

Easy-to-Read Version

Language: English

Provided by: Bible League International

This print-on-demand edition of Scripture is produced and provided at cost by the Digital Bible Society in partnership with the Bible League of Canada, Open Doors International, and other missions and translation agencies. To order additional copies of this or other Bibles, please visit www.dbs.org (USA), www.bibleleague.ca (Canada), and www.opendoors.org (Europe).

Copyright and Permission to Copy

Copyright © 1989 Bible League International Scripture text used by permission.

PDF, ePub, and MOBI Bible covers and design are copyrighted 2017 by the Digital Bible Society (www.dbs.org).

PDF generated on 2017-07-07 from source files dated 2017-07-07.

9417f999-1fb5-525b-a123-d5d84a7f35e1

ISBN: 978-1-5313-1294-7

Zechariah

Like Haggai, the prophet Zechariah served the Jewish people in Judah. These were Jews who had recently returned from captivity in Babylon. They had orders to rebuild their homeland and the Temple there. But the book of Zechariah is not mainly about the rebuilding of the Temple. Instead, Zechariah's message describes visions that God showed him. God also tells him the meaning of these visions.

Zechariah begins his message like most of the other prophets. He tells God's people that they are guilty of evil just like their ancestors were. He tells them they need to return to God. Then he describes some visions from God. These visions explain how God will finally cause his people to come back to him. At that time God plans for his people to bless the whole world.

In the New Testament, the Bible uses one of Zechariah's visions about a king riding on a donkey. The Gospel writers use this to show that Jesus is God's Chosen King (Matt. 21:5; John 12:15). And this king is the one who completes God's plan for blessing the world.

In the book of Zechariah, the prophet...

Sees eight visions at night (1:1 – 6:8)

Gives God's messages about the high priest, fasting and the future of Jerusalem (6:9 – 8:23)

Sees visions of war and God's Chosen King who will bring peace (9:1 – 14:21)

The Lord Wants His People to Return

1 Zechariah the prophet received a message from the LORD. This was in the eighth month of the second year that Darius* was king in Persia. Zechariah was the son of Berekiah and the grandson of Iddo. This is the message:

²“The LORD became very angry with your ancestors. ³So you must tell the people what the LORD All-Powerful says: ‘Come back to me, says the LORD All-Powerful, and I will come back to you.’ This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

⁴“Don't be like your ancestors. In the past the prophets spoke to them: ‘The LORD All-Powerful wants you to change your evil way of living. Stop doing evil things!’ But your ancestors did not listen to me.” This is what the LORD said.

⁵“Your ancestors are gone, and those prophets did not live forever. ⁶The prophets were my servants. I used them to tell your ancestors about my laws and teachings. Your ancestors finally learned their lesson and said, ‘The LORD All-Powerful did what he said he would do. He punished us for the way we lived and for all the evil things we did.’ So they came back to God.”

The Four Horses

⁷ That same year, on the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, the month of Shebat, Zechariah the prophet received another message from the LORD. (This was Zechariah son of Berekiah and grandson of Iddo.)

⁸ In a vision during the night, I saw a man on a red horse among some myrtle bushes in a valley. Behind him were riders on red, brown and white horses. ⁹I said, “Sir, what do these mean?”

*1:1 *the second year ... Darius* That is, about 520 BC. Also in verse 7.

The angel talking to me said, "I will show you what they mean."

¹⁰Then the man among the myrtle bushes said, "These are the ones the LORD sent to go here and there on the earth."

¹¹Then the riders on the horses spoke to the LORD's angel who was standing among the myrtle bushes. They said, "We have gone all over the earth, and everything is calm and quiet."

¹²Then the angel of the LORD said, "LORD All-Powerful, how long before you comfort Jerusalem and the cities of Judah? You have shown your anger at these cities for 70 years now."

¹³Then the LORD answered the angel who was talking with me. He spoke good, comforting words.

¹⁴Then the angel told me to tell the people that this is what the Lord All-Powerful says:

"I have a deep love for Jerusalem and Zion.

¹⁵And now I am very angry at the nations that feel so safe.

I was only a little angry, and I used them to punish my people, but they caused too much damage.

¹⁶So the LORD says:

I will come back to Jerusalem and comfort her.

The LORD All-Powerful says: Jerusalem will be rebuilt, and my house will be built there.

¹⁷"The angel also said: The LORD All-Powerful says:

"My towns will be rich again.

I will comfort Zion.

I will again choose Jerusalem to be my special city."

The Four Horns and Four Workers

¹⁸Then I looked up and I saw four horns. ¹⁹So I asked the angel who was

talking with me, "What do these horns mean?"

He said, "These are the horns that forced the people of Israel, Judah and Jerusalem to go to foreign countries."

²⁰Then the LORD showed me four metalworkers. ²¹I asked the angel, "What are these four workers going to do?"

He said, "The horns represent the nations that defeated the people of Judah and scattered them to foreign countries. But these four workers have come to terrify those nations. They have come to destroy the horns of those enemy nations."

Measuring Jerusalem

2 Then I looked up and saw a man holding a rope for measuring things. ²I asked him, "Where are you going?"

He said to me, "I am going to measure Jerusalem, to see how wide and how long it is."

³Then the angel who was talking to me left, and another angel went out to talk to him. ⁴He said to him, "Run and tell that young man this:

'Jerusalem will be a city without walls, because there will be too many people and animals living there.'

⁵The LORD says: 'I will be a wall of fire around her

to protect her,

and to bring glory to that city,

I will live there.'"

God Calls His People Home

The LORD says:

⁶"Hurry! Run from the land in the north! Yes, it is true that I scattered your people in every direction."

This is what the LORD says.

⁷"You people from Zion now live in Babylon.

Escape! Run away from that city!"

⁸ The LORD All-Powerful appeared to me in glory and sent me to the nations that carried away your wealth.

He said, “When anyone harms you, it is the same as poking me in the eye.

⁹ Watch and see how I will punish them. Their own slaves will become their masters and take all their wealth.”

Then you will know it was the LORD All-Powerful

who sent me to tell you these things.

¹⁰ The LORD says:

“Zion, be happy, because I am coming, and I will live in your city.

¹¹ At that time people from many nations will come to me.

They will become my people, and I will live in your city.”

Then you will know that it was the LORD All-Powerful who sent me.

¹² The LORD will again choose Jerusalem to be his special city.

Judah will be his share of the holy land.

¹³ Everyone, be quiet!

The LORD is coming out of his holy house.

The High Priest

3 The angel showed me Joshua the high priest, standing in front of the angel of the LORD. Satan was standing by Joshua’s right side. Satan was there to accuse Joshua of doing wrong. ² Then the angel of the LORD said to Satan, “The LORD says no to you! The LORD has chosen Jerusalem to be his special city, and he says that you are wrong. He saved this man like a burning stick that someone pulls out of the fire.”

³ Joshua was wearing a dirty robe as he stood in front of the angel. ⁴ Then the angel said to the other angels standing

near him, “Take those dirty clothes off Joshua.” Then he said to Joshua, “This means that I have taken away your guilt, and now I will dress you in fine clothes.”

⁵ Then I said, “Put a clean turban on his head.” So they put the clean turban on him and also put clean clothes on him while the angel of the LORD stood there.

⁶ Then the angel of the LORD said this to Joshua:

⁷ “This is what the LORD All-Powerful said:

Live the way I tell you, and do everything I say.

Then you will be in charge of my Temple.

You will take care of its courtyard.

You will be free to go anywhere in my Temple,

just as these angels standing here.

⁸ Listen, Joshua the high priest, and you other priests seated before him. Together, you are a symbol of something I will do in the future.

I am going to bring my special servant called the Branch.

⁹ Look at the special stone I have put in front of Joshua.

It is a single stone with seven sides.[†]

I will carve a special message on it.

This will show that in one day,

I will remove the guilt from this land.”

This is what the LORD All-Powerful says.

¹⁰ The LORD All-Powerful says:

“At that time people will sit and talk with their friends and neighbours.

They will invite each other to sit under the fig trees and grapevines.”

The Lampstand and the Two Olive Trees

4 Then the angel who was talking to me returned and woke me up. I was like a person waking up from sleep.

[†]3:9 *sides* Literally, “eyes”.

²Then the angel asked me, “What do you see?”

I said, “I see a solid gold lampstand. A large bowl is on top of the lampstand, and there are seven lamps[‡] around the top of the bowl. Around the top of each lamp are seven grooves to hold wicks. ³There are two olive trees by the bowl, one on the right side and one on the left side.” ⁴Then I asked the angel who was talking with me, “Sir, what do these things mean?”

⁵The angel said, “Don’t you know what these things are?”

“No, sir,” I said.

⁶He said, “This is the message from the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Your help will not come from your own strength and power. No, your help will come from my Spirit.’ This is what the LORD All-Powerful says. ⁷That tall mountain will be like a flat place for Zerubbabel. He will build the Temple, and when the most important stone is put in place, the people will shout, ‘Beautiful! Beautiful!’”

⁸The LORD’s message to me also said: ⁹“Zerubbabel will lay the foundations for my Temple, and he will finish building it. Then you will know that the LORD All-Powerful sent me to you. ¹⁰People will not be ashamed of the small beginnings, and they will be very happy when they see Zerubbabel with the plumb line,[¶] measuring and checking the finished building. Now the seven lamps you

saw represent the eyes of the LORD looking in every direction. They see everything on earth.”

¹¹Then I said to him, “I saw one olive tree on the right side of the lampstand and one on the left side. What do those two olive trees mean? ¹²I also saw two branches of the olive trees with golden olive oil flowing from them through two gold tubes. What do these things mean?”

¹³Then the angel said to me, “Don’t you know what these things mean?”

I said, “No, sir.”

¹⁴So he said, “They represent the two men chosen[§] to serve the Lord of all the earth.”

The Flying Scroll

5 I looked up again, and I saw a flying scroll. ²The angel asked me, “What do you see?”

I said, “I see a flying scroll that is 9 metres^{**} long and 4.5 metres^{††} wide.”

³Then the angel told me, “There is a curse written on that scroll. On one side of the scroll, there is a curse against thieves. And on the other side is a curse against people who lie when they make promises. ⁴The LORD All-Powerful says, ‘I will send that scroll with its curse into the house of every thief and everyone who lies when they use my name to make promises. That scroll will stay there until it destroys everything—even the stones and timber.’”

[‡]4:2 *lamps* These lamps made light by burning olive oil.

[¶]4:10 *plumb line* A string with a weight on one end used to show how straight the walls of a building were.

[§]4:14 *men chosen* Literally, “sons of extra pure olive oil”. Often a special oil was poured over new kings, priests and prophets. This showed that God chose these people.

^{**}5:2 *9 metres* Literally, “20 cubits”.

^{††}5:2 *4.5 metres* Literally, “10 cubits”.

The Woman and the Basket

⁵The angel who was talking to me went outside and said, “Look! What do you see coming?”

⁶I said, “I don’t know. What is it?”

He said, “That is a measuring basket.” He also said, “It is for measuring the sins^{‡‡} of the people in this country.”

⁷A lid made of lead was lifted off the basket, and there was a woman sitting in the basket. ⁸The angel said, “The woman represents evil.” Then the angel pushed the woman down into the basket and put the lead lid back on it. ⁹Then I looked up and saw two women with wings like a stork. They flew out, and with the wind in their wings, they picked up the basket. They flew through the air carrying the basket. ¹⁰Then I asked the angel who was talking with me, “Where are they carrying the basket?”

¹¹The angel told me, “They are going to build a house for it in Babylonia.[¶] After they build that house, they will put the basket there.”

The Four Chariots

6 I looked up again, and I saw four chariots coming out from between two bronze mountains. ²Red horses were pulling the first chariot. Black horses were pulling the second chariot. ³White horses were pulling the third chariot, and spotted horses were pulling the fourth chariot. ⁴I asked the angel

who was talking with me, “Sir, what do these mean?”

⁵The angel said, “These are the four winds.^{§§} They have just come from the Lord of all the earth. ⁶The black horses will go north, the white horses will go west,^{*} and the spotted horses will go south.”

⁷These horses wanted to leave and go all over the earth. So the angel told them, “Go throughout the earth.” And so they went on their way.

⁸Then the angel called to me and said, “Look, those horses that were going north finished their job in Babylon. They have calmed the Lord’s spirit; he is no longer angry!”

Joshua the Priest Gets a Crown

⁹Then I received another message from the LORD: ¹⁰“Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah have come from the captives[†] in Babylon. Get silver and gold from these men and go the same day to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah. ¹¹Use the silver and gold to make a crown. Put it on the head of the high priest, Joshua son of Jehozadak. ¹²Then tell him this is what the LORD All-Powerful says:

‘There is a man called the Branch.

He will grow strong,

and he will build the LORD’s Temple.

¹³Yes, he will build the LORD’s Temple, and he will receive honour.

He will sit on his throne and be the ruler, and a priest will stand by his throne.[‡]

These two will work together in peace.’

^{‡‡}5:6 *sins* The Hebrew text has “their eye”, but with a minor change of one character it becomes “their guilt”.

[¶]5:11 *Babylonia* Literally, “Shinar”, which may be a form of the name Sumer.

^{§§}6:5 *four winds* Or “four spirits”. Four winds often means “winds that blow from every direction: north, south, east and west”.

^{*}6:6 *west* Literally, “behind them”.

[†]6:10 *captives* The Jewish people who were taken by the Babylonian army from Israel and Judah to Babylon.

[‡]6:13 *stand by his throne* Or “be on another throne”.

¹⁴The crown will be kept in my Temple,[¶] so that when people see it, they will remember Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah and the kindness of Zephaniah's son Josiah."

¹⁵People living far away will come and build the LORD's Temple. Then you will know for sure that the LORD All-Powerful sent me to you. All these things will happen if you do what the LORD your God says.

The Lord Wants Kindness and Mercy

7 Zechariah received a message from the LORD in the fourth year that Darius[§] was the king of Persia. This was on the fourth day of the ninth month, the month of Kislev. ²The people of Bethel sent Sharezer, Regem-Melech and his men to ask the LORD a question. ³They went to the prophets and to the priests at the Temple of the LORD All-Powerful. They said, "For many years we have shown our sorrow for the destruction of the Temple. In the fifth month of each year, we have had a special time of mourning and fasting. Should we continue to do this?"

⁴I received this message from the LORD All-Powerful: ⁵"Tell the priests and the other people in the land: 'For seventy years you fasted and mourned in the fifth month and in the seventh month. But was that fasting really for me? ⁶And when you ate and drank, was that for me? No, it was for your own good. ⁷The LORD used the earlier prophets to say the same thing long ago. That was when Jerusalem was still a rich city filled with people and there were still people living in the surrounding towns, in the Negev, and in the western foothills."

⁸This is the LORD's message to Zechariah: ⁹"This is what the LORD All-Powerful said:

"You must do what is right and fair. You must be kind and show mercy to each other.

¹⁰Don't hurt widows and orphans, foreigners or poor people. Don't even think of doing bad things to each other!

¹¹"But they refused to listen and refused to do what he wanted. They closed their ears so that they could not hear what God said.

¹²They were very stubborn and would not obey the law. The LORD All-Powerful used his Spirit and sent messages to his people through the prophets.

But the people would not listen, so the LORD All-Powerful became very angry.

¹³The LORD All-Powerful said: I called to them, and they did not answer.

So now, if they call to me, I will not answer.

¹⁴I will bring the other nations against them like a storm.

They didn't know those nations, but the country will be destroyed after those nations pass through. This pleasant country will be destroyed."

The Lord Promises to Bless Jerusalem

8 This is a message from the LORD All-Powerful. ²The LORD All-Powerful says: "I have a deep love for Mount Zion. I love her so much that I became angry when she was not faithful to me." ³The LORD says: "I have come back to Zion, and I am living in Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be called Faithful City. The moun-

[¶]6:14 *my Temple* Literally, "the Temple of the LORD".

[§]7:1 *the fourth year ... Darius* This was about 518 BC.

tain of the LORD All-Powerful will be called Holy Mountain.”

⁴The LORD All-Powerful says: “Old men and women will again be seen in the public places in Jerusalem. People will live so long that they will need their walking sticks. ⁵And the city will be filled with children playing in the streets.” ⁶The LORD All-Powerful says, “The survivors will think it is wonderful, and so will I!”

⁷The LORD All-Powerful says: “Look, I am rescuing my people from countries in the east and west. ⁸I will bring them back here, and they will live in Jerusalem. They will be my people, and I will be their good and faithful God.”

⁹The LORD All-Powerful says: “Be strong! You people are hearing the same message today that the prophets gave when the LORD All-Powerful first laid the foundations to rebuild his Temple. ¹⁰Before that time, people didn’t have the money to hire workers or to rent animals. And it was not safe for people to come and go. There was no relief from all the troubles. I had turned everyone against their neighbour. ¹¹But it is not like that now. It will not be like that for the survivors.” This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

¹²“These people will plant in peace. Their grapevines will produce grapes. The land will give good crops, and the skies will give rain. I will give all these things to my people. ¹³People began using the names Israel and Judah in their curses. But I will save Israel and Judah, and their names will become a blessing. So don’t be afraid. Be strong!”

¹⁴The LORD All-Powerful says: “Your ancestors made me angry, so I de-

cidated to destroy them. And I did not change my mind.” This is what the LORD All-Powerful said. ¹⁵“But now I have changed my mind. And I have decided to be good to Jerusalem and to the people of Judah. So don’t be afraid! ¹⁶But you must do this: Tell the truth to your neighbours. When you make decisions in your cities, be fair and do what is right. Do what brings peace. ¹⁷Don’t make secret plans to hurt your neighbours. Don’t make false promises. You must not enjoy doing these things, because I hate them!” This is what the LORD said.

¹⁸I received this message from the LORD All-Powerful. ¹⁹The LORD All-Powerful says: “You have special days of mourning and fasting in the fourth month, the fifth month, the seventh month and the tenth month.** These days of sorrow must be changed into days of happiness. They will be good and happy festivals. And you must love truth and peace.”

²⁰The LORD All-Powerful says:

“In the future people from many cities will come to Jerusalem.

²¹People from different cities will greet each other and say,
‘We are going to worship the LORD All-Powerful.’

And someone will reply,

‘I will go with you!’”

²²Many people and many powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to find the LORD All-Powerful and to worship him. ²³The LORD All-Powerful says: “At that time many foreigners speaking different languages will come to a Jewish man, take hold of the hem of his robe, and ask, ‘We heard that God is with you. Can we come with you to worship him?’”

** **8:19 days ... month** These were days when the people remembered the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. See 2 Kgs 25:1-25 and Jer. 41:1-17; 52:1-12.

Judgement Against Other Nations

9 This is the LORD's message against the land of Hadrach and against the city of Damascus.

The tribes of Israel are not the only people who know about the LORD.

Everyone looks to him for help.^{††}

²This message is also against the city of Hamath near Damascus, and this message is against Tyre and Sidon, even though those people have been so wise and skilful.

³Tyre is built like a fortress. The people there have collected so much silver that it is like dust, and gold is as common as clay.

⁴But the Lord will take it all. He will destroy her powerful navy and that city will be destroyed by fire!

⁵The people in Ashkelon will see this, and they will be afraid. The people of Gaza will shake with fear, and the people of Ekron will lose all hope when they see this happen.

There will be no king left in Gaza. No one will live in Ashkelon any more.

⁶The people in Ashdod will not even know who their real fathers are. I will completely destroy the proud Philistines.

⁷They will no longer eat meat with the blood still in it or any other unclean food. Any Philistine left alive will become a part of my people; they will be just one more tribe in Judah. The people of Ekron will become a part of my people, as the Jebusites did.

⁸I will protect my country. I will not let enemy armies pass through it.

I will not let them hurt my people any more.

With my own eyes I have seen how much my people have suffered.

The Future King

⁹People of Zion,^{‡‡} rejoice! People of Jerusalem, shout with joy! Look, your king is coming to you! He has defeated the enemy and made everything right.

He is humble and riding on a donkey, the young colt of a donkey.

¹⁰I, the LORD, will take away the war chariots from Ephraim and the horsemen from Jerusalem.

I will destroy the bows used in war. Your king will bring news of peace to the nations.

He will rule from sea to sea, from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth.

The Lord Will Save His People

¹¹Jerusalem, we used blood to seal your agreement, so I am setting your people free from that empty hole in the ground.^{¶¶}

¹²Prisoners, go home! Now you have something to hope for. I am telling you now, I am coming back to you.

¹³Judah, I will use you like a bow. Ephraim, I will use you like arrows. Israel, I will use you like a sword to fight against the men of Greece.

¹⁴The LORD will appear to them,

^{††}9:1 The Hebrew text is not clear.

^{‡‡}9:9 *People of Zion* Literally, "Daughter Zion", meaning the city of Jerusalem. See Zion in the Word List.

^{¶¶}9:11 *empty hole in the ground* People stored water in large holes in the ground. People sometimes used those holes as prisons.

and he will shoot his arrows like lightning.

The Lord GOD will blow the trumpet, and the army will rush forward like a desert dust storm.

¹⁵ The LORD All-Powerful will protect them.

The soldiers will use rocks and slings to defeat the enemy.

They will spill the blood of their enemies.

It will flow like wine.

It will be like the blood that is sprinkled on the corners of the altar!

¹⁶ At that time the LORD their God will save his people

like a shepherd saves his sheep.

They will be very precious to him.

They will be like sparkling jewels in his land.

¹⁷ Everything will be good and beautiful!

There will be a wonderful crop,

but it will not be just the food and wine.

It will be all the young men and women!

The Lord's Promises

10 Pray to the LORD for rain in the springtime.

The LORD will send the lightning and the rain will fall.

He will make the plants grow in each person's field.

² People use their little statues and magic to learn what will happen in the future, but that is useless.

They see visions and tell about their dreams,

but it is nothing but worthless lies.

So the people are like sheep wandering here and there crying for help,

but there is no shepherd to lead them.

³ "I am very angry with the shepherds.

I made them responsible for what happens to my sheep."

The people of Judah are his flock, and the LORD All-Powerful really does take care of his flock.

He cares for them

as a soldier cares for his beautiful war horse.

⁴ "The cornerstone, the tent peg, the war bow

and the advancing soldiers will all come from Judah.

⁵ They will be like soldiers marching through mud in the streets.

They will fight, and since the LORD is with them,

they will defeat even the enemy soldiers riding horses.

⁶ "I will make the people of Judah strong.

I will help the people of Israel^{§§} win the war.

I will bring them back safely and comfort them.

It will be as if I had never left them.

I am the LORD their God,

and I will help them.

⁷ The people of Ephraim will be as happy as soldiers

who have too much to drink.

Their children will be rejoicing and they, too, will be happy.

They will all have a happy time together with the LORD.

⁸ I will give them a signal

and call them all together.

I really will save them.

There will be many people.

⁹ Yes, I have been scattering my people throughout the nations,

but in those faraway places, they will remember me.

They and their children will survive,

^{§§} **10:6** *people of Israel* Literally, "house of Joseph", which often refers to Joseph's descendants, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, or to all the tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel.

and they will come back.

¹⁰I will bring them back from Egypt and Assyria

and bring them to the area of Gilead.

And since there will not be enough room,

I will also let them live in nearby Lebanon.

¹¹They will go through a sea of troubles, but the waves will be stopped.

Even the deepest waters of the Nile River will dry up.

I will destroy Assyria's pride

and take away Egypt's power.

¹²I, the LORD, will make my people strong,

and they will live for me."

This is what the LORD said.

God Will Punish the Other Nations

11 Lebanon, open your gates so that the fire will come and burn your cedar trees.*

²The cypress trees will cry because the cedar trees have fallen.

Those powerful trees will be taken away.

Oak trees in Bashan will cry for the forest that was cut down.

³Listen to the crying shepherds.

Their powerful leaders were taken away.

Listen to the roaring of the young lions.

Their thick bushes near the Jordan River have all been taken away.

⁴The LORD my God says: "Care for the sheep that are ready to be killed.

⁵Buyers kill their sheep and are not punished. Those who sell the sheep say, 'Praise the LORD, I am rich!'

Even the shepherds don't feel sorry for their sheep.

⁶And I don't feel sorry for the people who live in this country."

The LORD says, "Look, I will let everyone be under the control

of their neighbour and king. I will let them destroy the country. I will not stop them!"

⁷So I took care of the sheep that were ready to be killed by the sheep traders.

I took two shepherd's staffs. I called one of them Favour, and I called the other one Union.

⁸I fired the three shepherds all in one month. I got angry with them, and they began to hate me.

⁹Then I said, "I quit! I will not take care of you sheep any more! If you die, you die. If you are killed, you are killed. And those who are left can destroy each other."

¹⁰Then I took the staff named Favour, and I broke it. I did this to show that God's agreement with his people had been broken.

¹¹So that day the agreement was finished, and the sheep traders who were watching me knew that this message was from the LORD.

¹²Then I said, "If you want to pay me, pay me. If not, don't!"

So they paid me 30 pieces of silver.

¹³Then the LORD said to me: "So that's how much money they think I'm worth—such a large amount!† Take it and throw it into the Temple treasury."

So I took the 30 pieces of silver and threw them into the treasury at the LORD's Temple.

¹⁴Then I cut the staff named Union into two pieces. I did this to show that the union between Judah and Israel had been broken.

¹⁵Then the LORD said to me, "Now, get the things a foolish shepherd might use.

¹⁶This will show that I will get a new shepherd for this country. But this young man will not take care of the sheep that are being destroyed. He will not heal the hurt sheep or feed those that are left alive. And the healthy ones will

***11:1 cedar trees** In this poem, the trees, bushes and animals are symbols for the leaders of the countries around Judah.

†**11:13 such a large amount** 30 pieces of silver was not really a large amount. It was the usual price for a slave. So the Lord was making fun of the people.

be eaten completely—only their hooves will be left.”

¹⁷Too bad for you, you worthless shepherd!

You abandoned my sheep.

Punish him!

Strike his arm and right eye with a sword.

His arm will be useless.

His right eye will be blind.

Visions About the Nations Around Judah

12 This is a message from the LORD about Israel. The Lord is the one who made the earth and the sky, and he put the human spirit in people. And this is what the LORD said: ²“Look, I will make Jerusalem like a cup of poison to the nations around her. The nations will come and attack that city, and all of Judah will be caught in the trap. ³But I will make Jerusalem like a heavy rock—those who try to take it will hurt themselves. They will be cut and scratched. All the nations on earth will come together to fight against Jerusalem. ⁴But at that time, says the LORD, I will scare the horse, and the soldier riding it will panic. I will make all the enemy horses blind, but my eyes will be open—and I will be watching over Judah’s family. ⁵The leaders of Judah will encourage the people and say, ‘The LORD All-Powerful is your God. He makes us strong.’ ⁶At that time I will make the leaders of Judah like a fire burning in a forest. They will destroy their enemies like fire burning straw. They will destroy the enemy all around them, and the people in Jerusalem will again be able to sit back and relax.”

⁷The LORD will save the people of Judah first so that the people in Jerusalem

will not be able to boast too much. David’s family and the other people who live in Jerusalem will not be able to boast that they are better than the other people in Judah. ⁸But the LORD will protect the people in Jerusalem. Even the man who trips and falls will become a great soldier like David. And the men from David’s family will be like gods—like the LORD’s own angel leading the people.

⁹The Lord says: “At that time I will destroy the nations that came to fight against Jerusalem. ¹⁰I will fill David’s family and the people living in Jerusalem with a spirit of kindness and mercy. They will look to me, the one they stabbed, and they will be very sad. They will be as sad as someone crying over the death of their only son, as sad as someone crying over the death of their firstborn son. ¹¹There will be a time of great sorrow and crying in Jerusalem. It will be like what happens in Megiddo Valley when people cry over the death of Hadad Rimmon.[‡] ^{12–13}Everyone in the land will mourn. Each family will cry by itself, the men and the women separately. The family of David will cry by itself, as will the families of Nathan, Levi and Simeon. ¹⁴And the same thing will happen in all the other tribes. The men and women in each family will cry by themselves.”

13 But at that time a new fountain of water will be opened for David’s family and for the other people living in Jerusalem. That fountain will be to wash away their sins and to make the people pure.

No More False Prophets

²The LORD All-Powerful says: “At that time I will remove all the idols from

[‡]12:11 *Hadad Rimmon* Possibly a name for the Syrian fertility god.

the earth. People will not even remember their names, and I will remove the false prophets and unclean spirits from the earth. ³Whoever continues to prophesy will be punished. Even their parents, their own mother and father, will say to them, 'You have spoken lies in the name of the LORD, so you must die!' Their own mother and father will stab them for prophesying. ⁴At that time those prophets will be ashamed when they say they have seen a vision and prophesy. They will not try to trick people by putting on the rough clothes that true prophets wear. ⁵They will say, 'I am not a prophet. I am a farmer. I have worked as a farmer since I was a little child.' ⁶But other people will say, 'Then what are these wounds on your body?' He will say, 'Oh, I got these at my friend's house.'"

⁷The LORD All-Powerful says:

"Sword, wake up
and strike the shepherd, my friend!
Strike the shepherd,
and the sheep will run away,
and I will punish those little ones.

⁸Two-thirds of the people in the land will be struck down and die, says the LORD,
but one-third will survive.

⁹"Then I will test those survivors by giving them many troubles.

The troubles will be like the fire a person uses to prove silver is pure.

I will test them the way a person tests gold.

Then they will call to me for help, and I will answer them.

I will say, 'You are my people.'

And they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

The Day of Judgement

14 Look, the LORD has a day of judgement coming, when the riches you have taken will be divided in your city. ²I will bring all the nations together to fight against Jerusalem. They will capture the city and destroy the houses. The women will be raped, and half the people will be taken away as prisoners. But the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. ³Then the LORD will go to war with those nations. It will be a real battle. ⁴At that time he will stand on the Mount of Olives, the hill east of Jerusalem. The Mount of Olives will split in half. Part of the mountain will move to the north, and part to the south. A deep valley will open up, from the east to the west. ⁵You will try to run away as that mountain valley comes closer and closer to you. You will run away like the time you ran from the earthquake during the time of King Uzziah of Judah. But the LORD my God will come, and all his holy ones^f will be with him.

⁶⁻⁷ On that day, there will not be any light, cold or frost. Only the LORD knows how, but there will not be any day or night. Then, when darkness usually comes, there will still be light. ⁸At that time water will flow continuously from Jerusalem.[§] That stream will split into two parts; one part will flow east towards the Dead Sea, and the other part will flow west to the coast. It will flow all year long, in the summer as well as in the winter. ⁹And the LORD will be the King of all the earth. At that time all people will worship him as the only LORD with only one name. ¹⁰And all

^f14:5 *holy ones* Here, this probably means angels.

[§]14:8 *water ... Jerusalem* Literally, "living water will flow from Jerusalem". Jerusalem's main water supply, the Gihon spring, did not flow continuously.

the land from Geba in the north to Rimmon in the south past Jerusalem will become a flat plain. The city of Jerusalem will stay in the same place, but it will be built high above the land around it. It will reach from the Benjamin Gate to the First Gate (that is, the Corner Gate) and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses. ¹¹ People will move to Jerusalem because it will be a safe place to live. It will never again be destroyed.

¹² But the LORD will punish the nations that fought against Jerusalem. He will send a terrible disease against them. Their skin will begin to rot while they are still alive. Their eyes will rot in their heads, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. ¹³ And on that day the LORD will confuse them with panic. Everyone will grab his neighbour, and they will fight each other. ¹⁴ Even Judah will fight against Jerusalem. And great amounts of gold, silver and clothing will be taken from the nations surrounding the city. ¹⁵ The same kind of terrible disease will strike the animals in the enemy camps, including all their horses, mules, camels and donkeys.

¹⁶ Some of the people who came to fight Jerusalem will survive. And every

year they will go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD All-Powerful. They will go to celebrate the Festival of Shelters. ¹⁷ Any nation on earth that refuses to go to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD All-Powerful, will be punished. No rain will fall on their land. ¹⁸ And this will also happen to the people of Egypt who do not go to take part in the festival. They will get the same punishment that the LORD gives to the other nations that refuse to go. ¹⁹ That will be the punishment for Egypt and for any other nation that does not go to celebrate the Festival of Shelters.

²⁰ At that time even the harnesses on the horses will have the label, only for the lord. And all the pots used in the LORD's Temple will be just as important as the bowls used at the altar. ²¹ In fact, every dish in Jerusalem and Judah will be only for the LORD All-Powerful. All the people offering sacrifices will come, take those dishes and cook their special meals in them.

At that time there will not be any merchants buying and selling things** in the Temple of the LORD All-Powerful.

**14:21 *merchants ... selling things* Literally, "Canaanites".