD who rules over all says, 'I am very much moved<sup>3</sup> for Jerusalem and for Zion. **1:15** But I am greatly displeased with the nations that take my grace for granted.<sup>4</sup> I was a little displeased with them, but they have only made things worse for themselves.

### *The Oracle of Response*

**1:16** "Therefore," says the LORD, 'I have become compassionate<sup>5</sup> toward Jerusalem<sup>6</sup> and will rebuild my temple<sup>7</sup> in it,' says the LORD who rules over all. 'Once more a surveyor's measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem.' **1:17** Speak up again with the message of the LORD who rules over all: 'My cities will once more overflow with prosperity, and once more the LORD will comfort Zion and validate his choice of Jerusalem.'"

### *Vision Two: The Four Horns*

**1:18** (2:1)<sup>8</sup> Once again I looked and this time I saw four horns. **1:19** So I asked the angelic

messenger<sup>9</sup> who spoke with me, "What are these?" He replied, "These are the horns<sup>10</sup> that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem."<sup>11</sup> **1:20** Next the LORD showed me four blacksmiths.<sup>12</sup> **1:21** I asked, "What are these going to do?" He answered, "These horns are the ones that have scattered Judah so that there is no one to be seen.<sup>13</sup> But the blacksmiths have come to terrify Judah's enemies<sup>14</sup> and cut off the horns of the nations that have thrust themselves against the land of Judah in order to scatter its people."<sup>15</sup>

### *Vision Three: The Surveyor*

**2:1** (2:5) I looked again, and there was a man with a measuring line in his hand. **2:2** I asked, "Where are you going?" He replied, "To measure Jerusalem<sup>16</sup> in order to determine its width and its length." **2:3** At this point the angelic messenger<sup>17</sup> who spoke to me went out, and another messenger came to meet him **2:4** and said to him, "Hurry, speak to this young man<sup>18</sup> as follows: 'Jerusalem will no longer be enclosed by walls<sup>19</sup> because of the multitude of people and animals there. **2:5** But I (the LORD says) will be a wall of fire surrounding Jerusalem<sup>20</sup> and the source of glory in her midst.'"

<sup>1</sup> **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

<sup>2</sup> **sn** The seventy years refers to the predicted period of Babylonian exile, a period with flexible beginning and ending points depending on the particular circumstances in view (cf. Jer 25:1; 28:1; 29:10; Dan 9:2). Here the end of the seventy years appears to be marked by the completion of the temple in 516 B.C., exactly seventy years after its destruction in 586.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** *Heb* "jealous for" (so KJV, ASV); NIV, NRSV "very jealous for"; CEV "very protective of." The meaning is that Jerusalem/Zion is the special object of God's grace and purposes. This results in his unusual protection of his people, a protection not accorded others with whom he does not have such a close relationship.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Or "the nations that are at ease" (so ASV, NRSV). The Hebrew word in question is שְׁאֲנָנִים (*sha'ananim*) which has the idea of a careless, even arrogant attitude (see BDB 983 s.v. שְׁאֲנָנִים); cf. NAB "the complacent nations." Here it suggests that the nations take for granted that God will never punish them just because he hasn't already done so. Thus they presume on the grace and patience of the Lord. The translation attempts to bring out this nuance rather than the more neutral renderings of TEV "nations that enjoy quiet and peace" or NLT "enjoy peace and security."

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* "I have turned." This suggests that the LORD has responded to the "turning" (i.e., repentance) of the people (v. 6) and now, with great love and forgiveness, allows construction of the temple to proceed.

<sup>6</sup> **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *Heb* "house."

<sup>8</sup> **sn** This marks the beginning of ch. 2 in the Hebrew text. Beginning with **1:18**, the verse numbers through **2:13** in the English Bible differ from the verse numbers in the Hebrew text (BHS), with **1:18** ET = **2:1** HT, **1:19** ET = **2:2** HT, **1:20** ET = **2:3** HT, **1:21** ET = **2:4** HT, **2:1** ET = **2:5** HT, etc., through **2:13** ET = **2:17** HT. From **3:1** the verse numbers in the English Bible and the Hebrew Bible are again the same.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** See the note on the expression "angelic messenger" in v. 9.

<sup>10</sup> **sn** An animal's horn is a common OT metaphor for military power (Pss 18:2; 75:10; Jer 48:25; Mic 4:13). The fact that there are four horns here (as well as four blacksmiths, v. 20) shows a correspondence to the four horses of v. 8 which go to four parts of the world, i.e., the whole world.

<sup>11</sup> **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* "craftsmen" (so NASB, NIV; KJV "carpenters"), a generic term which can mean "metalworker, smith, armorer" (HALOT 358 s.v. הַרְחִישׁ). "Blacksmiths" was chosen for the present translation because of its relative familiarity among contemporary English readers.

**sn** The horns are perhaps made of iron, the strongest of all metals known to the ancient Near Eastern world, since military activity is implied in the context. Only blacksmiths can cut the horns off. If the horns represent oppressive nations, the blacksmiths must represent deliverers whom the LORD raises up, kings like Cyrus of Persia (cf. Isa 54:16).

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* "so that no man lifts up his head."

<sup>14</sup> **tn** *Heb* "terrify them"; the referent (Judah's enemies) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* "to scatter it." The word "people" has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

<sup>16</sup> **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** See the note on the expression "angelic messenger" in 1:9.

<sup>18</sup> **sn** That is, to Zechariah.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** *Heb* "Jerusalem will dwell as open regions (פְּרָזוֹת, *p'razot*); cf. NAB "in open country"; CEV "won't have any boundaries." The population will be so large as to spill beyond the ancient and normal enclosures. The people need not fear, however, for the LORD will be an invisible but strong wall (v. 5).

<sup>20</sup> **tn** *Heb* "her"; the referent (Jerusalem) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

2:6 “You there!<sup>1</sup> Flee from the northland!” says the LORD, “for like the four winds of heaven<sup>2</sup> I have scattered you,” says the LORD. 2:7 “Escape, Zion, you who live among the Babylonians!”<sup>3</sup> 2:8 For the LORD who rules over all says to me that for his own glory<sup>4</sup> he has sent me to the nations that plundered you – for anyone who touches you touches the pupil<sup>5</sup> of his<sup>6</sup> eye. 2:9 “I am about to punish them<sup>7</sup> in such a way,” he says, “that they will be looted by their own slaves.” Then you will know that the LORD who rules over all has sent me.

2:10 “Sing out and be happy, Zion my daughter!<sup>8</sup> For look, I have come; I will settle in your midst,” says the LORD. 2:11 “Many nations will join themselves to the LORD on the day of salvation,<sup>9</sup> and they will also be my<sup>10</sup> people. Indeed, I will settle in the midst of you all.” Then you will know that the LORD who rules over all has sent me to you. 2:12 The LORD will take possession of<sup>11</sup> Judah as his portion in the holy land and he will choose Jerusalem once again. 2:13 Be silent in the LORD’s presence, all people everywhere,<sup>12</sup> for he is being moved to action in his holy dwelling place.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup> sn These are the scattered Jews of eschatological times (as the expression *four winds of heaven* makes clear) and not those of Zechariah’s time who have, for the most part, already returned by 520 b.c. This theme continues and is reinforced in vv. 10-13.

<sup>2</sup> tn Or “of the sky.” The same Hebrew term, שָׁמַיִם (*shamayim*), may be translated “heaven(s)” or “sky” depending on the context.

<sup>3</sup> tn Heb “live in [or “with” (cf. NASB), i.e., “among”] the daughter of Babylon” (so NIV; NAB “dwell in daughter Babylon”).

<sup>4</sup> tn Heb “After glory has he sent me” (similar KJV, NASB). What is clearly in view is the role of Zechariah who, by faithful proclamation of the message, will glorify the LORD.

<sup>5</sup> tn Heb “gate” (בָּבְיָהּ, *bavah*) of the eye, that is, pupil. The rendering of this term by KJV as “apple” has created a well-known idiom in the English language, “the apple of his eye” (so ASV, NIV). The pupil is one of the most vulnerable and valuable parts of the body, so for Judah to be considered the “pupil” of the LORD’s eye is to raise her value to an incalculable price (cf. NLT “my most precious possession”).

<sup>6</sup> tc A scribal emendation (*tiqqun sopherim*) has apparently altered an original “my eye” to “his eye” in order to allow the prophet to be the speaker throughout vv. 8-9. This alleviates the problem of the LORD saying, in effect, that he has sent himself on the mission to the nations.

<sup>7</sup> tn Heb “I will wave my hand over them” (so NASB); NIV, NRSV “raise my hand against them.”

<sup>8</sup> sn This individualizing of *Zion* as a *daughter* draws attention to the corporate nature of the covenant community and also to the tenderness with which the LORD regards his chosen people.

<sup>9</sup> tn Heb “on that day.” The descriptive phrase “of salvation” has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

<sup>10</sup> tc The LXX and Syriac have the 3rd person masculine singular suffix in both places (“his people” and “he will settle”; cf. NAB, TEV) in order to avoid the LORD’s speaking of himself in the third person. Such resort is unnecessary, however, in light of the common shifting of person in Hebrew narrative (cf. 3:2).

<sup>11</sup> tn Heb “will inherit” (so NIV, NRSV).

<sup>12</sup> tn Heb “all flesh”; NAB, NIV “all mankind.”

<sup>13</sup> sn The sense here is that God in heaven is about to undertake an occupation of his earthly realm (v. 12) by restoring his people to the promised land.

### Vision Four: The Priest

3:1 Next I saw Joshua the high priest<sup>14</sup> standing before the angel of the LORD, with Satan<sup>15</sup> standing at his right hand to accuse him. 3:2 The LORD<sup>16</sup> said to Satan, “May the LORD rebuke you, Satan! May the LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem,<sup>17</sup> rebuke you! Isn’t this man like a burning stick snatched from the fire?” 3:3 Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes<sup>18</sup> as he stood there before the angel. 3:4 The angel<sup>19</sup> spoke up to those standing all around, “Remove his filthy clothes.” Then he said to Joshua, “I have freely forgiven your iniquity and will dress you<sup>20</sup> in fine clothing.” 3:5 Then I spoke up, “Let a clean turban be put on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the LORD stood nearby. 3:6 Then the angel of the LORD exhorted Joshua solemnly: 3:7 “The LORD who rules over all says, ‘If you live<sup>21</sup> and work according to my requirements, you will be able to preside over my temple<sup>22</sup> and attend to my courtyards, and I will allow you to come and go among these others who are standing by you. 3:8 Listen now, Joshua the high priest, both you and your colleagues who are

<sup>14</sup> sn Joshua the high priest mentioned here is the son of the priest Jehozadak, mentioned also in Hag 1:1 (cf. Ezra 2:2; 3:2, 8; 4:3; 5:2; 10:18; Neh 7:7; 12:1, 7, 10, 26). He also appears to have been the grandfather of the high priest contemporary with Nehemiah ca. 445 b.c. (Neh 12:10).

<sup>15</sup> tn The Hebrew term הַסָּטָן (*hassatan*, “the satan”) suggests not so much a personal name (as in almost all English translations) but an epithet, namely, “the adversary.” This evil being is otherwise thus described in Job 1 and 2 and 1 Chr 21:1. In this last passage the article is dropped and “the satan” becomes “Satan,” a personal name.

<sup>16</sup> sn The juxtaposition of *the messenger of the LORD* in v. 1 and *the LORD* in v. 2 shows that here, at least, they are one and the same. See Zech 1:11, 12 where they are distinguished from each other.

<sup>17</sup> map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

<sup>18</sup> sn The Hebrew word שִׁמְוִים (*so'im*) means “excrement.” This disgusting figure of speech suggests Joshua’s absolute disqualification for priestly service in the flesh, but v. 2 speaks of his having been rescued from that deplorable state by God’s grace. He is like a *burning stick* pulled out of the fire before it is consumed. This is a picture of cleansing, saving grace.

<sup>19</sup> tn Heb “and he”; the referent (the angel, cf. v. 1) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>20</sup> tn The occurrence of the infinitive absolute here for an expected imperfect 1st person common singular (or even imperative 2nd person masculine plural or preterite 3rd person masculine plural) is well-attested elsewhere. Most English translations render this as 1st person singular (“and I will clothe”), but cf. NAB “Take off...and clothe him.”

<sup>21</sup> tn Heb “walk,” a frequent biblical metaphor for lifestyle or conduct; TEV “If you [+ truly CEV] obey.” To “walk” in the ways of the LORD is to live life as he intends (cf. Deut 8:6; 10:12-22; 28:9).

<sup>22</sup> sn The statement *you will be able to preside over my temple* (Heb “house,” a reference to the Jerusalem temple) is a hint of the increasingly important role the high priest played in the postexilic Jewish community, especially in the absence of a monarchy. It also suggests the messianic character of the eschatological priesthood in which the priest would have royal prerogatives.

sitting before you, all of you<sup>4</sup> are a symbol that I am about to introduce my servant, the Branch.<sup>2</sup> **3:9** As for the stone<sup>3</sup> I have set before Joshua – on the one stone there are seven eyes.<sup>4</sup> I am about to engrave an inscription on it,<sup>5</sup> says the LORD who rules over all, ‘to the effect that I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day.’<sup>5</sup> **3:10** In that day,<sup>6</sup> says the LORD who rules over all, ‘everyone will invite his friend to fellowship under his vine and under his fig tree.’<sup>6</sup>

#### *Vision Five: The Menorah*

**4:1** The angelic messenger<sup>7</sup> who had been speaking with me then returned and woke me, as a person is awakened from sleep. **4:2** He asked me, “What do you see?” I replied,<sup>8</sup> “I see a menorah of pure gold with a receptacle at the top and seven lamps, with fourteen pipes going to the lamps. **4:3** There are also two olive trees beside it, one on the right of the receptacle and the other on the left.”<sup>9</sup> **4:4** Then I asked the messenger who spoke with me, “What are these,<sup>10</sup> sir?” **4:5** He replied, “Don’t you know what these are?” So I responded, “No, sir.” **4:6** Therefore he told me, “These signify the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by strength and not

by power, but by my Spirit,’<sup>11</sup> says the LORD who rules over all.”

#### *Oracle of Response*

**4:7** “What are you, you great mountain?<sup>12</sup> Because of Zerubbabel you will become a level plain! And he will bring forth the temple<sup>13</sup> capstone with shoutings of ‘Grace! Grace!’<sup>14</sup> because of this.” **4:8** Moreover, the word of the LORD came to me as follows: **4:9** “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundations of this temple,<sup>15</sup> and his hands will complete it.” Then you will know that the LORD who rules over all has sent me to you. **4:10** For who dares make light of small beginnings? These seven eyes<sup>16</sup> will joyfully look on the tin tablet<sup>17</sup> in Zerubbabel’s hand. (These are the eyes of the LORD, which constantly range across the whole earth.)

**4:11** Next I asked the messenger, “What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the menorah?” **4:12** Before he could reply I asked again, “What are these two extensions<sup>18</sup> of the olive trees, which are emptying out the golden oil through the two golden pipes?” **4:13** He replied, “Don’t you know what these are?” And I said, “No, sir.” **4:14** So he said, “These are the two anointed ones<sup>19</sup> who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”

<sup>1</sup> **tn** *Heb* “these men.” The cleansing of Joshua and his elevation to enhanced leadership as a priest signify the coming of the messianic age.

<sup>2</sup> **sn** The collocation of *servant* and *branch* gives double significance to the messianic meaning of the passage (cf. Isa 41:8, 9; 42:1, 19; 43:10; 44:1, 2, 21; Ps 132:17; Jer 23:5; 33:15).

<sup>3</sup> **sn** The *stone* is also a metaphor for the Messiah, a foundation stone that, at first rejected (Ps 118:22-23; Isa 8:13-15), will become the chief cornerstone of the church (Eph 2:19-22).

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Some understand the Hebrew term פָּנִים (*ayin*) here to refer to facets (cf. NAB, NRSV, NLT) or “faces” (NCV, CEV “seven sides”) of the stone rather than some representation of organs of sight.

**sn** The seven eyes are symbolic of divine omniscience and universal dominion (cf. Zech 1:10; 4:10; 2 Chr 16:9).

<sup>5</sup> **sn** Inscriptions were common on ancient Near Eastern cornerstones. This inscription speaks of the redemption achieved by the divine resident of the temple, the Messiah, who will in the day of the LORD bring salvation to all Israel (cf. Isa 66:7-9).

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* “under the vine and under the fig tree,” with the Hebrew article used twice as a possessive pronoun (cf. NASB “his”). Some English translations render this as second person rather than third (NRSV “your vine”; cf. also NAB, NCV, TEV).

**sn** The imagery of *fellowship under his vine and under his fig tree* describes the peaceful dominion of the LORD in the coming messianic age (Mic 4:4; cf. 1 Kgs 4:25).

<sup>7</sup> **tn** See the note on the expression “angelic messenger” in 1:9.

<sup>8</sup> **tc** The present translation (along with most other English versions) follows the reading of the Qere and many ancient versions, “I said,” as opposed to the MT *Kethib* “he said.”

<sup>9</sup> **sn** The vision apparently describes two olive trees providing olive oil by pipes to a large basin atop the menorah. From this basin two pipes extend to each of the seven lamps of the menorah, for a total of fourteen pipes in all. See vv. 11-12.

<sup>10</sup> **sn** Here these must refer to the lamps, since the identification of the olive trees is left to vv. 11-14.

<sup>11</sup> **sn** It is premature to understand the *Spirit* here as the Holy Spirit (the third Person of the Trinity), though the OT prepares the way for that NT revelation (cf. Gen 1:2; Exod 23:3; 31:3; Num 11:17-29; Judg 3:10; 6:34; 2 Kgs 2:9, 15, 16; Ezek 2:2; 3:12; 11:1, 5).

<sup>12</sup> **sn** In context, the *great mountain* here must be viewed as a metaphor for the enormous task of rebuilding the temple and establishing the messianic kingdom (cf. TEV “Obstacles as great as mountains”).

<sup>13</sup> **tn** The word “temple” has been supplied in the translation to clarify the referent (cf. NLT “final stone of the Temple”).

<sup>14</sup> **sn** *Grace* is a fitting response to the idea that it was “not by strength and not by power” but by God’s gracious Spirit that the work could be done (cf. v. 6).

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* “house” (so NAB, NRSV).

<sup>16</sup> **tn** *Heb* “these seven.” Eyes are clearly intended in the ellipsis as v. 10b shows. As in 3:9 the idea is God’s omniscience. He who knows the end from the beginning rejoices at the completion of his purposes.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** This term is traditionally translated “plumb line” (so NASB, NIV, NLT; cf. KJV, NRSV “plummet”), but it is more likely that the Hebrew בְּדִיל (*bdil*) is to be derived not from בָּדַל (*badal*, “to divide,” but from a root meaning “tin.” This finds support in the ancient Near Eastern custom of placing inscriptions on tin plates in dedicatory foundation deposits).

<sup>18</sup> **tn** The usual meaning of the Hebrew term שְׂבִיטָה (*sh<sup>o</sup>bolet*) is “ears” (as in ears of grain). Here it probably refers to the produce of the olive trees, i.e., olives. Many English versions render the term as “branches,” but cf. NAB “tufts.”

<sup>19</sup> **tn** The usual word for “anointed (one),” מָשִׁיחַ (*mashiakh*), is not used here but rather בְּנֵי־יְהוָה (*h<sup>o</sup> hayyishar*), literally, “sons of fresh oil.” This is to maintain consistency with the imagery of olive trees. In the immediate context these two olive trees should be identified with Joshua and Zerubbabel, the priest and the governor. Only the high priest and king were anointed for office in the OT and these two were respectively the descendants of Aaron and David.

*Vision Six: The Flying Scroll*

**5:1** Then I turned to look, and there was a flying scroll! **5:2** Someone asked me, “What do you see?” I replied, “I see a flying scroll thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide.”<sup>1</sup> **5:3** The speaker went on to say, “This is a curse<sup>2</sup> traveling across the whole earth. For example, according to the curse whoever steals<sup>3</sup> will be removed from the community; or on the other hand (according to the curse) whoever swears falsely will suffer the same fate.” **5:4** “I will send it out,” says the LORD who rules over all, “and it will enter the house of the thief and of the person who swears falsely in my name. It will land in the middle of his house and destroy both timber and stones.”

*Vision Seven: The Ephah*

**5:5** After this the angelic messenger<sup>4</sup> who had been speaking to me went out and said, “Look, see what is leaving.” **5:6** I asked, “What is it?” And he replied, “It is a basket for measuring grain<sup>5</sup> that is moving away from here.” Moreover, he said, “This is their ‘eye’<sup>6</sup> throughout all the earth.” **5:7** Then a round lead cover was raised up, revealing a woman sitting inside the basket. **5:8** He then said, “This woman represents wickedness,” and he pushed her down into the basket and placed the lead cover on top. **5:9** Then I looked again and saw two women<sup>7</sup> going forth with the wind in their wings (they had wings like those of a stork) and they lifted up the basket between the earth and the sky. **5:10** I asked the messenger who was speaking to me, “Where are they taking the basket?” **5:11** He

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb “twenty cubits...ten cubits” (so NAB, NRSV). These dimensions (“thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide”) can hardly be referring to the scroll when unrolled since that would be all out of proportion to the normal ratio, in which the scroll would be 10 to 15 times as long as it was wide. More likely, the scroll is 15 feet thick when rolled, a hyperbole expressing the enormous amount and the profound significance of the information it contains.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** The Hebrew word translated “curse” (אָלָה, *alah*) alludes to the covenant sanctions that attend the violation of God’s covenant with Israel (cf. Deut 29:12, 14, 20-21).

<sup>3</sup> **sn** Stealing and swearing falsely (mentioned later in this verse) are sins against mankind and God respectively and are thus violations of the two major parts of the Ten Commandments. These two stipulations (commandments 8 and 3) represent the whole law.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** See the note on the expression “angelic messenger” in 1:9.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Heb “[This is] the ephah.” An ephah was a liquid or solid measure of about a bushel (five gallons or just under twenty liters). By metonymy it refers here to a measuring container (probably a basket) of that quantity.

<sup>6</sup> **tc** The LXX and Syriac read עֵינָם (*avonam*, “their iniquity,” so NRSV; NIV similar) for the MT עֵינָם (*enam*, “their eye”), a reading that is consistent with the identification of the woman in v. 8 as wickedness, but one that is unnecessary. In 4:10 the “eye” represented divine omniscience and power; here it represents the demonic counterfeit.

<sup>7</sup> **sn** Here *two women* appear as the agents of the LORD because the whole scene is feminine in nature. The Hebrew word for “wickedness” in v. 8 (רָעָה) is grammatically feminine, so feminine imagery is appropriate throughout.

replied, “To build a temple<sup>8</sup> for her in the land of Babylonia.<sup>9</sup> When it is finished, she will be placed there in her own residence.”

*Vision Eight: The Chariots*

**6:1** Once more I looked, and this time I saw four chariots emerging from between two mountains of bronze.<sup>10</sup> **6:2** Harnessed to the first chariot were red horses, to the second black horses, **6:3** to the third white horses, and to the fourth spotted horses, all of them strong.<sup>11</sup> **6:4** Then I asked the angelic messenger<sup>12</sup> who was speaking with me, “What are these, sir?” **6:5** The messenger replied, “These are the four spirits<sup>13</sup> of heaven that have been presenting themselves before the Lord of all the earth. **6:6** The chariot with the black horses is going to the north country and the white ones are going after them, but the spotted ones are going to the south country. **6:7** All these strong ones<sup>14</sup> are scattering; they have sought permission to go and walk about over the earth.” The Lord had said, “Go! Walk about over the earth!” So they are doing so. **6:8** Then he cried out to me, “Look! The ones going to the northland have brought me<sup>15</sup> peace about the northland.”<sup>16</sup>

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Heb “house” (so NIV, NRSV, CEV).

<sup>9</sup> **sn** The *land of Babylonia* (Heb “the land of Shinar”) is another name for Sumer and Akkad, where Babylon was located (Gen 10:10). Babylon throughout the Bible symbolizes the focus of anti-God sentiment and activity (Gen 11:4; 14:1; Isa 13-14; 47:1-3; Jer 50-51; Rev 14:8; 17:1, 5, 18; 18:21).

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Heb “two mountains, and the mountains [were] mountains of bronze.” This has been simplified in the translation for stylistic reasons.

**sn** *Bronze*, a hard, almost impenetrable metal, is an apt figure to speak of the obstacles standing in the way of the accomplishment of God’s purposes for the postexilic Jewish community (cf. 4:7). The cleft between the two from which the chariots emerge might be related to the eschatological triumph of the LORD who will return to the Mount of Olives and divide it into two mountains, one on the north and the other on the south (cf. Zech 14:1-8; Ezek 47:1-12).

<sup>11</sup> **tc** For the MT reading אַמְּוִטִּים (*amutsim*, “strong”) Aquila and Syriac presuppose אַדְּמִיִּים (*adumim*, “red”), thus giving the red horse an assignment and eliminating the problem of a fifth, “spotted” horse. The fourth would be a mottled red horse according to this view. There is, however, no manuscript support for this interpretation.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** See the note on the expression “angelic messenger” in 1:9.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term translated “spirit” here may also be translated “wind” or “breath” depending on the context (cf. ASV, NRSV, CEV “the four winds of heaven”; NAB similar).

<sup>14</sup> **tn** The present translation takes אַמְּוִטִּים (*amutsim*, “strong”) to be a descriptive of all the horses – white, black, red, and spotted (cf. NAB, NIV, NLT).

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Heb “my spirit.” The subject appears to be the LORD who exclaims here that the horsemen have accomplished their task of bringing peace.

<sup>16</sup> **sn** The immediate referent of *peace about the northland* is to the peace brought by Persia’s conquest of Babylonia, a peace that allowed the restoration of the Jewish people (cf. 2 Chr 36:22-23; Isa 44:28; 45:1-2). However, there is also an eschatological dimension, referring to a time when there will be perfect and universal peace.

### A Concluding Oracle

**6:9** The word of the LORD came to me as follows: **6:10** “Choose some people<sup>1</sup> from among the exiles, namely, Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, all of whom have come from Babylon, and when you have done so go to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah.<sup>2</sup> **6:11** Then take some silver and gold to make a crown<sup>3</sup> and set it on the head of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest. **6:12** Then say to him, ‘The LORD who rules over all says, “Look – here is the man whose name is Branch,<sup>4</sup> who will sprout up from his place and build the temple of the LORD. **6:13** Indeed, he will build the temple of the LORD, and he will be clothed in splendor, sitting as king on his throne. Moreover, there will be a priest<sup>5</sup> with him on his throne and they will see eye to eye on everything. **6:14** The crown will then be turned over to Helem,<sup>6</sup> Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen<sup>7</sup> son of Zephaniah as a memorial in the temple of the LORD. **6:15** Then those who are far away<sup>8</sup> will come and build the temple of the LORD so that you may know that the LORD who rules over all has sent me to you. This will all come to pass if you completely obey the voice of the LORD your God.’”

### The Hypocrisy of False Fasting

**7:1** In King Darius’ fourth year, on the fourth

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The words “some people” are supplied in the translation. The Hebrew verb translated “choose” (alternatively “take” [NAB, NIV]; “collect” [NRSV, CEV]) has no direct object specified in the text. Some translations supply “silver and gold” (NIV, NRSV) or “an offering” (NASB).

<sup>2</sup> **sn** Except for Joshua (v. 11) none of these individuals is otherwise mentioned and therefore they cannot be further identified.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** *Heb* “crowns” (so KJV, ASV; also in v. 14). The Hebrew word for “crown” here is *עֲטֹרֶת* (*‘ateret*), a term never used in the OT for the priestly crown or mitre. Thus, the scene here describes the investing of the priest with royal authority.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** The epithet “Branch” (*צֶמַח*, *isemakh*) derives from the verb used here (*צָמַח*, *yitsmakh*, “will sprout up”) to describe the rise of the Messiah, already referred to in this manner in Zech 3:8 (cf. Isa 11:1; 53:2; Jer 33:15). In the immediate context this refers to Zerubbabel, but the ultimate referent is Jesus (cf. John 19:5).

<sup>5</sup> **sn** The *priest* here in the immediate context is Joshua but the fuller and more distant allusion is to the Messiah, a ruling priest. The notion of the ruler as a priest-king was already apparent in David and his successors (Pss 2:2, 6-8; 110:2, 4), and it finds mature expression in David’s greater Son, Jesus Christ, who will combine both offices in his kingship (Heb 5:1-10; 7:1-25).

<sup>6</sup> **tn** “Helem” is probably the same individual as “Heldai” in v. 10. Since the MT and the major ancient versions leave the apparent conflict unresolved it is probably best to view “Helem” as interchangeable with “Heldai” (cf. “Heled” in 1 Chr 11:30 with “Heleb” [2 Sam 23:29] and “Heldai” [1 Chr 27:15]). A number of modern English versions use “Heldai” here (e.g., NAB, NIV, NRSV, TEV, NLT).

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Since the “son of Zephaniah” in v. 10 is Josiah, it might be best here to understand “Hen” in its meaning “grace” (*חֵן*, *khen*); that is, “Hen” is a nickname for Josiah – “the gracious one.” A number of modern English translations use “Josiah” here (e.g., NCV, NRSV, NLT).

<sup>8</sup> **sn** *Those who are far away* is probably a reference to later groups of returning exiles under Ezra, Nehemiah, and others.

day of Kislev, the ninth month,<sup>9</sup> the word of the LORD came to Zechariah. **7:2** Now the people of Bethel<sup>10</sup> had sent Sharezer and Regem-Melech and their companions to seek the LORD’s favor **7:3** by asking both the priests of the temple<sup>11</sup> of the LORD who rules over all and the prophets, “Should we weep in the fifth month,<sup>12</sup> fasting as we have done over the years?” **7:4** The word of the LORD who rules over all then came to me, **7:5** “Speak to all the people and priests of the land as follows: ‘When you fasted and lamented in the fifth and seventh<sup>13</sup> months through all these seventy years, did you truly fast for me – for me, indeed? **7:6** And now when you eat and drink, are you not doing so for yourselves?’” **7:7** Should you not have obeyed the words that the LORD cried out through the former prophets when Jerusalem<sup>14</sup> was peacefully inhabited and her surrounding cities, the Negev, and the Shephelah<sup>15</sup> were also populated?

**7:8** Again the word of the LORD came to Zechariah: **7:9** “The LORD who rules over all said, ‘Exercise true judgment and show brotherhood and compassion to each other. **7:10** You must not oppress the widow, the orphan, the foreigner, or the poor, nor should anyone secretly plot evil against his fellow human being.’

**7:11** “But they refused to pay attention, turning away stubbornly and stopping their ears so they could not hear. **7:12** Indeed, they made their heart as hard as diamond,<sup>16</sup> so that they could not obey the Torah and the other words the LORD who rules over all had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore,

<sup>9</sup> **sn** The *fourth day of Kislev, the ninth month* would be December 7, 518 B.C., 22 months after the previous eight visions.

<sup>10</sup> **map** For location see Map4-G4; Map5-C1; Map6-E3; Map7-D1; Map8-G3.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* “house” (so NAB, NIV, NRSV).

<sup>12</sup> **sn** This lamentation marked the occasion of the destruction of Solomon’s temple on August 14, 586 B.C., almost exactly 70 years earlier (cf. 2 Kgs 25:8).

<sup>13</sup> **tn** The *seventh* month apparently refers to the anniversary of the assassination of Gedaliah, governor of Judah (Jer 40:13-14; 41:1), in approximately 581 B.C.

<sup>14</sup> **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

<sup>15</sup> **sn** The *Shephelah* is the geographical region between the Mediterranean coastal plain and the Judean hill country. The Hebrew term can be translated “lowlands” (cf. ASV), “foothills” (NAB, NASB, NLT), or “steppes.”

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term *שָׁמַיר* (*shamir*) means literally “hardness” and since it is said in Ezek 3:9 to be harder than flint, many scholars suggest that it refers to diamond. It is unlikely that diamond was known to ancient Israel, however, so probably a hard stone like emery or corundum is in view. The translation nevertheless uses “diamond” because in modern times it has become proverbial for its hardness. A number of English versions use “flint” here (e.g., NASB, NIV).

the LORD who rules over all had poured out great wrath.

**7:13** “‘It then came about that just as I<sup>1</sup> cried out, but they would not obey, so they will cry out, but I will not listen,’ the LORD who rules over all had said. **7:14** ‘Rather, I will sweep them away in a storm into all the nations they are not familiar with.’ Thus the land had become desolate because of them, with no one crossing through or returning, for they had made the fruitful<sup>2</sup> land a waste.”

*The Blessing of True Fasting*

**8:1** Then the word of the LORD who rules over all<sup>3</sup> came to me as follows: **8:2** “The LORD who rules over all says, ‘I am very much concerned for Zion; indeed, I am so concerned for her that my rage will fall on those who hurt her.’ **8:3** The LORD says, ‘I have returned to Zion and will live within Jerusalem.’<sup>4</sup> Now Jerusalem will be called “truthful city,” “mountain of the LORD who rules over all,” “holy mountain.”” **8:4** Moreover, the LORD who rules over all says, ‘Old men and women will once more live in the plazas of Jerusalem, each one leaning on a cane because of advanced age. **8:5** And the streets of the city will be full of boys and girls playing.’<sup>5</sup> **8:6** And,’ says the LORD who rules over all, ‘though such a thing may seem to be difficult in the opinion of the small community of those days, will it also appear difficult to me?’ asks the LORD who rules over all.

**8:7** “The LORD who rules over all asserts, ‘I am about to save my people from the lands of the east and the west. **8:8** And I will bring them to settle within Jerusalem. They will be my people, and I will be their God.’<sup>6</sup> in truth and righteousness.”

**8:9** “The LORD who rules over all also says, ‘Gather strength, you who are listening to these

words today from the mouths of the prophets who were there at the founding of the house of the LORD who rules over all,<sup>7</sup> so that the temple might be built. **8:10** Before that time there was no compensation for man or animal, nor was there any relief from adversity for those who came and went, because I had pitted everybody – each one – against everyone else. **8:11** But I will be different now to this remnant of my people from the way I was in those days,’ says the LORD who rules over all, **8:12** ‘for there will be a peaceful time of sowing, the vine will produce its fruit and the ground its yield, and the skies<sup>8</sup> will rain down dew. Then I will allow the remnant of my people to possess all these things. **8:13** And it will come about that just as you (both Judah and Israel) were a curse to the nations, so I will save you and you will be a blessing. Do not be afraid! Instead, be strong!’

**8:14** “For the LORD who rules over all says, ‘As I had planned to hurt<sup>9</sup> you when your fathers made me angry,’ says the LORD who rules over all, ‘and I was not sorry, **8:15** so, to the contrary, I have planned in these days to do good to Jerusalem and Judah – do not fear! **8:16** These are the things you must do: Speak the truth, each of you, to one another. Practice true and righteous judgment in your courts.’<sup>10</sup> **8:17** Do not plan evil in your hearts against one another. Do not favor a false oath – these are all things that I hate,’ says the LORD.”

**8:18** The word of the LORD who rules over all came to me as follows: **8:19** “The LORD who rules over all says, ‘The fast of the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth<sup>11</sup> months will become joyful and happy, pleasant feasts for the house of Judah, so love truth and peace.’ **8:20** The LORD who rules over all says, ‘It will someday come to pass that people – residents of many cities – will come. **8:21** The inhabitants of one will go to another and say, “Let’s go up at once to ask the

<sup>1</sup> **tn** *Heb* “he.” Since the third person pronoun refers to the LORD, it has been translated as a first person pronoun (“I”) to accommodate English style, which typically does not exhibit switches between persons of pronouns in the same immediate context as Hebrew does.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Or “desirable”; traditionally “pleasant” (so many English versions; cf. TEV “This good land”).

<sup>3</sup> **sn** LORD who rules over all. There is a remarkable concentration of this name of God in this section of Zechariah. Of 53 occurrences of יהוה צבאות (*yhwh ts’va’ot*) in the Hebrew text in the book, 18 are in this chapter. The reason is the sheer human impossibility of accomplishing what lies ahead – it must be done by the LORD who rules over all.

<sup>4</sup> **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

<sup>5</sup> **sn** The references to longevity and to children living and playing in peace are eschatological in tone. Elsewhere the millennial kingdom is characterized in a similar manner (cf. Isa 65:20; Jer 31:12-13).

<sup>6</sup> **sn** The affirmation *They will be my people, and I will be their God* speaks of covenant renewal, a restoration of the unbroken fellowship the LORD desired to have with his people but which their disloyalty had shattered. In the eschaton God and Israel will be in covenant union once again (cf. Jer 31:33).

<sup>7</sup> **sn** These prophets who were there at the founding of the house of the LORD who rules over all included at least Haggai and Zechariah, and perhaps others. The founding referred to here is not the initial laying of the temple’s foundations in 536 B.C. (Ezra 3:8) but the resumption of work two years before the time of the present narrative (i.e., in 520 B.C.), as vv. 10-12 make clear.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Or “the heavens” (so KJV, NAB, NIV). The Hebrew term שָׁמַיִם (*shamayim*) may be translated “heavens” or “skies” depending on the context.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** The verb זָמַם (*zamam*) usually means “to plot to do evil,” but with a divine subject (as here), and in light of v. 15 where it means to plan good, the meaning here has to be the implementation of discipline (cf. NCV, CEV “punish”). God may bring hurt but its purpose is redemptive and/or pedagogical.

<sup>10</sup> **sn** For a similar reference to true and righteous judgment see Mic 6:8.

<sup>11</sup> **sn** The fasts of the fifth and seventh months, mentioned previously (7:5), are listed here along with the observances of the fourth and tenth months. The latter commemorated the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians on January 15, 588 B.C. (2 Kgs 25:1), and the former the breach of the city walls on or about July 18, 586 B.C. (Jer 39:2-5).

favor of the LORD, to seek the LORD who rules over all. Indeed, I'll go with you.” **8:22** Many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD who rules over all and to ask his favor. **8:23** The LORD who rules over all says, “In those days ten people from all languages and nations will grasp hold of – indeed, grab – the robe of one Jew and say, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.””<sup>1</sup>

### *The Coming of the True King*

**9:1** An oracle of the word of the LORD concerning the land of Hadrach,<sup>2</sup> with its focus on Damascus.<sup>3</sup>

The eyes of all humanity,<sup>4</sup> especially of the tribes of Israel, are toward the LORD. **9:2** as are those of Hamath also, which adjoins Damascus, and Tyre<sup>5</sup> and Sidon,<sup>6</sup> though they consider themselves to be very wise. **9:3** Tyre built herself a fortification and piled up silver like dust and gold like the mud of the streets! **9:4** Nevertheless the LORD will evict her and shove her fortifications<sup>7</sup> into the sea – she will be consumed by fire. **9:5** Ashkelon will see and be afraid; Gaza will be in great anguish, as will Ekron, for her hope will have been dried up.<sup>8</sup> Gaza will lose her king, and Ashkelon will no longer be inhabited. **9:6** A mongrel people will live in Ashdod, for I

will greatly humiliate the Philistines. **9:7** I will take away their abominable religious practices,<sup>9</sup> then those who survive will become a community of believers in our God,<sup>10</sup> like a clan in Judah, and Ekron will be like the Jebusites. **9:8** Then I will surround my temple<sup>11</sup> to protect it like a guard<sup>12</sup> from anyone crossing back and forth; so no one will cross over against them anymore as an oppressor, for now I myself have seen it.

**9:9** Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! Look! Your king is coming to you: he is legitimate<sup>13</sup> and victorious,<sup>14</sup> humble and riding on a donkey<sup>15</sup> – on a young donkey, the foal of a female donkey.

**9:10** I will remove<sup>16</sup> the chariot from Ephraim and the warhorse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be removed. Then he will announce peace to the nations. His dominion will be from sea to sea and from the Euphrates River<sup>17</sup> to the ends of the earth.

<sup>1</sup> **sn** This scene of universal and overwhelming attraction of the nations to Israel's God finds initial fulfillment in the establishment of the church (Acts 2:5-11) but ultimate completion in the messianic age (Isa 45:14, 24; 60:14; Zech 14:16-21).

<sup>2</sup> **sn** The land of Hadrach was a northern region stretching from Aleppo in the north to Damascus in the south (cf. NLT “Aram”).

<sup>3</sup> **tn** *Heb* “Damascus its resting place.” The 3rd person masculine singular suffix on “resting place” (בְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ, *m<sup>e</sup>nukhato*), however, precludes “land” or even “Hadrach,” both of which are feminine, from being the antecedent. Most likely “word” (masculine) is the antecedent, i.e., the “word of the LORD” is finding its resting place, that is, its focus in or on Damascus.

<sup>4</sup> **tc** Though without manuscript and version support, many scholars suggest emendation here to clarify what, to them, is an unintelligible reading. Thus some propose עֵינֵי אֲרָם (*ade aram*, “cities of Aram”); cf. NAB, NRSV for עֵינֵי אֲדָם (*en adam*, “eye of man”) or אֲדָמָה (*adamah*, “ground”) for אֲדָם (*adam*, “man”), “(surface of) the earth.” It seems best, however, to see “eye” as collective and to understand the passage as saying that the attention of the whole earth will be upon the LORD (cf. NIV, NLT).

<sup>5</sup> **map** For location see Map1-A2; Map2-G2; Map4-A1; JP3-F3; JP4-F3.

<sup>6</sup> **map** For location see Map1-A1; JP3-F3; JP4-F3.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** The Hebrew word כְּהַל (*khayil*, “strength, wealth”) can, with certain suffixes, look exactly like כְּהַל (*khel*, “fortress, rampart”). The chiasmic pattern here suggests that not Tyre's riches but her defenses will be cast into the sea. Thus the present translation renders the term “fortifications” (so also NLT) rather than “wealth” (NASB, NRSV, TEV) or “power” (NAB, NIV).

<sup>8</sup> **tn** The present translation presupposes a Hiphil perfect of יָבֵשׁ (*yavesh*, “be dry”; cf. NRSV “are withered”) rather than the usually accepted Hiphil of בֹּשַׁח (*bosh*, “be ashamed”; cf. KJV, ASV), a sense that is less suitable with the removal of hope.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** *Heb* “and I will take away their blood from their mouth and their abominations from between their teeth.” These expressions refer to some type of abominable religious practices, perhaps eating meat with the blood still in it (less likely NCV “drinking blood”) or eating unclean or forbidden foods.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** *Heb* “and they will be a remnant for our God”; cf. NIV “will belong to our God”; NLT “will worship our God.”

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* “house” (so NAB, NIV, NRSV).

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Though a *hapax legomenon*, the מִצְבֵּה (*mitsavah*) of the MT (from מָצַב, *natsav*, “take a stand”) is preferable to the suggestion מִצְבֵּה אֲרָם (*mitsavah aram*, “pillar”) or even מִצְבֵּה אֲרָם (*mitsava aram*, “from” or “against the army”). The context favors the idea of the LORD as a protector.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term צְדִיק (*tsadiq*) ordinarily translated “righteous,” frequently occurs, as here, with the idea of conforming to a standard or meeting certain criteria. The Messianic king riding into Jerusalem is fully qualified to take the Davidic throne (cf. 1 Sam 23:3; Isa 9:5-6; 11:4; 16:5; Jer 22:1-5; 23:5-6).

<sup>14</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term נוֹשָׁע (*nosha*) a Niphal participle of יָשַׁע (*yasha*, “to save”) could mean “one delivered” or, if viewed as active, “one bringing salvation” (similar KJV, NIV, NKJV). It is preferable to take the normal passive use of the Niphal and understand that the king, having been delivered, is as a result “victorious” (so also NRSV, TEV, NLT).

<sup>15</sup> **sn** The NT understands this verse to be a prophecy of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and properly so (cf. Matt 21:5; John 12:15), but reference to the universal rule of the king in v. 10 reveals that this is a “split prophecy,” that is, it has a two-stage fulfillment. Verse 9 was fulfilled in Jesus' earthly ministry but v. 10 awaits a millennial consummation (cf. Rev 19:11-16).

<sup>16</sup> **tc** The MT first person pronoun (“I”), which seems to shift the subject too abruptly, becomes 3rd person masculine singular (“he”) in the LXX (הִיכְרִית, *hikhrit*, presupposed for הִיכְרִי, *hikhriti*). However, the LORD is the subject of v. 8, which speaks of his protection of Jerusalem, so it is not surprising that he is the subject in v. 10 as well.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** *Heb* “cut off” (so NASB, NRSV; also later in this verse); NAB “banish”; NIV, CEV “take away.”

<sup>18</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the river.” The Hebrew expression typically refers to the Euphrates, so the referent has been specified in the translation for clarity.



**9:11** Moreover, as for you, because of our covenant relationship secured with blood, I will release your prisoners from the waterless pit. **9:12** Return to the stronghold, you prisoners, with hope; today I declare that I will return double what was taken from you. **9:13** I will bend Judah as my bow; I will load the bow with Ephraim, my arrow!<sup>1</sup> I will stir up your sons, Zion, against yours, Greece, and I will make you, Zion,<sup>2</sup> like a warrior's sword.

**9:14** Then the LORD will appear above them, and his arrow will shoot forth like lightning; the Lord GOD will blow the trumpet and will sally forth on the southern storm winds. **9:15** The LORD who rules over all will guard them, and they will prevail and overcome with sling stones. Then they will drink, and will become noisy like drunkards,<sup>3</sup> full like the sacrificial basin or like the corners of the altar.<sup>4</sup> **9:16** On that day the LORD their God will deliver them as the flock of his people, for they are the precious stones of a crown sparkling over his land. **9:17** How precious and fair!<sup>5</sup> Grain will make the young men flourish and new wine the young women.

### *The Restoration of the True People*

**10:1** Ask the LORD for rain in the season of the late spring rains<sup>6</sup> – the LORD who causes thunderstorms – and he will give everyone showers of rain and green growth in the field. **10:2** For the household gods<sup>7</sup> have spoken wickedness, the soothsayers have seen a lie, and as for the dreamers, they have disclosed emptiness

and give comfort in vain. Therefore the people set out like sheep and become scattered because they have no shepherd.<sup>8</sup> **10:3** I am enraged at the shepherds and will punish the lead-goats.

For the LORD who rules over all has brought blessing to his flock, the house of Judah, and will transform them into his majestic warhorse. **10:4** From him will come the cornerstone,<sup>9</sup> the wall peg,<sup>10</sup> the battle bow, and every ruler.<sup>11</sup> **10:5** And they will be like warriors trampling the mud of the streets in battle. They will fight, for the LORD will be with them, and will defeat the enemy cavalry.<sup>12</sup>

**10:6** “I (says the LORD) will strengthen the kingdom<sup>13</sup> of Judah and deliver the people of Joseph<sup>14</sup> and will bring them back<sup>15</sup> because of my compassion for them. They will be as though I had never rejected them, for I am the LORD their God and therefore I will hear them. **10:7** The Ephraimites will be like warriors and will rejoice as if they had drunk wine. Their children will see it and rejoice; they will celebrate in the things of the LORD. **10:8** I will signal for them and gather them, for I have already redeemed them; then they will become as numerous as they were before. **10:9** Though I scatter<sup>16</sup> them among the nations, they will remember in far-off places – they and their children will sprout forth and return. **10:10** I will bring them back from Egypt and gather them from Assyria.<sup>17</sup> I will

<sup>8</sup> **sn** *Shepherd* is a common OT metaphor for the king (see esp. Jer 2:8; 3:15; 10:21; 23:1-2; 50:6; Ezek 34).

<sup>9</sup> **sn** On the NT use of the image of the *cornerstone*, see Luke 20:17; Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:6.

<sup>10</sup> **sn** The metaphor of the wall peg (Heb. יָתֵד, *yated*), together with the others in this list, describes the remarkable change that will take place at the inauguration of God's eschatological kingdom. Israel, formerly sheep-like, will be turned into a mighty warhorse. The peg refers to a wall hook (although frequently translated “tent peg,” but cf. ASV “nail”; TWOT 1:419) from which tools and weapons were suspended, but figuratively also to the promise of God upon which all of Israel's hopes were hung (cf. Isa 22:15-25; Ezra 9:8).

<sup>11</sup> **tn** This is not the usual word to describe a king of Israel or Judah (such as מֶלֶךְ, *melekh*, or נָשִׂיא, *nasi*), but נֹגֵס, *noges*, “dictator” (cf. KJV “oppressor”). The author is asserting by this choice of wording that in the messianic age God's rule will be by force.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* “and the riders on horses will be put to shame,” figurative for the defeat of mounted troops. The word “enemy” in the translation is supplied from context.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the house.”

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Or “the kingdom of Israel”; *Heb* “the house of Joseph.”

**sn** *Joseph* is mentioned here instead of the usual Israel (but see 2 Sam 19:20; Ps 78:67; 80:1; 81:5; Ezek 37:16; Amos 5:6, 15; 6:6) because of the exodus motif that follows in vv. 8-11.

<sup>15</sup> **tc** The anomalous MT reading וְהוֹשִׁיעֵם (v<sup>h</sup>*khosh*<sup>h</sup>*votim*) should probably be הִשִּׁיעֵם בְּיַד (v<sup>h</sup>*hashi votim*), the Hiphil perfect consecutive of שׁוּב (shuv), “return” (cf. Jer 12:15).

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Or “sow” (so KJV, ASV). The imagery is taken from the sowing of seed by hand.

<sup>17</sup> **sn** *I will bring them back from Egypt...from Assyria*. The gathering of God's people to their land in eschatological times will be like a reenactment of the exodus, but this time they will come from all over the world (cf. Isa 40:3-5; 43:1-7, 14-21; 48:20-22; 51:9-11).

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The words “my arrow” are not in the Hebrew text, but are supplied in the translation to clarify the imagery for the modern reader (cf. NRSV, NLT).

<sup>2</sup> **tn** The word “Zion” is not repeated here in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation to indicate that the statement refers to Zion and not to Greece.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** *Heb* “they will drink and roar as with wine”; the LXX (followed here by NAB, NRSV) reads “they will drink blood like wine” (referring to a figurative “drinking” of the blood of their enemies).

<sup>4</sup> **sn** The whole setting is eschatological as the intensely figurative language shows. The message is that the LORD will assume his triumphant reign over all the earth and will use his own redeemed and renewed people Israel to accomplish that work. The imagery of v. 15 is the eating and drinking of the flesh and blood of God's enemies, that is, Israel's complete mastery of them. Like those who drink too much wine, the LORD's warriors will be satiated with the blood of their foes and will exult as though drunk.

<sup>5</sup> **sn** This expostulation best fits the whole preceding description of God's eschatological work on behalf of his people. His goodness is especially evident in his nurturing of the young men and women of his kingdom.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the latter rain.” This expression refers to the last concentration of heavy rainfall in the spring of the year in Palestine, about March or April. Metaphorically and eschatologically (as here) the “latter rain” speaks of God's outpouring of blessing in the end times (cf. Hos 6:3; Joel 2:21-25).

<sup>7</sup> **tn** The Hebrew word תְּרָפִים (*terafim*), “teraphim”) refers to small images used as means of divination and in other occult practices (cf. Gen 31:19, 34-35; 1 Sam 19:13, 16; Hos 3:4). A number of English versions transliterate the Hebrew term (cf. ASV, NAB, NASB, NRSV) or simply use the generic term “idols” (so KJV, NIV, TEV).

bring them to the lands of Gilead and Lebanon, for there will not be enough room for them in their own land. **10:11** The LORD<sup>4</sup> will cross the sea of storms and will calm its turbulence. The depths of the Nile will dry up, the pride of Assyria will be humbled, and the domination<sup>2</sup> of Egypt will be no more. **10:12** Thus I will strengthen them by my power,<sup>3</sup> and they will walk about<sup>4</sup> in my name,” says the LORD.

*The History and Future of Judah's Wicked Kings*

**11:1** Open your gates, Lebanon,  
so that the fire may consume your  
cedars.<sup>5</sup>

**11:2** Howl, fir tree,  
because the cedar has fallen;  
the majestic trees have been destroyed.  
Howl, oaks of Bashan,  
because the impenetrable forest has  
fallen.

**11:3** Listen to the howling of shepherds,  
because their magnificence has been de-  
stroyed.

Listen to the roaring of young lions,  
because the thickets of the Jordan have  
been devastated.

**11:4** The LORD my God says this: “Shepherd the flock set aside for slaughter. **11:5** Those who buy them<sup>6</sup> slaughter them and are not held guilty; those who sell them say, ‘Blessed be the LORD, for I am rich.’ Their own shepherds have no compassion for them. **11:6** Indeed, I will no longer have compassion on the people of the land,” says the LORD, “but instead I will turn every last person over to his neighbor and his king. They will devastate the land, and I will not deliver it from them.”

<sup>1</sup> **tn** *Heb* “he,” in which case the referent is the LORD. This reading is followed by KJV, ASV, NAB (which renders it as first person), and NASB. The LXX reads “they,” referring to the Israelites themselves, a reading followed by many modern English versions (e.g., NIV, NRSV, TEV, NLT).

<sup>2</sup> **tn** *Heb* “scepter,” referring by metonymy to the dominating rule of Egypt (cf. NLT).

<sup>3</sup> **tc** *Heb* “I will strengthen them in the LORD.” Because of the perceived problem of the LORD saying he will strengthen the people “in the LORD,” both *BHK* and *BHS* suggest emending גְּבַרְתִּים (*gibbartim*, “I will strengthen them”) to גְּבַרְתֵּם (*gevuratam*, “their strength”). This is unnecessary, however, for the LORD frequently refers to himself in that manner (see Zech 2:11).

<sup>4</sup> **tc** The LXX and Syriac presuppose יִתְהַלְלוּ (*yithallalu*, “they will glory”) for יִתְהַלְכוּ (*yithall<sup>c</sup>khu*, “they will walk about”). Since walking about is a common idiom in Zechariah (cf. 1:10, 11; 6:7 [3x]) to speak of dominion, and dominion is a major theme of the present passage, there is no reason to reject the MT reading, which is followed by most modern English versions.

<sup>5</sup> **sn** In this poetic section, plants and animals provide the imagery for rulers, especially evil ones (cf. respectively Isa 10:33-34; Ezek 31:8; Amos 2:9; Nah 2:12).

<sup>6</sup> **sn** The expression *those who buy them* appears to be a reference to the foreign nations to whom Israel's own kings “sold” their subjects. Far from being good shepherds, then, they were evil and profiteering. The whole section (vv. 4-14) refers to the past when the LORD, the Good Shepherd, had in vain tried to lead his people to salvation and life.

**11:7** So I<sup>7</sup> began to shepherd the flock destined for slaughter, the most afflicted<sup>8</sup> of all the flock. Then I took two staffs,<sup>9</sup> calling one “Pleasantness”<sup>10</sup> and the other “Binders,”<sup>11</sup> and I tended the flock. **11:8** Next I eradicated the three shepherds in one month,<sup>12</sup> for I ran out of patience with them and, indeed, they detested me as well. **11:9** I then said, “I will not shepherd you. What is to die, let it die, and what is to be eradicated, let it be eradicated. As for those who survive, let them eat each other's flesh!”

**11:10** Then I took my staff “Pleasantness” and cut it in two to annul my covenant that I had made with all the people. **11:11** So it was annulled that very day, and then the most afflicted of the flock who kept faith with me knew that that was the word of the LORD.

**11:12** Then I<sup>13</sup> said to them, “If it seems good to you, pay me my wages, but if not, forget it.” So they weighed out my payment – thirty pieces of silver.<sup>14</sup> **11:13** The LORD then said to me,

<sup>7</sup> **sn** The first person pronoun refers to Zechariah himself who, however, is a “stand-in” for the LORD as the actions of vv. 8-14 make clear. The prophet, like others before him, probably performed actions dramatizing the account of God's past dealings with Israel and Judah (cf. Hos 1-3; Isa 20:2-4; Jer 19:1-15; 27:2-11; Ezek 4:1-3).

<sup>8</sup> **tc** For the MT reading לְבָנִי (*lakhen 'aniyyey*, “therefore the [most] afflicted of”) the LXX presupposes לְבָנֵי הַמְּכָרִים (“to the merchants of”). The line would then read “So I began to shepherd the flock destined for slaughter for the sheep merchants” (cf. NAB). This helps to explain the difficult לְבָנִי (*lakhen*) here but otherwise has no attestation or justification, so the MT is followed by most modern English versions.

<sup>9</sup> **sn** The two staffs represent the two kingdoms, Israel and Judah. For other examples of staffs representing tribes or nations see Num 17:1-11; Ezek 37:15-23.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term נֵיב (*no'am*) is frequently translated “Favor” (so NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT); cf. KJV “Beauty”; CEV “Mercy.”

**sn** The name of the first staff, *pleasantness*, refers to the rest and peace of the covenant between the LORD and his people (cf. v. 10).

<sup>11</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term חֲבָלִים (*khovlim*) is often translated “Union” (so NASB, NIV, NLT); cf. KJV, ASV “Bands”; NAB “Bonds”; NRSV, TEV, CEV “Unity”).

**sn** The name of the second staff, *Binders*, refers to the relationship between Israel and Judah (cf. v. 14).

<sup>12</sup> **sn** Zechariah is only dramatizing what God had done historically (see the note on the word “cedars” in 11:1). The “one month” probably means just any short period of time in which three kings ruled in succession. Likely candidates are Elah, Zimri, Tibni (1 Kgs 16:8-20); Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem (2 Kgs 15:8-16); or Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah (2 Kgs 24:1-25:7).

<sup>13</sup> **sn** The speaker (Zechariah) represents the LORD, who here is asking what his service as faithful shepherd has been worth in the opinion of his people Israel.

<sup>14</sup> **sn** If taken at face value, *thirty pieces* (shekels) of silver was worth about two and a half years' wages for a common laborer. The Code of Hammurabi prescribes a monthly wage for a laborer of one shekel. If this were the case in Israel, 30 shekels would be the wages for 2 1/2 years (R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 76, 204-5). For other examples of “thirty shekels” as a conventional payment, see K. Luke, “The Thirty Pieces of Silver (Zech. 11:12f.),” *Ind TS* 19 (1982): 26-30. Luke, on the basis of Sumerian analogues, suggests that “thirty” came to be a term meaning anything of little or no value (p. 30). In this he follows Erica Reiner, “Thirty Pieces of Silver,” in *Essays in Memory of E. A. Speiser*, AOS 53, ed. William W. Hallo (New Haven, Conn.: American Oriental Society, 1968),

“Throw to the potter that exorbitant sum<sup>1</sup> at which they valued me!” So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter<sup>2</sup> at the temple<sup>3</sup> of the LORD. **11:14** Then I cut the second staff “Binders” in two in order to annul the covenant of brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

**11:15** Again the LORD said to me, “Take up once more the equipment of a foolish shepherd.<sup>4</sup> **11:16** Indeed, I am about to raise up a shepherd in the land who will not take heed to the sheep headed to slaughter, will not seek the scattered, and will not heal the injured.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, he will not nourish the one that is healthy but instead will eat the meat of the fat sheep<sup>6</sup> and tear off their hooves.

**11:17** Woe to the worthless shepherd who abandons the flock!  
May a sword fall on his arm and his right eye!  
May his arm wither completely away,  
and his right eye become completely blind!”

### *The Repentance of Judah*

**12:1** The revelation of the word of the LORD concerning Israel: The LORD – he who stretches out the heavens and lays the foundations of the earth, who forms the human spirit within a person<sup>7</sup> – says, **12:2** “I am about to make Jerusalem<sup>8</sup>

a cup that brings dizziness<sup>9</sup> to all the surrounding nations; indeed, Judah will also be included when Jerusalem is besieged. **12:3** Moreover, on that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy burden<sup>10</sup> for all the nations, and all who try to carry it will be seriously injured;<sup>11</sup> yet all the peoples of the earth will be assembled against it. **12:4** On that day,” says the LORD, “I will strike every horse with confusion and its rider with madness. I will pay close attention to the house of Judah, but will strike all the horses<sup>12</sup> of the nations<sup>13</sup> with blindness. **12:5** Then the leaders of Judah will say to themselves, ‘The inhabitants of Jerusalem are a means of strength to us through their God, the LORD who rules over all.’ **12:6** On that day<sup>14</sup> I will make the leaders of Judah like an igniter<sup>15</sup> among sticks and a burning torch among sheaves, and they will burn up all the surrounding nations right and left. Then the people of Jerusalem will settle once more in their place, the city of Jerusalem. **12:7** The LORD also will deliver the homes<sup>16</sup> of Judah first, so that the splendor of the kingship<sup>17</sup> of David and of the people of Jerusalem may not exceed that of Judah. **12:8** On that day the LORD himself will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the weakest among them will be like mighty David, and the dynasty of David will be like God, like the angel of the LORD before them.<sup>18</sup> **12:9** So on that day I will set out to destroy all the nations<sup>19</sup> that come against Jerusalem.”

**12:10** “I will pour out on the kingship<sup>20</sup> of David and the population of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication so that they will look to me,<sup>21</sup> the one they have pierced. They will

186-90. Though the 30 shekels elsewhere in the OT may well be taken literally, the context of Zech. 11:12 may indeed support Reiner and Luke in seeing it as a pittance here, not worth considering (cf. Exod 21:32; Lev 27:4; Matt 26:15).

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb “splendor of splendor” (אָדֶר הַיָּקָר, *’eder hayyqar*). This expression sarcastically draws attention to the incredibly low value placed upon the LORD’s redemptive grace by his very own people.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** The Syriac presupposes הַאֲצִיזָה (*ha’otsar*, “treasury”) for the MT הַיָּצוֹסֶר (*hayyotser*, “potter”) perhaps because of the lack of evidence for a potter’s shop in the area of the temple. The Syriac reading is followed by NAB, NRSV, TEV. Matthew seems to favor this when he speaks of Judas having thrown the thirty shekels for which he betrayed Jesus into the temple treasury (27:5-6). However, careful reading of the whole gospel pericope makes it clear that the money actually was used to purchase a “potter’s field,” hence Zechariah’s reference to a potter. The MT reading is followed by most other English versions.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Heb “house” (so NASB, NIV, NRSV).

<sup>4</sup> **sn** The grammar (e.g., the incipient participle מַקְיִים, *maqim*, “about to raise up,” v. 16) and overall sense of vv. 15-17 give the incident a future orientation. Zechariah once more is role-playing but this time he is a “foolish” shepherd, i.e., one who does not know God and who is opposed to him (cf. Prov 1:7; 15:5; 20:3; 27:22). The individual who best represents this eschatological enemy of God and his people is the Antichrist (cf. Matt 24:5, 24; 2 Thess 2:3-4; 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7).

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Heb “the broken” (so KJV, NASB; NRSV “the maimed”).

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb “the fat [ones].” Cf. ASV “the fat sheep”; NIV “the choice sheep.”

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Heb “who forms the spirit of man within him” (so NIV).

<sup>8</sup> **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

<sup>9</sup> **sn** The image of a cup that brings dizziness is that of drunkenness. The LORD will force the nations to drink of his judgment and in doing so they will become so intoxicated by his wrath that they will stumble and become irrational.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Heb “heavy stone” (so NRSV, TEV, NLT; KJV “burden-some stone”; NIV “an immovable rock.”)

<sup>11</sup> **sn** In Israel’s and Judah’s past they had been uprooted by various conquerors such as the Assyrians and the Babylonians. In the eschaton, however, they will be so “heavy” with God’s glory and so rooted in his promises that no nation will be able to move them.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Heb “every horse.”

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Or “peoples” (so NAB, NRSV).

<sup>14</sup> **sn** *On that day* (referring to the day of the LORD) the Davidic monarchy will be restored and the LORD’s people will recognize once more the legitimacy and divine sanction of David’s dynasty. But there will also be a democratizing that will not give Jerusalem and its rulers undue priority over the people of the countryside (v. 7).

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Heb “a firepot” (so NASB, NIV); NRSV “a blazing pot”; NLT “a brazier.”

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Heb “the tents” (so NAB, NRSV); NIV “the dwellings.”

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb “house,” referring here to the dynastic line. Cf. NLT “the royal line”; CEV “the kingdom.” The same expression is translated “dynasty” in the following verse.

<sup>18</sup> **sn** The statement *the dynasty of David will be like God* is hyperbole to show the remarkable enhancements that will accompany the inauguration of the millennial age.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Or “peoples.”

<sup>20</sup> **tn** Or “dynasty”; Heb “house.”

<sup>21</sup> **tc** Because of the difficulty of the concept of the mortal piercing of God, the subject of this clause, and the shift of pronoun from “me” to “him” in the next, many mss read אֶלֶי אֲשֶׁר אֶלֶי אֲשֶׁר (“ale et’ asher,” “to the one whom,” a reading followed by NAB, NRSV) rather than the MT’s אֶלֶי אֲשֶׁר אֶלֶי (“ela et’ asher,

lament for him as one laments for an only son, and there will be a bitter cry for him like the bitter cry for a firstborn.<sup>1</sup> **12:11** On that day the lamentation in Jerusalem will be as great as the lamentation at Hadad-Rimmon<sup>2</sup> in the plain of Megiddo.<sup>3</sup> **12:12** The land will mourn, clan by clan – the clan of the royal household of David by itself and their wives by themselves; the clan of the family of Nathan<sup>4</sup> by itself and their wives by themselves; **12:13** the clan of the descendants of Levi by itself and their wives by themselves; and the clan of the Shimeites<sup>5</sup> by itself and their wives by themselves – **12:14** all the clans that remain, each separately with their wives.”

### *The Refinement of Judah*

**13:1** “In that day there will be a fountain opened up for the dynasty<sup>6</sup> of David and the people of Jerusalem<sup>7</sup> to cleanse them from sin and impurity.<sup>8</sup> **13:2** And also on that day,” says

“to me whom”). The reasons for such alternatives, however, are clear – they are motivated by scribes who found such statements theologically objectionable – and they should be rejected in favor of the more difficult reading (*lectio difficilior*) of the MT.

**tn** Or “on me.”

**1** **tn** The Hebrew term בכור (*b<sup>o</sup>chor*, “firstborn”), translated usually in the LXX by πρωτότοκος (*prōtotokos*), has unmistakable messianic overtones as the use of the Greek term in the NT to describe Jesus makes clear (cf. Col 1:15, 18). Thus, the idea of God being pierced sets the stage for the fatal wounding of Jesus, the Messiah and the Son of God (cf. John 19:37; Rev 1:7). Note that some English translations supply “son” from the context (e.g., NIV, TEV, NLT).

**2** **tn** “Hadad-Rimmon” is a compound of the names of two Canaanite deities, the gods of storm and thunder respectively. The grammar (a subjective genitive) allows, and the problem of comparing Israel’s grief at God’s “wounding” with pagan mourning seems to demand, that this be viewed as a place name, perhaps where Judah lamented the death of good king Josiah (cf. 2 Chr 35:25). However, some translations render this as “for” (NRSV, NCV, TEV, CEV), suggesting a person, while others translate as “of” (KJV, NAB, NASB, NIV, NLT) which is ambiguous.

**3** **map** For location see Map1-D4; Map2-C1; Map4-C2; Map5-F2; Map7-B1.

**4** **sn** By the time of Zechariah the line of descent from David had already been transferred from the Solomon branch to the Nathan branch (*the clan of the family of Nathan*). Nathan was a son of David (2 Sam 5:14) through whom Jesus eventually came (Luke 3:23-31). Matthew traces Jesus’ ancestry back through Solomon (Matt 1:6-16) but apparently this is to tie Joseph into the Davidic (and thus messianic) line. The “official” descent of Jesus may be viewed as passing through Solomon whereas the “physical” descent came through Nathan.

**5** **sn** The *Shimeites* were Levites (Exod 6:16-17; Num 3:17-18) who presumably were prominent in the postexilic era. Just as David and Nathan represented the political leadership of the community, so Levi and Shimei represented the religious leadership. All will lament the piercing of the Messiah.

**6** **tn** *Heb* “house” (so NIV, NRSV), referring to dynastic descendants.

**7** **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

**8** **tn** *Heb* “for sin and for impurity.” The purpose implied here has been stated explicitly in the translation for clarity.

**sn** This reference to the *fountain opened up...to cleanse them from sin and impurity* is anticipatory of the cleansing from sin that lies at the heart of the NT gospel message (Rom 10:9-10; Titus 3:5). “In that day” throughout the passage (v.

the LORD who rules over all, “I will remove<sup>9</sup> the names of the idols from the land and they will never again be remembered. Moreover, I will remove the prophets and the unclean spirit from the land. **13:3** Then, if anyone prophesies in spite of this, his father and mother to whom he was born will say to him, ‘You cannot live, for you lie in the name of the LORD.’ Then his father and mother to whom he was born will run him through with a sword when he prophesies.<sup>10</sup>

**13:4** “Therefore, on that day each prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies and will no longer wear the hairy garment<sup>11</sup> of a prophet to deceive the people.<sup>12</sup> **13:5** Instead he will say, ‘I am no prophet – indeed, I am a farmer, for a man has made me his indentured servant since my youth.’<sup>13</sup> **13:6** Then someone will ask him, ‘What are these wounds on your chest?’<sup>14</sup> and he will answer, ‘Some that I received in the house of my friends.’”

**13:7** “Awake, sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is my associate,” says the LORD who rules over all.

Strike the shepherd that the flock may be scattered;<sup>15</sup>

I will turn my hand against the insignificant ones.

**13:8** It will happen in all the land, says the LORD,

1, 2, 4) locates this cleansing in the eschatological (church) age (John 19:37).

**9** **tn** *Heb* “cut off” (so NRSV); NAB “destroy”; NIV “banish.”

**10** **sn** Death (in this case being *run...through with a sword*) was the penalty required in the OT for prophesying falsely (Deut 13:6-11; 18:20-22).

**11** **tn** The “hairy garment of a prophet” (אֲדָרְתָּ שֵׂעִר, *adderet she’ar*) was the rough clothing of Elijah (1 Kgs 19:13), Elisha (1 Kgs 19:19; 2 Kgs 2:14), and even John the Baptist (Matt 3:4). Yet, אֲדָרְתָּ alone suggests something of beauty and honor (Josh 7:21). The prophet’s attire may have been simple the image it conveyed was one of great dignity.

**12** **tn** The words “the people” are not in the Hebrew text, but are supplied in the translation from context (cf. NCV, TEV, NLT).

**13** **tn** Or perhaps “for the land has been my possession since my youth” (so NRSV; similar NAB).

**14** **tn** *Heb* “wounds between your hands.” Cf. NIV “wounds on your body”; KJV makes this more specific: “wounds in thine hands.”

**sn** *These wounds on your chest*. Pagan prophets were often self-lacerated (Lev 19:28; Deut 14:1; 1 Kgs 18:28) for reasons not entirely clear, so this false prophet betrays himself as such by these graphic and ineradicable marks.

**15** **sn** Despite the NT use of this text to speak of the scattering of the disciples following Jesus’ crucifixion (Matt 26:31; Mark 14:27), the immediate context of Zechariah suggests that unfaithful shepherds (kings) will be punished by the LORD precisely so their flocks (disobedient Israel) can be scattered (cf. Zech 11:6, 8, 9, 16). It is likely that Jesus drew on this passage merely to make the point that whenever shepherds are incapacitated, sheep will scatter. Thus he was not identifying himself with the shepherd in this text (the shepherd in the Zechariah text is a character who is portrayed negatively).

that two-thirds of the people<sup>4</sup> in it will be cut off and die, but one-third will be left in it.<sup>2</sup>  
**13:9** Then I will bring the remaining third into the fire;  
 I will refine them like silver is refined and will test them like gold is tested. They will call on my name and I will answer;  
 I will say, ‘These are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’”<sup>3</sup>

### *The Sovereignty of the Lord*

**14:1** A day of the LORD<sup>4</sup> is about to come when your possessions<sup>5</sup> will be divided as plunder in your midst. **14:2** For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem<sup>6</sup> to wage war; the city will be taken, its houses plundered, and the women raped. Then half of the city will go into exile, but the remainder of the people will not be taken away.<sup>7</sup>

**14:3** Then the LORD will go to battle<sup>8</sup> and fight against those nations, just as he fought battles in ancient days.<sup>9</sup> **14:4** On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives which lies to the east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in half from east to west, leaving a great valley. Half the mountain will move

northward and the other half southward.<sup>10</sup> **14:5** Then you will escape<sup>11</sup> through my mountain valley, for the mountains will extend to Azal.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, you will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of King Uzziah<sup>13</sup> of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come with all his holy ones with him. **14:6** On that day there will be no light – the sources of light in the heavens will congeal.<sup>14</sup> **14:7** It will happen in one day (a day known to the LORD); not in the day or the night, but in the evening there will be light.<sup>15</sup> **14:8** Moreover, on that day living waters will flow out from Jerusalem,<sup>16</sup> half of them to the eastern sea<sup>17</sup> and half of them to the western sea;<sup>18</sup> it will happen both in summer and in winter.

**14:9** The LORD will then be king over all the earth. In that day the LORD will be seen as one with a single name.<sup>19</sup> **14:10** All the land will change and become like the Arabah<sup>20</sup> from Geba

<sup>10</sup> **sn** This seismic activity provides a means of escape from Jerusalem so that the Messiah (the LORD), whose feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, may destroy the wicked nations in the Kidron Valley (the v. of Jehoshaphat, or of “judgment of the LORD”) without harming the inhabitants of the city.

<sup>11</sup> **tc** For the MT reading נַסְתָּם (nastem, “you will escape”) the LXX presupposes נִסְתָּם (nistam, “will be stopped up”); this reading is followed by NAB. This appears to derive from a perceived need to eliminate the unexpected “you” as subject. This not only is unnecessary to Hebrew discourse (see “you” in the next clause), but it contradicts the statement in the previous verse that the mountain will be split open, not stopped up.

<sup>12</sup> **sn** Azal is a place otherwise unknown.

<sup>13</sup> **sn** The earthquake in the days of King Uzziah, also mentioned in Amos 1:1, is apparently the one attested to at Hazor in 760 B.C.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb “the splendid will congeal.” This difficult phrase (MT יִקְרָאוּ יִקְרָאוּ, yiqra’u yiqpa’u) is not clarified by the LXX which presupposes יִקְרָאוּ וְיִקְרָאוּ (yiqra’u v’yiqpa’u, “and cold and ice,” a reading followed by NAB, NIV, NCV, NRSV, TEV). Besides the fact that cold and ice do not necessarily follow the absence of light, the idea here is that day will be night and night day. The heavenly sources of light “freeze up” as it were, and refuse to shine.

<sup>15</sup> **sn** In the evening there will be light. The normal pattern is that light breaks through in the morning (Gen 1:3) but in the day of the LORD in judgment it would do so in the evening. In a sense the universe will be “de-created” in order to be “re-created.”

<sup>16</sup> **sn** Living waters will flow out from Jerusalem. Ezekiel sees this same phenomenon in conjunction with the inauguration of the messianic age (Ezek 47; cf. Rev 22:1-5; also John 7:38).

<sup>17</sup> **sn** The eastern sea is a reference to the Dead Sea (cf. NCV, TEV, CEV, NLT).

<sup>18</sup> **sn** The western sea is a reference to the Mediterranean Sea (cf. NCV, TEV, CEV, NLT).

<sup>19</sup> **sn** The expression the LORD will be seen as one with a single name is an unmistakable reference to the so-called Shema, the crystallized statement of faith in the LORD as the covenant God of Israel (cf. Deut 6:4-5). Zechariah, however, universalizes the extent of the LORD’s dominion – he will be “king over all the earth.”

<sup>20</sup> **tn** Or “like a plain” (similar KJV, NAB, NASB, NCV, NRSV, NLT); or “like a steppe”; cf. CEV “flatlands.” The Hebrew term אַרְבָּה (aravah) refers to an arid plain or steppe, but can be used specifically as the name of the rift valley running from the Sea of Galilee via the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba.

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The words “of the people” are supplied in the translation for clarity (cf. NCV, TEV, NLT).

<sup>2</sup> **sn** The fractions mentioned here call to mind the affliction of God’s people described by Ezekiel, though Ezekiel referred to his own times whereas Zechariah is looking forward to a future eschatological age. Ezekiel spoke of cutting his hair at God’s command (Ezek 5:1-4) and then of burning a third of it, striking a third with a sword, and scattering the rest. From this last third a few hairs would survive to become the nucleus of a new Israel. It is this “third” Zechariah speaks of (v. 9), the remnant who will be purified and reclaimed as God’s covenant people.

<sup>3</sup> **sn** The expression I will say ‘It is my people,’ and they will say ‘the LORD is my God’ is reminiscent of the restoration of Israel predicted by Hosea, who said that those who had been rejected as God’s people would be reclaimed and once more become his sons and daughters (Hos 2:23).

<sup>4</sup> **sn** The eschatological day of the LORD described here (and through v. 8) is considered by many interpreters to refer to the period known as the great tribulation, a seven year time of great suffering by God’s (Jewish) people culminating in the establishing of the millennial reign of the LORD (vv. 9-21). For other OT and NT references to this aspect of the day of the LORD see Amos 9:8-15; Joel 1:15-2:11; Isa 1:24-31; 2:2-4; 4:2-6; 26:16-27:6; 33:13-24; 59:1-60:22; 65:13-25; Jer 30:7-11; 32:36-44; Ezek 20:33-44; Dan 11:40; 12:1; Matt 24:21, 29; 25:31-46; Rev 19:11-16.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Heb “your plunder.” Cf. NCV “the wealth you have taken.”

<sup>6</sup> **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Heb “not be cut off from the city” (so NRSV); NAB “not be removed.”

<sup>8</sup> **sn** The statement the LORD will go to battle introduces the conflict known elsewhere as the “battle of Armageddon,” a battle in which the LORD delivers his people and establishes his millennial reign (cf. Joel 3:12, 15-16; Ezek 38-39; Rev 16:12-21; 19:19-21).

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Heb “as he fights on a day of battle” (similar NASB, NIV, NRSV).

to Rimmon,<sup>1</sup> south of Jerusalem; and Jerusalem will be raised up and will stay in its own place from the Benjamin Gate to the site of the First Gate<sup>2</sup> and on to the Corner Gate,<sup>3</sup> and from the Tower of Hananel to the royal winepresses.<sup>4</sup> **14:11** And people will settle there, and there will no longer be the threat of divine extermination – Jerusalem will dwell in security.

**14:12** But this will be the nature of the plague with which the LORD will strike all the nations that have fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will decay while they stand on their feet, their eyes will rot away in their sockets, and their tongues will dissolve in their mouths. **14:13** On that day there will be great confusion from the LORD among them; they will seize each other and attack one another violently. **14:14** Moreover, Judah will fight at<sup>5</sup> Jerusalem, and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered up<sup>6</sup> – gold, silver, and clothing in great abundance. **14:15** This is the kind of plague that will devastate horses, mules, camels, donkeys, and all the other animals in those camps.

**14:16** Then all who survive from all the nations that came to attack Jerusalem will go up annually to worship the King, the LORD who rules over all, and to observe the Feast of Temporary Shelters.<sup>7</sup> **14:17** But if any of the nations anywhere on earth refuse to go up to Jerusalem<sup>8</sup> to worship the King, the LORD who rules over all, they will get no rain. **14:18** If the Egyptians will not do so, they will get no rain – instead there will be the kind of plague which the LORD inflicts on any nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. **14:19** This will be the punishment of Egypt and of all nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.

**14:20** On that day the bells of the horses will bear the inscription “HOLY TO THE LORD.” The cooking pots in the LORD’s temple<sup>9</sup> will be as holy as the bowls in front of the altar.<sup>10</sup> **14:21** Every cooking pot in Jerusalem and Judah will become holy in the sight of the LORD who rules over all, so that all who offer sacrifices may come and use some of them to boil their sacrifices in them. On that day there will no longer be a Canaanite<sup>11</sup> in the house of the LORD who rules over all.

<sup>1</sup> **sn** The expression from *Geba* to *Rimmon* is a way of indicating the extent of all Judah from north (2 Kgs 23:8) to south (Job 15:32; 19:7). Since *Geba* (Heb. גִּבְעָה) means “hill” and *Rimmon* resembles the word for height (Heb. רָמָה, *ramah*), this could be a play on words suggesting that all the high country will be made low, like the great Arabah valley.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Or “old gate” (NLT); or “former gate” (NRSV).

<sup>3</sup> **sn** From the *Benjamin Gate...on to the Corner Gate* marks the northern wall of the city of Jerusalem from east to west.

<sup>4</sup> **sn** From the *Tower of Hananel to the royal winepresses* indicates the extent of Jerusalem from north to south.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The Hebrew phrase בִּירוּשָׁלַם (*birushalam*) with the verb נָלְחָם (*nilkham*, “make war”) would ordinarily suggest that Judah is fighting against Jerusalem (so NAB, CEV). While this could happen accidentally, the context here favors the idea that Judah is fighting alongside Jerusalem against a common enemy. The preposition בְּ (*bē*), then, should be construed as locative (“at”; cf. KJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT).

<sup>6</sup> **tn** The term translated “gathered up” could also be rendered “collected” (so NIV, NCV, NRSV, although this might suggest a form of taxation) or “confiscated” (which might imply seizure of property against someone’s will). The imagery in the context, however, suggests the aftermath of a great battle, where the spoils are being picked up by the victors (cf. NLT “captured”).

<sup>7</sup> **sn** Having imposed his sovereignty over the earth following the Battle of Armageddon, the LORD will receive homage and tribute from *all who survive from all the nations*. The *Feast of Temporary Shelters* was especially associated with covenant institution and renewal so it will be appropriate for all people to acknowledge that they are vassals to the LORD at that time (cf. Deut 31:9-13; Neh 8:12-18; 9:1-38).

<sup>8</sup> **sn** The reference to *any...who refuse to go up to Jerusalem* makes clear the fact that the nations are by no means “converted” to the LORD but are under his compulsory domination.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Heb “house” (also in the following verse).

<sup>10</sup> **sn** In the glory of the messianic age there will be no differences between the sacred (*the bowls before the altar*) and the profane (*the cooking pots in the LORD’s temple*) – all will be dedicated to his use.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Or “merchant”; “trader” (because Canaanites, especially Phoenicians, were merchants and traders; cf. BDB 489 s.v. I and II בַּנְיָיִם). English versions have rendered the term as “Canaanite” (KJV, NKJV, NASB, NIV), “trader” (RSV, NEB), “traders” (NRSV, NLT), or “merchant” (NAB), although frequently a note is given explaining the other option. Cf. also John 2:16.

**sn** This is not to preclude the Canaanite (or anyone else) from worship; the point is that in the messianic age all such ethnic and religious distinctions will be erased and all people will be eligible to worship the LORD.