

hood (10:11-14). The finality of His sacrifice establishes the new covenant as final in that it brings absolute remission of sin (10:15-18).

In verse twelve Jehovah says concerning Joshua as symbolic of the Branch what Pilate would one day say concerning the Branch Himself, "Behold the man." (cp. *John* 19:5) As Joshua now stood with the mitre of the high priest capped by the crown of the king, so Jesus would stand offering Himself as the high priestly sacrifice and crowned with a crown of thorns. And above the head of this high priest as He offered Himself in sacrifice for His people, Pilate would write, "Behold the King of the Jews."

Joshua's coronation could not be more than symbolic, since he could never be king, not being of David's lineage. The temple which Joshua would build, would be also symbolic of the true temple to be built by the Christ.

Actually Joshua did not build the second temple. It was built under the direction of Zerubbabel, who governed Judah by appointment of Darius. This is one of the textual problems of *Zechariah* 6:9-15. It has been suggested that the name Zerubbabel actually appeared in the original rather than Joshua. This seems unlikely since the term Branch applied here is previously applied to Joshua. (cp. *Zechariah* 3:8)

It seems more likely that the prophet here credits Joshua with building the temple in order to carry forward the symbolic merger of the two offices of king and priest. In fact Judah, at this time, had no king. The civil authority resided in Zerubbabel and that by Persian appointment.

(Verse 13) When the true Branch came, of whom Joshua was only a symbol, He would build the true temple, of which the present temple would only be a symbol. (cp. *Ephesians* 2:19-22 and *Hebrews* 8:1-2)

Further, The Branch shall bear the glory. The Hebrew *hod*, here rendered "glory," means literally "honor, beauty, majesty." *Hebrews* 1:3 will say He is the effulgence (or brightness) of God's glory. Certainly this could only be said symbolically of Joshua.

The prophet makes three additional assertions concerning The Branch. He shall sit and rule upon His throne, He shall be a priest upon His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them, *ie.* between His functions as King and priest.

Men have died, the Christ has been crucified, denominations have been formed and countless souls have been lost eternally over the seeming inability of men to agree as to what is meant by the Christ sitting on a throne and ruling.

Had Jesus been willing to yield to the pressures of first century Jewry and lead an armed revolt for the purpose of establishing Himself upon a materialistic throne to rule an earthly kingdom, those who forced His crucifixion would have been among His most ardent supporters. He refused this kind of throne. He asserted His kingdom was not of this world. Yet thousands of His followers today insist that when He returns, He will do precisely what He refused to do in the first century.

Those who do not accept this materialistic view of Christ's reign are called everything from liberal to spiritualizers. It is assumed that to take the Bible literally is to take it materialistically.

And so the argument over Christ's kingly rule goes on. Surely, whatever the truth is, it is not to be found in such vindictiveness!

Of one thing we may be certain in this verse. It could not be said of Joshua that he would sit and rule upon his throne. Historically this simply is not true. The statement applies to Him of whom Joshua was merely a "sign." (3:8)

Zechariah further informs us that He shall sit as a priest on His throne. Here is the ultimate statement of the merger of the kingly and priestly offices in the Christ. In no other way did a high priest ever sit upon a throne in Israel.

And lastly, the counsel of peace shall be between these two Messianic functions. The co-working of civil and spiritual authority are never in conflict with one another. The majesty of the King never overshadows the self-effacing self-sacrifice of the priest. Nor does the loving compassion ever over-rule the just judgements and ultimate authority of the King.

The Jews would have had Jesus as King to rule over them and subjugate the Gentiles, but they could not accept His priestly offering of Himself as the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of His people.

The modern American Protestant is willing for Him to be the merciful and compassionate self-effacing priest but is not willing to accept His Kingly authority.

(Verse 14) The crowns, following the symbolic coronation of Joshua were to be kept in the temple as a memorial to those who had provided the gold and silver from which they were made.

(Verse 15) Here, in conjunction with the symbolic merging of the King and high priest, is a very important statement of the nature of the Messianic Temple. It is to be built not just by the Jews but by "*those that are afar off.*" Here is a term pregnant indeed with Messianic meaning.

At the preaching of the Gospel on the first Pentecost, Peter assured his listeners that the promise was not alone to them, who were all Jews, but to *"all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto Himself."*

In *Ephesians 2:17* Paul informs us that Christ Jesus came and *"preached peace to them that were afar off,"* as well as *"to them that were nigh."* This the apostle sees, as did Zechariah, as included in the building of the real temple for, "So then ye (Gentiles) are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief cornerstone: in whom each several building, fitly framed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit."

Please note, the ultimate temple, built by the King-priest and those who are afar off is a habitation for God in the Spirit.

Zechariah, chapter six, closes with another recurrence of the theme stated in 1:3. All that has been here promised is conditional. The remnant must do what their fathers seldom had done, namely diligently obey the voice of Jehovah God.

Chapter XXXV—Questions

The Proclamation of the Messiah

1. The eight visions deal with the removal of obstacles to Messiah's coming. The present "word of Jehovah" deals with _____.
2. Rather than a vision in 6:9-15, Zechariah receives _____.
3. Who were the donors of the gold and silver for the crowns?
4. The gold and silver may have been a gift from _____.
5. In the coronation _____ became, symbolically, the Messiah.
6. Discuss "The Branch" in 9:12 in relationship to the same term in 3:8-9.
7. Isaiah establishes "The Branch" as _____.
8. Jeremiah predicts The Branch in what terms?
9. Israel perfected is _____ Israel.
10. What does Joshua's coronation symbolize?
11. When the true Branch came He would build the true _____.
12. How will The Branch "bear the glory?"

13. What three additional assertions does Zechariah make concerning The Branch?
14. How could Jesus have won the allegiance of those who brought about His crucifixion?
15. Distinguish between taking the Bible "literally," and taking it "materialistically."
16. Show how the counsel of peace is between the kingly and priestly functions of the Messiah.
17. What was to be done with the two crowns following Joshua's coronation?
18. Discuss "Those that are afar off." (v. 15) in connection with *Acts 2:39* and *Ephesians 2:17*.
19. The ultimate temple built by our King-Priest is a habitation for God _____.
20. What recurs another time in the close of this section?

CHAPTER XXXVI

TEACHING ABOUT WORSHIP

Chapter seven has been called "*A Call to Civic Duty*." We cannot subscribe to this summary of the prophetic message contained in this chapter, but we mention it to underscore a truth which shines through both chapters seven and eight, namely that outward formal religious observances unrelated to present life are an affront to God. His promises are to those whose relationship to Him makes a real difference in their relationship to their fellowmen.

QUESTIONS ABOUT FASTING . . . Zechariah 7:1-3

RV . . . And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius, that the word of Jehovah came unto Zechariah in the fourth day of the ninth month, even in Chisleu. Now they of Beth-el had sent Sharezer and Regem-melech, and their men, to entreat the favor of Jehovah, and to speak unto the priests of the house of Jehovah of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these many years?

LXX . . . And it came to pass in the fourth year of Darius the king, that the word of the Lord came to Zacharias on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Cheseleu. And Sarasar and Arbeseer the king and his men sent to Baethel, and that to propitiate the Lord, speaking to

to the priests that were in the house of the Lord Almighty, and to the prophets, saying, The holy offering has come in hither in the fifth month, as it has done already many years.

COMMENTS

On December 4, 518 B.C., just over two years after the beginning of Zechariah's prophetic ministry, the Jews who lived in Beth-el sent two envoys, Sharezer and Regem-melech, to inquire of the priests of Jehovah concerning the continuation of the fasts which for seventy years had commemorated the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

Beth-el is located east of an imaginary line running north from Jerusalem to Nablus.

Beth-el's ruins were discovered by Robinson and are now identified with the village of Betin. Formerly inhabited by Canaanite kings, it became home to a number of Jews following the captivity. In Zechariah's day, as in the time of the pre-exilic divided kingdom, Beth-el lay just south of the border that divided Judea and Israel. In New Testament days the boundary between Judea and Samaria ran south of the village. This has led some to the erroneous conclusion that Zechariah's visitors were Samaritans, while in point of fact they were Jews returned from Babylon. They had settled in the northernmost part of what was originally the land of Benjamin and they had come to Jerusalem for instruction concerning the requirements of worship on the part of the returnees.

(Verse 3) The question asked is, *"Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself as I have these so many years?"* The concern is for the facts which related to the captivity.

In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which marked the nineteenth anniversary of Nebuchadnezzar's ascending the throne of Babylon, he sent his servant to Jerusalem to burn the temple and main buildings of the city.

In the seventh month, apparently of the same year, a member of the Babylonian royal family had assassinated the Jewish governor, Gedaliah, of Judah, and the Jews who were with him.

In memory of those two tragic events the Jews had fasted twice a year on the days marking their occurrence. It had been a burdensome experience for a people in captivity. The people of Beth-el now want to know if it is required to continue the practice.

THE FIRST ANSWERING STATEMENT . . . Zechariah 7:4-7

RV . . . Then came the word of Jehovah of hosts unto me, saying, Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and in the seventh month, even these seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me? And when ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves? Should ye not hear the words which Jehovah cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, and the South and the lowland were inhabited?

LXX . . . And the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying, Speak to the whole people of the land, and to the priests, saying, Though ye fasted or lamented in the fifth or seventh months (yea, behold, these seventy years) have ye at all fasted to me? And if ye eat or drink, do ye not eat and drink for yourselves? Are not these words which the Lord spoke by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and her cities round about her, and the hill country and the low country was inhabited?

COMMENTS

(Verses 4-7) Zechariah's answer to the question from Beth-el is made in six statements. Each statement is introduced with exact statements which indicate the prophet's words were actually those of Jehovah.

The *first* of these statements begins with 7:4 and continues through 7:7. The *second* begins with 7:8 and concludes the chapter. The *third* begins at 8:1 and runs through 8:7. The *fourth* statement begins with 8:9 and continues through 8:13. The *fifth* statement begins at 8:14 and ends with 8:17. The *sixth* and final statement in answer to the question from Beth-el begins with 8:18 and closes the chapter. It also forms the final paragraph of the first section of Zechariah's writing.

Jehovah's *first* answering statement (7:4-7) begins by reminding the questioners that the fasts in question had not been instituted by any divine directive. The reminder is in the form of three questions. "*Did ye at all fast unto me, even unto me?*" "*And when ye eat and when ye drink, do not ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?*"

To paraphrase these first two questions we might say "*When you began fasting in memory of the destruction and death, did you ask me?*"

The obvious conclusion is stated in the third question, "*Should ye not hear (more accurately have heard) the words which Jehovah cried by the former prophets . . . ?*" It would have been better for them

to have heard and heeded the former prophets than to have invented fasts for themselves with no divine directive.

The former prophets were those who had preached in the times before the captivity. The practice of what they taught would have been the appropriate response to the captivity rather than self-appointed fasts of mourning. Rather than mourn over what God had brought upon them, they should have corrected the circumstances which caused Him to punish them.

THE SECOND ANSWERING STATEMENT . . . Zechariah 7:8-14

RV . . . And the word of Jehovah came unto Zechariah, saying, Thus hath Jehovah of hosts spoken, saying, Execute true judgement, and show kindness and compassion every man to his brother; and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the sojourner, nor the poor; and let none of you devise evil against his brother in your heart. But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they might not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which Jehovah of hosts had sent by his Spirit by the former prophets: therefore there came great wrath from Jehovah of hosts. And it is come to pass that, as he cried, and they would not hear, so they shall cry, and I will not hear, said Jehovah of hosts; but I will scatter them with a whirlwind among all the nations which they have not known. Thus the land was desolate after them, so that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate.

LXX . . . And the word of the Lord came to Zacharias, saying, Thus saith the Lord Almighty; Judge righteous judgement, and deal mercifully and compassionately every one with his brother: and oppress not the widow, or the fatherless, or the stranger, or the poor; and let not one of you remember in his heart the injury of his brother. But they refused to attend, and madly turned their back, and made their ears heavy, so that they should not hear. And they made their heart disobedient, so as not to hearken to my law, and the words which the Lord Almighty sent forth by his Spirit by the former prophets: so there was great wrath from the Lord Almighty. And it shall come to pass, that as he spoke, and they hearkened not, so they shall cry, and I will not hearken, saith the Lord Almighty. And I will cast them out among all the nations, whom they know not; and the land behind them shall be made utterly destitute of any going through or returning: yea they have made the choice land a desolation.

COMMENTS

The second answering statement to the questioners from Beth-el is a summary of what was taught by the former prophets. (It would be helpful here to review at least one of the pre-exilic prophets, possibly Micah.)

(Verses 8-10) The demands of God which, if heeded, would have averted the necessity of the Babylonian exile can by no means be called unreasonable. He asked that the courts execute "true judgement." Yet, as we saw in our study of Micah, the courts were in the hands of evil men who used them for their own gain in extorting land and money from the poor and the defenseless.

It seems, looking back across centuries at the iniquities of the courts of another people, that justice for all would have been a matter of simple decency. Yet one cannot but wonder at our own judicial system. Heavy charges have been alleged against our courts to the effect that justice in America is a rich man's commodity. If this be so, we may be assured that the God Who executes judgement over all nations will not allow it to go unnoticed. This is the sort of thing that destroys nations. Whatever else we learn from the captivity of the Jews by Babylon, this is obvious.

The questioners are further reminded that God had, through the former prophets, commanded their fathers to *"show kindness and compassion, every man to his brother; and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the sojourner, nor the poor; and let none devise evil against his brother in your heart."*

Again these things seem, when viewed objectively, the common customs of any civilized people, particularly a people who claim to be God's people. Yet, as we saw, Micah described in detail the cruel and often violent violation of each of these practices and he had warned their fathers of the consequences.

As in the case of the other evils which brought about Judah's exile to Babylon, American culture today seems fairly riddled with such cruelty. Most any daily newspaper will supply ample illustrations of the truth of this charge.

(Verses 11-14) In these verses Zechariah reviews the response of the pre-exilic nation to the warnings of the prophets, and the consequences of that response. They had hardened their hearts, turned away and refused to listen.

Therefore God's wrath had come, and the people had been driven from the land as chaff is driven before a whirlwind. It was part of

this wrath that had brought about the burning and death which they commemorated by their annual fasts of mourning.

God's first answer to the questions about fasting may be summarized like this: the fasts in question were not ordained of God. The events remembered in the fasts were part of God's just punishment of the wickedness of the people. The people had not only deserved the punishment because of their evil ways, they deserved it doubly because they had refused to hear God's prophets who were sent to call them to repentance and to warn them of what would happen if they failed to repent. Therefore, those who mourned the just punishment of God upon their fathers had best leave off such meaningless ceremonies and themselves heed the teaching of the former prophets.

As James would have it "pure religion and undefiled before our God and father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." (*James 1:27*)

THE THIRD ANSWERING STATEMENT . . . Zechariah 8:1-8

RV . . . And the word of Jehovah of hosts came to me, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath. Thus saith Jehovah: I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called The city of truth; and the mountain of Jehovah of hosts. The holy mountain. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, every man with his staff in his hand for every age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in those days; should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith Jehovah of hosts. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; and I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.

LXX . . . And the word of the Lord Almighty came, saying, Thus saith the Lord Almighty; I have been jealous for Jerusalem and for Sion with great jealousy, and I have been jealous for her with great fury. Thus saith the Lord; I will return to Sion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a true city, and the mountain of the Lord Almighty a holy mountain. Thus saith the Lord Almighty; There shall yet dwell old men and old women in the streets

of Jerusalem, every one holding his staff in his hand for age. And the broad places of the city shall be filled with boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. Thus saith the Lord Almighty; If it shall be impossible in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, shall it also be impossible in my sight? saith the Lord Almighty. Thus saith the Lord Almighty; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and the west country; and I will bring them in, and cause them to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be to me a people, and I will be to them a God, in truth and in righteousness.

COMMENTS

The *third* statement made by God through Zechariah to the questioners from Beth-el is a statement of His love for His people and a desire that they be happy in the knowledge that He is with them in the land. Such a joyous relationship has no room for fasts, especially not for fasts of human origin.

(Verses 1-2) This is not the only passage of Scripture in which God is said to be jealous. (cp. *Exodus* 20:5, 34:14, *Deuteronomy* 4:24, 5:9, 6:15, *Joshua* 24:19, *Nahum* 1:2) In every one of these passages, God's jealousy is set against the background either of the covenant or the violation of the covenant in the worship of false gods.

Zechariah's statement of Jehovah's jealousy is likewise in the context of the covenant. It is Zion over which He is jealous. It is the restored remnant who marvel at the joys of His return to Jerusalem (v. 6). It is Jehovah of hosts who speaks (v. 4). The mountain (Zion) of Jehovah is the holy mountain. These are covenant terms.

God's jealousy is the jealousy of a righteous husband for His bride. In more than one passage in the pre-exilic prophets, Israel is presented as Jehovah's bride. (eg. *Isaiah* 49:18, 61:10, 62:5, *Jeremiah* 2:32, 7:34, 16:9, 25:10, 33:11, *Joel* 2:16).

Nor is the idea strange to the New Testament. (eg. *John* 3:29, *Revelation* 18:23, 21:2,9, 22:17) Israel, as presented in the New Testament, is the covenant people consisting of all who by obedient faith are God's people.

In both the Old and New Testaments, idolatry in particular and false worship in general are called harlotry or spiritual adultery. In turning from God to the worship of false gods, Israel played the role of the unfaithful wife. This, as we have previously seen, was the ultimate cause of the evil in the pre-exilic kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and

so the ultimate reason for the destruction of Israel and the captivity of Judah.

(Verses 3-5) Now the punishment of the faithless bride by her jealous husband is over. He has returned her to the homeland. In building the temple she has at last returned in her heart to Him. He will therefore return to live in the house Israel has built for Him. The twin hills, Zion and Moriah upon which Jerusalem and the temple sit are to be known as the holy mountain.

Bear in mind, that which is holy is that which is set apart to the accomplishment of God's purpose. The ultimate fulfillment of God's covenant promise would come when, on this very mountain, God's message of repentance and remission of sins began its call to all the nations of the earth. (cp. *Luke 24:44-ff, Acts, chapter 2*)

The happiness of the restored people in their land with their God is pictured by the prophet in figures of happy homelife. Old men and old women sit in the streets. Those who, because of age must lean upon a staff, go about the city. The streets are full of children at play. It is a picture of happy contented safety on the part of those who trust and obey the Lord and who thereby are aware of His presence in their midst. Long life and many children was, among the Jews, the epitome of the "good life."

(Verse 6) The remnant, having returned to a desolate forsaken land with its buildings all in ruins, would look with amazement upon the restoration.

"*Should it also be,*" Jehovah asks rhetorically, "*marvellous in mine eyes?*" Those who had failed to heed his warnings before the captivity, had also failed to hear His promises of deliverance. Therefore they were astounded that it should come so completely to pass. But to Jehovah, Who from the beginning had planned it so, it was no cause for marvel at all.

(Verses 7-8) The joy of the returnees, and their amazement at what God has wrought through them blends quite normally into a glimpse of the final fulfillment in Messianic Israel. In that day, Jehovah will save His people, not only from Babylon and from among the Jews. His people will come from the east and the west. The presence of God among them will not be symbolic, as in the temple, but in truth and righteousness. Jesus saw this in His own coming. At the Samaritan well He said that the hour was now that true worship would be in spirit and truth rather than in the temple made with hands. (cf. *John 4:23-24*)

THE FOURTH STATEMENT . . . Zechariah 8:9-13

RV . . . Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words from the mouth of the prophets that were in the day that the foundation of the house of Jehovah of hosts was laid, even the temple, that it might be built. For before those days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in, because of the adversary: for I set all men every one against his neighbor. But now I will not be unto the remnant of this people as in the former days, saith Jehovah of hosts. For there shall be the seed of peace; the vine shall give its fruit, and the ground shall give its increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these things. And it shall come to pass that, as ye were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing. Fear not, but let your hands be strong.

LXX . . . Thus saith the Lord Almighty; Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words out of the mouth of the prophets, from the day that the house of the Lord Almighty was founded, and from the time that the temple was built. For before those days the wages of men could not be profitable, and there could be no hire of cattle, and there could be no peace by reason of the affliction to him that went out or to him that came in: for I would have let loose all men, every one against his neighbour. But now I will not do to the remnant of this people according to the former days, saith the Lord Almighty. But I will shew peace: the vine shall yield her fruit, and the land shall yield her produce, and the heaven shall give its dew: and I will give as an inheritance all these things to the remnant of my people. And it shall come to pass, as ye were a curse among the nations, O house of Juda, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: be of good courage, and strengthen your hands.

COMMENTS

(Verses 9-10) Before the blessed state described in the third statement can become reality the people must get to work with their hands and build the temple. There will be little prosperity in the land until this is accomplished. Their labour will be all in vain and they will be constantly at odds with one another until they have finished the task

the Lord, through His prophets, has set before them. (cp. *Haggai 1:6-11*)

(Verses 11-12) Once the temple has been rebuilt the promised blessed conditions will be forthcoming. God's relationship to the restored remnant will then be different than it is now in their hesitancy to rebuild, different than it has been during the centuries of their rebellion and punishment. Rather than chastisement, He will heap upon them the blessings of the land.

(Verse 13) Again the ecstasy of blessing blends forward into a Messianic prediction. Israel, who have been a curse among the nations shall be saved and become a blessing.

Here, in capsule form, is a statement of God's covenant purpose in the Jewish people. The term "house of Judah" is that from which we derive the term Jew. The term Israel is the term which stresses the covenant relationship of the Jews to Jehovah.

The remnant of the Jewish race has returned to the land promised by God in the establishment of the covenant. As the remainder of the race they have been saved (or will be upon completion of the temple).

The remnant was also the remainder of the covenant people. As such they would be saved in a much greater way with the coming of the Messiah. At that point they would be a blessing.

Here, at the beginning of their restored national life, is the same covenant terminology which has marked every other beginning in the history of this people. In the call of Abraham, when the covenant was voiced for the first time, God had made the promise to him in words identical to these (*Genesis 12:2*). In the same statement, God had made it clear to Abraham that the blessing was intended for the whole human race. (*Genesis 12:3*)

In the soliloquy recorded in *Genesis 18:17-ff*, God reaffirms this covenant purpose in very similar language. (v. 18)

To Isaac God spoke similarly, as the covenant passed from the first to the second generation. (*Genesis 26:4*)

When the covenant was reaffirmed to Jacob, the language was the same. (*Genesis 28:14*)

It was this promise that God remembered when He was about to lead Jacob's progeny out of Egypt. (*Exodus 2:24*) The progeny accepted this covenant as the condition upon which they would become a peculiar treasure to Jehovah, and a nation of priests. (*Exodus 19:5-6*)

Now the remnant, upon taking up residence in the land once more, once more becoming a nation of priests in the restored temple, are reminded very pointedly that the reason for their existence has to

do with their relationship to God's purpose in all the nations of the earth.

They had, in time past, become a curse rather than a blessing upon the nations. They had assumed they were special before God merely for their own sakes, and so believed the rest of the world inferior. They had proved unfaithful to God themselves and so thwarted the fulfillment of His purpose to bless all nations through them.

Consequently, ten of the twelve tribes had been wiped out and the remaining people led captive.

* Now, returned from exile and re-established with the symbolic presence of Jehovah in their midst they are not to forget why He has spent all these patient centuries with them. The purpose for which they had been called into being in the beginning is exactly the purpose of their present restoration.

Therefore, because God has more at stake in their work than do they, they are once more called upon to: "*fear not, but let your hands be strong.*" To understand God's purpose in building is to fearlessly build in the strength of the Lord.

THE FIFTH STATEMENT . . . Zechariah 8:14-17

RV . . . For thus saith Jehovah of hosts: As I thought to do evil unto you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith Jehovah of hosts, and I repented not; so again have I thought in these days to do good unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not. These are the things that ye shall do: Speak ye every man the truth with his neighbor; execute the judgement of truth and peace in your gates; and let none of you devise evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith Jehovah.

LXX . . . For thus saith the Lord Almighty; As I took counsel to afflict you when your fathers provoked me, saith the Lord Almighty, and I repented not: so have I prepared and taken counsel in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Juda: be ye of good courage. These are the things which ye shall do; speak truth every one with his neighbour; judge truth and peaceable judgement in your gates: and let none of you devise evil in his heart against his neighbour; and love not a false oath: for all these things I hate, saith the Lord Almighty.

COMMENTS

(Verses 14-15) The *fifth* statement is, in effect, a brief reaffirmation of the first. The fathers, *ie.* those who lived on the other side

of the exile, had provoked Jehovah's wrath. He had determined to punish them and would not be dissuaded.

Now He is equally determined to "start all over again" with the remnant. Just as originally He had intended a blessed and peaceful relationship with Israel in the land of promise while leading them toward the fulfillment of His purpose, so now in the restoration it is His desire to bless the remnant toward the same end.

(Verses 15(c)-17) For this reason they are not to live in fear. God's wrath is neither petulant nor arbitrary. So long as they are faithful and live as He desires they have no reason to fear it.

There can be no doubt as to what will please Him. They must, as the former prophets had entreated their fathers, be honest with each other. They must be just in their judicial proceedings. They must not scheme to take advantage of the weak and poor. They must not go to court with false oaths to accomplish selfish purposes.

The reason is plain. He hates all these things. A righteous God could scarcely do otherwise.

THE SIXTH STATEMENT . . . Zechariah 8:18-23

RV . . . And the word of Jehovah of hosts came unto me, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts; The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; there love truth and peace. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come peoples, and the inhabitants of many cities; and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to entreat the favor of Jehovah, and go to seek Jehovah of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek Jehovah of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favor of Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, they shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.

LXX . . . And the word of the Lord Almighty came to me, saying, Thus saith the Lord Almighty, The fourth fast, and the fifth fast, and the seventh fast, and the tenth fast, shall be to the house of Juda for joy and gladness, and for good feasts; and ye shall rejoice; and love ye the truth and peace. Thus saith the Lord Almighty; Yet shall many peoples come, and the inhabitants of many cities; and the inhabitants of five cities shall come together to one city, saying, Let us go to make

supplication to the Lord, and to seek the face of the Lord Almighty; I will go also. And many peoples and many nations shall come to seek earnestly the face of the Lord Almighty in Jerusalem, and to obtain favour of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord Almighty; In those days my word shall be fulfilled if ten men of all the languages of the nations should take hold—even take hold of the hem of a Jew, saying, We will go with thee; for we have heard that God is with you.

COMMENTS

The *final* statement in answer to the questioners from Beth-el is also the final entreaty of God to the people to build the temple. It begins with a promise of joy in the stead of fasting and closes with a Messianic promise that through His people all the people of earth will come to share His blessings.

(Verses 18-19) The fasts occasioned, albeit without divine sanction, by the punishment of Judah through Babylon will give way to joy and gladness. The fast days themselves will become feast days.

Jewish history provides an ironic footnote concerning these fasts which God promised would become feasts. The fast of the fourth month observed on the 17th of the Hebrew month of *Tammuz*, is now observed in connection with four incidents: (1) the building of the golden calf, (2) Moses' breaking of the tablets of the law, (3) the cessation of daily sacrifices prior to the actual Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem^{bl} and (4) the actual occupation of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

The fast of the fifth month, is held on the 9th day of *Ab* by modern Jewry, in connection with the destruction of Solomon's temple by Nebuchadnezzar and of the second temple on the same day of the year by Titus in 70 A.D. Connected with the modern observance of this fast also is the memory of the day God turned the Israelites back from entering the promised land a year and a half after they left Egypt, and the capture of the city of Bether by Hadrian c. 135 A.D.

The fast of the seventh month, now observed on the third day of *Tishri* remembers the murder of Gedaliah at Mizpah, just as during the captivity.

The tenth month fast remembers, on the tenth day of *Tibeth*, as it did in Babylon, the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

From this it would seem that the Jews have missed the joy of their

deliverance from captivity, just as in rejecting Jesus they have missed the joy of their deliverance from sin.

On is constrained to believe that Zechariah's picture of joy in this passage, as others, is symbolic of the joy of salvation in Christ rather than of any joy on the part of those who seem forever blind to the blessings of Jehovah.

(Verses 20-2) The Messianic age will come. People of many nations will join the faithful of Israel in the enjoyment of God's blessings. The passage is a perfect picture of what is happening as the influence of the church, beginning in Jerusalem, has brought to the world the Jehovah once known only to the Jews.

These verses are very reminiscent of *Isaiah* 2:-4, and of *Joel* 2:28-ff. If by them we are to understand material promises, then history fails to record their fulfillment. If, on the other hand, these verses, and other such prophetic passages are symbolic of the real blessings of Jehovah for His people in the Messianic age, we have but to count our blessings as Christians to know the real meaning of these verses. Personally, I believe the latter to be the intent of the passage.

What God began in the Spirit will not be perfected in the flesh (cp. *Galatians* 3:3). God's purpose has always been to bless the peoples of the whole earth. When the temple is completed and the symbolic priesthood and sacrifices restored, the final barrier to Messiah's coming will have been removed. When He comes, men from every nation under heaven will seek the God of Israel. The faithful remnant would become the nucleus of the Messiah's true Israel, and as they went everywhere from Jerusalem preaching the Gospel, men of every nation would turn to them for knowledge of the one true God.

Chapter XXXVI—Questions

Teaching About Worship

1. Outward formal religious observances unrelated to present life are an _____ to _____.
2. God's promises are to those whose relationship to Him makes a real difference in _____.
3. On December 4, _____ B.C. those who lived in Beth-el sent messengers to Jehovah with a question.
4. What was that question?
5. Where is Beth-el?

Z E C H A R I A H

6. Show that those who lived in Beth-el were not Samaritans but Jews.
7. The fast on the seventh day of the fifth month marked the _____ anniversary of _____.
8. The fast of the seventh Month remembered _____.
9. Zechariah's answer to the question from Beth-el was in _____ statements.
10. Give the references for each of these statements.
11. What was the first answer?
12. Who were "the former prophets?"
13. What was the second answer?
14. The questioners are further reminded that God, through the former prophets, had commanded their fathers to "_____".
18. The happiness of the restored people is presented in figures of happy _____.
19. The joy and amazement of the returnees blends quite normally into a glimpse of _____.
20. What is Zechariah's fourth answering statement?
21. Again the ecstasy of blessing blends forward into _____ prediction.
22. At the beginning of their restored national life is the same _____ terminology which had marked the beginning of _____.
23. The returned remnant is once more to be a nation of _____.
24. How had the Jews become a curse upon the nations rather than a blessing?
25. Discuss the idea that "God has more at stake in this work than do they."
26. What was the fifth statement in answer to the questioners from Beth-el?
27. How does it relate to the first statement?
28. So; long as the people are _____ and _____ they have no reason to fear God's wrath.
29. What was the sixth statement?
30. This statement is also an entreaty to God's people to _____.
31. It begins with a promise of _____ instead of _____ and closes with a _____ promise.

PREFACE TO SECTION II

32. Modern Jews observe the fast of the fourth month in connection with _____, _____, _____, and _____.
33. The fast of the fifth month is held in connection with _____, and _____. It also remembers _____ and _____.
34. The fast of the seventh month is now observed in remembrance of _____.
35. The tenth month fast recalls _____.
36. What do you conclude from the fact that these fasts are still observed by the Jews?
37. Verses 20-23 are a perfect picture of what is happening as the influence of the _____, beginning at _____ has brought the world the _____ once known only to the Jews.

CHAPTER XXXVII

PREFACE TO SECTION II

The opening verse of Zechariah, chapter nine, marks the beginning of the truly apocalyptic section of the prophet's work. As has been previously indicated, the probable reason for the shift to this style of writing is to avoid a confrontation with the Medo-Persian authorities. We shall see that, in this last six chapters, Zechariah makes predictions which, if written literally, would have brought the wrath of an otherwise benevolent Darius down upon Judah perhaps to her permanent destruction. Daniel, written during the Babylonian captivity, and Revelation, written during the heat of Roman persecution are two further examples among others in the Bible of the use of apocalypsis in writing predictive prophecy for the purpose of protecting the readers.

Because of the sudden shift in style of writing between this and the first section of the book, the form critics of the Bible have had a field day with Zechariah. Their attacks have centered largely upon the date of writing and the identity of the author.

It is not within the scope of this work to answer these critics, except to say that there is no solid evidence, either internal or external to deny its place as part of the message of Zechariah. The sudden change in style is brought about by the content of the predictions. The change in subject matter is occasioned by the fact that, unlike the

first eight chapters, this section is not written to motivate the people to build. It deals with that which is to come after the building of the temple.

Having said this in defense of the second section of Zechariah, we must, for the sake of our own study, recognize that, in all probability, the second section of Zechariah was written much later in the life of the prophet than the first section. There are in it no problems relating to the building of the temple. The author does not use the first person singular, as he did in the first section, and most important, the historical viewpoint is entirely changed from the first part of the book.

A broad outline of the section will divide it into three major divisions: (1) the triumph of Zion through her Messiah (9:1-10:12), (2) the good and foolish shepherds (11:1-17) and (3) final events (chapters 12-14).

The third of these major divisions may be subdivided into (a) Judah's victory over the attackers and (b) the approaching Day of the Lord.

The final section of Zechariah is easier to follow if one keeps in mind (1) the prophet is concerned primarily with the final consummation of God's dealing with the Jews as a race and nation and (2) in the foretelling of this he interrupts himself frequently to deal with historic events which will intervene between his own time and the end time.

The coming of the Messiah must await the rebuilding of the temple, the invasion of the Greeks, and the Maccabean revolt. The final restoration of the Jewish nation must await the coming of the Good Shepherd, His rejection by the Jews, and the consequent dissolution of the covenant relationship with the Jews as a race. This will be followed by a break up of the nation and its dispersion throughout the world. Only then will the nation be re-established, and wail at the sight of Him Whom they have pierced and become the instrument of establishing the universal reign of Jehovah.

We must digress here to call attention again to Zechariah's influence on the New Testament. Most of this influence comes from the second section of the book.

In the first section we saw the recurrent references to the Branch. These are not directly quoted in the New Testament, but the concept of the Messiah as priest and King expressed in this figure plays a prominent role in the New Testament understanding of Jesus as Lord and Christ.

PREFACE TO SECTION II

The emphasis which we find in the second section of Zechariah are directly quoted in the New Testament as applying specifically to the events and the person of Jesus. The king riding on the ass (*Zechariah* 9:9) is seen as fulfilled literally in Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (cf. *Matthew* 21:4-ff, *John* 12:15).

The betrayal of Jesus by Judas for thirty pieces of silver is seen as the fulfillment of *Zechariah* 11:12-f. (cp. *Matthew* 26:15, 27:9-ff)

When the Jews who insisted to Pilate that Jesus be executed looked upon the dying Savior, the Gospel writers saw it as the fulfillment of *Zechariah* 12:10. (cp. *John* 19:37, *Revelation* 1:7)

The smitten shepherd of *Zechariah* 13:7 is seen fulfilled in the crucifixion also. (cp. *Matthew* 26:31, *Mark* 14:27)

Jesus is also seen as the King who reigns from sea to sea (*Zechariah* 9:10) and the fountain for cleansing (*Zechariah* 13:1).

Other influences of Zechariah on the New Testament include the prophet's insistence upon honesty of God's people one with another (*Zechariah* 8:16 cp. *Ephesians* 4:25), as well as some of John's word pictures in Revelation, as for example the four horsemen (*Zechariah* 6:1-8 cp. *Revelation* 6:2-ff), the two olive trees (*Zechariah* 4:3-ff cp. *Revelation* 11:4), and the lampstand and seven eyes (*Zechariah* 4:2-10 cp. *Revelation* 1:12-f).

Chapter XXXVII—Questions

Preface to Section II

1. The opening verse of chapter nine marks the beginning of the truly _____ section of the prophetic work of Zechariah.
2. What is the probable reason for the shift to this style?
3. How have the critics attacked Zechariah at this point?
4. Suggest some answers to this criticism.
5. When was Zechariah 9-14 written in relationship to the opening chapters?
6. Give a brief outline of Zechariah, chapters 9-14.
7. The first half of the final section of Zechariah is concerned with _____.
8. The final half of this section is concerned with _____.
9. Discuss Zechariah's influence on the New Testament.
10. What are other Biblical examples of apocalyptic writing?

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE TRIUMPH OF ZION
THROUGH HER MESSIAH

JUDGEMENT AGAINST ISRAEL'S ENEMIES . . . Zechariah 9:1-8

RV . . . The burden of the word of Jehovah upon the land of Had-rach, and Damascus shall be its resting place (for the eye of man and of all the tribes of Israel is toward Jehovah); and Hamath, also, which bordereth thereon; Tyre and Sidon, because they are very wise. And Tyre did build herself a stronghold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets. Behold, the Lord will dispossess her, and he will smite her power in the sea; and she shall be devoured with fire. Ashkelon shall see it, and fear; Gaza also, and shall be sore pained; and Ekron, for her expectation shall be put to shame; and the king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited. And a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines. And I will take away his blood out of his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth; and he also shall be a remnant for our God; and he shall be as a chieftain in Judah, and Ekron as a Jebusite. And I will encamp about my house against the army, that none pass through or return; and no oppressor shall pass through them any more: for now have I seen with mine eyes.

LXX . . . The burden of the word of the Lord in the land of Sedrach, and his sacrifice shall be in Damascus; for the Lord looks upon men, and upon all the tribes of Israel. And in Emath, even in her coasts, are Tyre and Sidon, because they were very wise. And Tyrus built strongholds for herself, and heaped up silver as dust, and gathered gold as the mire of the ways. And therefore the Lord will take them for a possession, and will smite her power in the sea; and she shall be consumed with fire. Ascalon shall see, and fear; Gaza also, and shall be greatly pained, and Accaron; for she is ashamed at her trespass; and the king shall perish from Gaza, and Ascalon shall not be inhabited. And aliens shall dwell in Azotus, and I will bring down the pride of the Philistines. And I will take their blood out of their mouth, and their abominations from between their teeth; and these also shall be left to our God, and they shall be as a captain of a thousand in Juda, and Accaron as a Jebusite. And I will set up a defence for my house, that they may not pass through, nor turn back, neither shall there any

more come upon them one to drive them away: for now have I seen with mine eyes.

COMMENTS

The theme of chapter nine is struck in verse nine. It is the coming of the Messianic King (*vs.* 9-17). The judgement of God against Israel's traditional enemies set forth in these opening verses are to be seen as preparation for that event. Not only God's dealing with these nations as the enemies of His people, but all his dealings in history prior to Messiah's coming were in preparation for it.

(Verse 1) The term "*burden* (more accurately "oracle") of *the word of Jehovah*" is reminiscent of Malachi. It is calculated to place the stamp of divine origin on the second section of the book. The method of inspiration seems to differ from that of the first section in that the prophet does not claim here to have seen a vision. Nevertheless, what he is about to say is not a matter of his own subjective understanding of historic events. He is speaking from God as one moved by the Holy Spirit. (cp. *II Peter* 1:19-21, *Hebrews* 1:1)

The first part of this oracle is concerned with the land of Hadrach, and its focal point is Damascus. (cp. *Isaiah* 21:13) Hadrach is a symbolic name for Syria. The name itself was a little used one applying to a region of Syria also called Bikathanen. It is the western interior part of the country surrounded by hills. Hadrach takes its name from this surrounding. The word means literally "enclosed."

The burden of Jehovah would focus on Damascus until that ancient enemy of Israel was utterly brought to its knees. History records the fulfillment of this prediction when Alexander the Great took the city, c. 344 B.C. It subsequently became Hellenized and is listed as the first of ten such cities which formed the Decapolis.

The parenthetical statement by which Zechariah explains this must not be overlooked if one would begin to understand the hand of Providence in the ebb and flow of history. The English text is misleading when it states, "*the eye of man and of all the tribes of Israel is toward Jehovah.*" The marginal rendering in the Standard Edition is more to the point, "*Jehovah hath an eye upon men and upon the tribes of Israel.*" The point being that God's covenant purpose to bless all the nations of the earth in Israel's Seed is the all determining factor in every historic development, even the defeat of one pagan nation by another.

(Verses 2-4) In rapid succession Zechariah deals with the future of the other enemies of Israel immediately adjacent to her. Tyre and Sidon were next in Alexander's plan to conquest. Sidon, as Damascus, surrendered peaceably, but Tyre was subdued only after a siege.

The city harbored a large squadron of mercenaries in the pay of the Persians. The resistance was so bitter that, when Tyre finally fell, Alexander departed from his usual policy of benevolence toward conquered cities and allowed his Macedonians to slaughter eight thousand Tyrians and sell thirty thousand into slavery.

(Verse 5) Ashkelon, seeing the fate of Tyre, surrendered without resistance. Thus the ancient seaport of the Philistines became, in turn, a Greek city to plague Israel no more.

Gaza, on the other hand, chose to resist the Macedonian conqueror. Durant records, "Gaza fought till every man in the city was dead and every woman raped."

Ekron, the southernmost of the Philistine cities, had hoped in vain that Alexander would be stopped by Tyre in his march through Palestine to Egypt. The hope was turned to disappointment as the Macedonian phalanx swept down the Mediterranean coast engulfing by either peaceful surrender or siege all who stood in its path.

The king of Gaza comes in for special attention by the prophet, as well he might, considering what lay in store for him. When Gaza fell, following a two month siege, and ten thousand of its inhabitants were killed while the rest were sold to the slave merchants who followed in the wake of Alexander's armies, special treatment was waiting Betis, the Persian satrap. This puppet "king" found himself tied to Alexander's chariot by two thongs through the soles of his feet and dragged through the city in one of the young conqueror's characteristic fits of revenge against one who resisted his forward march.

(Verses 6-7) Ashdod shall be ruled by an alien race. (The rendering "bastard" here is misleading.) (The Septuagint is more accurate.) It is a clear prediction of the reign of the Greeks and Romans, beginning with Alexander.

The pride of the Philistines has to do with the peculiar form of idolatry practiced in Philistia which included the drinking of the blood of sacrificed animals. Hence, when the Philistines are conquered by Alexander, Hellenized by the Ptolemaic dynasty of Egypt, and subsequently converted to Jehovah, the blood was taken "out of his mouth."

The law made the drinking of blood an abomination (cf. *Genesis* 9:4, *Leviticus* 7:26). When in Philistia "the son of the stranger joined himself to the Lord" (*Isaiah* 56:3) the abomination would be taken

THE TRIUMPH OF ZION THROUGH HER MESSIAH 9:8-17

"from between his teeth," and the Philistine also became part of Jehovah's faithful remnant! Just as the Jebusites, the original inhabitants of Jerusalem had been incorporated into the people of Judah (*II Samuel 24:16*, etc.) in a subordinate position (*I Kings 9:20,21*), so the Philistines, traditional enemies of Israel are to ultimately be assimilated as proselytes. Again history vindicates prophecy.

(Verse 8) The prophet reassures his readers, who have worked to rebuild the temple, that when all this is taking place around them, they, and their work will be protected by the Lord. History records that Alexander's conquest of Jerusalem was by invitation. He did not oppress them, but rather afforded them privileges. No Jew was injured.

THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH KING . . . Zechariah 9:9-17

RV . . . Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy king cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off; and he shall speak peace unto the nations; and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. As for thee also, because of the blood of thy covenant I have set free thy prisoners from the pit wherein is no water. Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope: even today do I declare that I will render double unto thee. For I have bent Judah for me, I have filled the bow with Ephraim; and I will stir up thy sons, O Zion, against the sons of Greece, and will make thee as the sword of a mighty man. And Jehovah shall be seen over them; and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning; and the Lord Jehovah will blow the trumpet, and will go with whirlwinds of the south. Jehovah of hosts will defend them; and they shall devour, and shall tread down the sling-stones; and they shall drink, and make a noise as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, like the corners of the altar. And Jehovah their God will save them in that day as the flock of his people; for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted on high over his land. For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty! grain shall make the young men flourish, and new wine the virgins.

LXX . . . Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion; proclaim it aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, the King is coming to thee, just, and a Saviour; he is meek and riding on an ass, and a young foal. And

he shall destroy the chariots out of Ephraim, and the horse out of Jerusalem, and the bow of war shall be utterly destroyed; and there shall be abundance and peace out of the nations; and he shall rule over the waters as far as the sea, and the rivers to the ends of the earth. And thou by the blood of thy covenant hast sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit that has no water. Ye shall dwell in strongholds, ye prisoners of the congregation: and for one day of thy captivity I will recompense thee double. For I have bent thee, O Juda, for myself as a bow, I have filled Ephraim; and I will raise up thy children, O Sion, against the children of the Greeks, and I will handle thee as the sword of a warrior. And the Lord shall be over them, and his arrow shall go forth as lightning: and the Lord Almighty shall blow with the trumpet; and shall proceed with the tumult of his threatening. The Lord Almighty shall protect them, and overwhelm them with sling-stones; and they shall swallow them down as wine, and fill the bowls as the altar. And the Lord their God shall save them in that day, even his people as a flock; for holy stones are rolled upon his land. For if he has anything good, and if he has anything fair, the young men shall have corn, and there shall be fragrant wine to the virgins.

COMMENTS

The predictions of this section find their immediate meaning in the Maccabean revolt and their ultimate fulfillment in the coming of Jesus. The victory of Judas Maccabee over Antiochus Epiphanes led the prophet quite naturally to exultation over God's final victory through the Messiah.

For the sake of clarity we shall deal with the two aspects of this section separately, first as it applies to the Maccabean revolt, and afterward as it applies to the coming of Jesus Christ.

In order to understand the prophecies concerning the Maccabean war with the Seleucid Emperor Antiochus IV, it is helpful to review the history of Hellenism in the near east immediately following the death of Alexander the Great.

After nine years in Asia, Alexander began to doubt the wisdom of Aristotle's instruction to him to treat the "barbarians" as slaves. He found in the aristocratic elements of Persia a refinement seldom seen among the temperamental and warring Greeks. He doubted that his uncouth Macedonians could replace these Persian nobles in successful administration of the conquered peoples of the orient.

He began to think of himself not as a Macedonian emperor ruling a conquered Persian empire but as a Graeco-Persian emperor ruling over Greeks and Persians as equals.

Pursuant to this policy Alexander married a Bactrian princess and encouraged his officers to follow his example. He opened the Persian land to Greek colonists and gave large doweries to his soldiers who would marry middle eastern women.

All this marked the beginning of the Hellenization of that part of the world which included the holy land and which was vital to the development of events in the Seleucid empire following the death of Alexander.

Another factor in Alexander's reign was to greatly influence the subsequent history of the holy land. He did not choose a successor. When he was dying in Babylon following a drinking bout at the age of thirty three (323 B.C.) he was asked to whom he would leave his empire. He answered simply, "To the strongest."

Alexander's empire had no solid root. He was a Macedonian attempting to be Greek and he became almost a Persian. His attempt to Hellenize the orient resulted in no strong bond designed to hold the empire together. It was consequently no strange thing that it came apart, so to speak, shortly after his death.

The division came in five parts. Antipater took Macedonia and Greece; Lysimachus ruled Thrace; Antigonos, Asia Minor; Ptolemy, Egypt; and most significant for our purposes, Seleucus took Babylon, including Palestine as far south as the southern border of Samaria.

A struggle ensued between Seleucid Asia and Ptolemaic Egypt for control of what the Romans would later call Palestine. The original division gave Palestine south of Samaria to Ptolemy and it became part of Egypt. The Seleucids never agreed to this division, desiring full control of the trade route which passed through Damascus and Jerusalem.

From 312-198 B.C. the Ptolemies were able to resist the Seleucid attempts to wrest Judea from them by force. The Jews were allowed a large measure of local self-government. The ruling elements were the hereditary high priest and the gerousia or Council of Elders which had been established by Ezra and Nehemiah. The pattern of Orthodox Judaism from that time to now was set by the regulations passed by this body of seventy and called Dibre Soferim.

In effect this regulation simply attempted to prevent the Jews from succumbing to the Hellenistic pressures with which they were surrounded. Art, music, dress, customs, and most of all religion were

over-shadowed by the synagogue chant of the rabbis, "Shammai Israel, Adonai eleenu, Adonai echod," "Hear O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord is One."

A concerted effort was made by the Hellenists to break down this resistance. Judea was ringed with a series of Greek settlements in league with the trans-Jordanian Decapolis. Each of these tantalized the Judeans with temples to Greek gods and goddesses, Academies, schools, gymnasiums and nude games.

The extent to which the Hellenizing efforts succeeded is seen in the fact that several young Jews submitted to surgery to remove the sign of the covenant so they would not be ridiculed when participating in the games.

Historians believe three factors prevented the complete overwhelming of the Jews by Hellenism. The persecution of Antiochus IV which drove the Orthodox underground and polarized public sympathy in their favor, the protection of the Romans which came at the request of the Maccabees, and the power and prestige of the Law of Moses which even the most Hellenistic Jews agreed came from God.

The persecution began in 198 B.C. when Antiochus III finally defeated the Ptolemys and Judea became part of the Seleucid Empire. Antiochus III was received by the Jews as a liberator, but their joy was short-lived. His successor Antiochus IV proved to be a veritable despot. He appointed as high priest one Jason who was a leader of Hellenistic sympathizers in Jerusalem. An order came from Antiochus at Jason's request for the establishing of Greek institutions like those of the Decapolis in Jerusalem itself.

Unhappy with Jason for the slowness with which the Hellenizing of Judea was proceeding, Antiochus replaced him with Menelous. Menelous proceeded to get to the core of the matter. Jehovah was made one with the Greek Zeus and sacrifices were offered to them according to the Greek practice rather than the Jewish law.

Such shocking practice brought predictable consequences. The majority of the Jews swung to the Chasidim, or anti-Hellenist party. Antiochus IV declared himself Epiphanes or "God made manifest."

In 168 B.C. Antiochus was defeated by the Ptolemaic Pharaoh Popilius, and Jerusalem received the mistaken report that he had been killed. Their celebration was cut short by Antiochus himself appearing on the scene.

Convinced that the Jews had been responsible for his failure in Egypt, he slaughtered thousands of them, robbed the temple, restored Menelaus whom the Jews had deposed and rededicated the temple to

Zeus. He ordered the destruction of the altar, replaced it with a Greek altar and then committed the ultimate blasphemy by sacrificing a pig on it! Jews were forced on pain of death to eat pork so sacrificed. Jerusalem was razed by flames and the Jewish population was sold into slavery.

The entire reign of Antiochus Epiphanes was, and still is, known as "the abomination of desolation," in Jewish historical writings.

During all this, the Chasidim preached guerilla resistance. Among those who went underground was one Mattathias of the house of Hasmonai of the tribe of Aaron, and his five sons Judas, Simon, Eleazor, Jonathan and Johannan Caddis.

Mattathias began the active revolt by killing a Jew who was approaching the altar to offer a swine, and shouting, "Whoever is zealous for the Law, and wishes to support the covenant, let him follow me." He had set the stage for every Jewish Zealot from then until now.

Upon Mattathias' death, leadership of the revolt passed to Judas who was called Maccabee, "the hammer." Judas was a saint in prayer and a terror in battle. Against great odds he defeated the Greek mercenaries at Emmaus. The victory was complete, yet Antiochus was not convinced. He sent an even larger force to wipe out the rebels.

These were in turn wiped out at Mizpah. In 164 B.C. Judas cleansed and rededicated the temple and restored the priestly services.

Upon the death of Antiochus Epiphanes in 163 B.C., his successor, Lysias, offered the Jews full religious freedom if they would disarm. The Chasidim consented. Judas refused, asserting that to be really religiously free the Jews must be politically free. This difference was the beginning of civil strife which produced the party of the Pharisees, who agreed with the Chasidim and the Sadducees whose political ambitions matched those of Judas.

Civil war ensued with the Maccabeans now persecuting those of the Hellenistic faction. Israel was engulfed in civil strife.

Judas was slain in 161 B.C. His successor, brother Jonathan, was killed in 143. The only surviving brother carried the favor of Rome and with the help of that growing power established Jewish independence in 142 B.C. Thus establishing the Hasmonian dynasty.

This period of independence prevailed, although torn by internal strife, until the coming of the Roman Legions seventy nine years later.

In *Zechariah* 9:9-10 the prophet begins to rejoice. Now that the temple is built and the land has returned to Jehovah, the appearance of the Messianic King seems imminent. We will have more to say shortly about this King and His appearance.

In 9:11-f the joyous coming of the Messiah is postponed by the stark reality of the present grim situation. The struggle with Greece must first be won. The disbursed are encouraged to return to their home land and join in the struggle. They have the promise that they will prevail (*v.* 13). Jehovah Himself will fight for them (*v.* 14-15). He will save them as His people (*v.* 16). The sling-stones of the Maccabees will eat the flesh of the Seleucids. The victorious rebels would be drenched with blood like the horns of the altar (*v.* 15) and in their victories they would shine like the glittering jewels of a crown (*v.* 16).

The fierce description of the struggle for independence from the Hellenizing Seleucid Greek empire ends on a note of praise to God for His goodness.

THE MESSIANIC ASPECT OF ZECHARIAH . . . 9:9-17

It is indeed not strange that Zechariah should mingle his prophecy of Maccabean independence with that of the coming of Christ. The defeat of the Seleucids marked the last foreign presence in the holy land prior to that historic period in which Christ finally came. The excited rejoicing of the prophet is indeed understandable.

On the other hand, it is equally easy to see how the Jews of later times reading such intermingled predictions could cast their longed for Messiah in the mold of Judas Maccabee. The desire for political independence as a base for religious freedom would be as strong under Caesar as under Antiochus Epiphanes.

Nevertheless, when the Messiah did come, He scorned such a militarily attained and supported political kingdom to fulfill God's ultimate purpose in blessing all the nations of the earth. It required His own resurrection from the dead to establish His Messianic identity in view of His renunciation of this worldly power and ambition.

(Verse 9) Zechariah calls upon the theocratic people, "Daughter of Zion . . . Daughter of Jerusalem" to rejoice at the coming of her king. (cp. *Psalms* 2:11) He is not at all what she expected, but He is Messiah.

He is just, a characteristic attributed by the prophets to the Messiah in connection with salvation (cp. *Isaiah* 45:21, 53:11, *Jeremiah* 23:5,6).

In contrast with Antiochus, whom the Jews mistakenly welcomed as a savior from Egyptian oppression but who came to destroy, the Messiah King will come to save.

He is lowly and He comes riding on an ass; not the symbol of humiliation as some have supposed but the symbol of peace, as the

THE TRIUMPH OF ZION THROUGH HER MESSIAH 9:9-17

horse was a symbol of war. Messiah will lead no armed revolt. He will not receive His kingly dominion from Satan (cp. *Luke 4:6-7*) but by going the way of the suffering servant.

This verse finds its literal fulfillment in Jesus' final entry into Jerusalem. (cp. *Matthew 21:4-5*)

(Verse 10) Ephraim, symbolic of the northern tribes, and Jerusalem, symbolic of the southern are to be restored at Messiah's coming. The people will be restored to their full promised dominion (*Genesis 15:18*) from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean.

And beyond, He shall speak peace to all nations, His dominion shall be to the ends of the earth.

The Jews understood such passages to indicate that the Messiah would conquer the world, as had Alexander. Jesus showed the true sense when He commissioned His apostles to preach the gospel to the uttermost part of the earth.

(Verses 11-17) With the words, "as for thee also," Zechariah turns to the coming deliverance from Greek oppression. It will be because of the covenant that the people will be rescued from the threat of complete extinction by Hellenization.

Chapter XXXVIII—Questions

The Triumph of Zion Through Her Messiah

1. The theme of chapter nine is struck in verse _____.
2. This theme is the coming of the _____.
3. The term "burden of the word of Jehovah" is calculated to _____.
4. The first part of the oracle is concerned with the land of _____.
5. Hadrach is the symbolic name for _____.
6. This prediction was fulfilled c. 344 B.C. by the invasion of _____ by _____.
7. God's purpose to _____ is the all-determining factor in every historic development.
8. List the traditional enemies of Israel mentioned in chapter nine, and give the symbolic name of each as given by Zechariah.
9. _____ was the southern-most of the Philistine cities mentioned here.
10. What world conqueror fulfilled this predictive passage? (9:1-8)
11. The predictions of this section find their immediate fulfillment in what historic event?

12. The ultimate fulfillment of this passage is found in the coming of _____.
13. Describe the events leading to the Maccabean revolt.
14. To what three factors do historians attribute the failure of the Greeks to completely Hellenize the Jews?
15. Following the death of Alexander, the land of Palestine became at first part of what empire?
16. Antiochus IV was called Epiphanes meaning _____.
17. Who were the Chasidim?
18. Whom did Antiochus Epiphanes blame for his defeat at the hand of the Egyptian Ptolemies?
19. What, in Jewish history, is referred to as "the abomination of desolation?"
20. Who was Mattathias?
21. Who was called "the hammer?"
22. Upon the death of Antiochus IV, Lysias offered the Jews complete religious freedom if they would lay down their arms. Why did they refuse?
23. What caused the Jewish civil war following their victory under Judas Maccabee?
24. What was the origin of the party of the Pharisees?
25. What was the origin of the Sadducees?
26. What finally ended the internal strife which followed the Maccabean revolt?
27. In 9:11-f the joyous coming of the Messiah is postponed by _____.
28. Why does Zechariah mingle the prediction of the coming of Christ with that of the Maccabean revolt?
29. Show how the Jews in later times confused these two predictions.
30. What was Jesus' attitude toward the desire of the Jews for a military independence and a political kingdom?
31. Contrast Antiochus IV with the Messiah King.
32. What is the symbolism of the ass upon which the Messiah would ride?
33. What New Testament event fulfills this prediction?
34. Beyond the traditional boundaries of Israel, the Messiah will speak peace to _____.
35. The Jews understood such passages to indicate that _____.

CHAPTER XXXIX

ISRAEL RESTORED

ZECHARIAH, CHAPTER 10:1-12

RV . . . Ask ye of Jehovah rain in the time of the latter rain, even of Jehovah that maketh lightnings; and he will give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field. For the teraphim have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie; and they have told false dreams, they comfort in vain; therefore they go their way like sheep, they are afflicted, because there is no shepherd. Mine anger is kindled against the shepherds, and I will punish the he-goats, for Jehovah of hosts hath visited his flock, the house of Judah, and will make them as his goodly horse in the battle. From him shall come forth the corner-stone, from him the nail, from him the battle bow, from him every ruler together. And they shall be as mighty men, treading down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle; and they shall fight, because Jehovah is with them; and the riders on horses shall be confounded. And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them back; for I have mercy upon them; and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I am Jehovah their God, and I will hear them. And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine; yea, their children shall see it, and rejoice; their hearts shall be glad in Jehovah. I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them; and they shall increase as they have increased. And I will sow them among peoples; and they shall remember me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and shall return. I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; the place shall not be found for them. And he will pass through the sea of affliction, and will smite the waves in the sea, and all the depths of the Nile shall dry up; and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart. And I will strengthen them in Jehovah; and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith Jehovah.

LXX . . . Ask ye of the Lord rain in season, the early and the latter; the Lord has given bright signs, and will give them abundant rain, to every one grass in the field. For the speakers have uttered grievous things, and the diviners have seen false visions, and they have spoken

false dreams, they have given vain comfort: therefore have they fallen away like sheep, and been afflicted, because there was no healing. Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I will visit the lambs; and the Lord God Almighty shall visit his flock, the house of Juda, and he shall make them as his goodly horse in war. And from him he looked, and from him he set the battle in order, and from him came the bow in anger, and from him shall come forth every oppressor together. And they shall be as warriors treading clay in the ways in war; and they shall set the battle in array, because the Lord is with them, and the riders on horses shall be put to shame. And I will strengthen the house of Juda, and save the house of Joseph, and I will settle them; because I have loved them; and they shall be as if I had not cast them off: for I am the Lord their God, and I will hear them. And they shall be as the warriors of Ephraim, and their heart shall rejoice as with wine: and their children also shall see it, and be glad; and their heart shall rejoice in the Lord. I will make a sign to them, and gather them in; for I will redeem them, and they shall be multiplied according to their number before. And I will sow them among the people; and they that are afar off shall remember me: they shall nourish their children, and they shall return. And I will bring them again from the land of Egypt, and I will gather them in from among the Assyrians; and I will bring them into the land of Galaad and to Libanus; and there shall not even one of them be left behind. And they shall pass through a narrow sea, they shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deep places of the rivers shall be dried up; and all the pride of the Assyrians shall be taken away, and the sceptre of Egypt shall be removed. And I will strengthen them in the Lord their God; and they shall boast in his name, saith the Lord.

COMMENTS

In chapter nine, verses nine through ten, Zechariah exalted at the coming of Messiah. In 9:11-17, he interrupted his rejoicing to predict the victorious struggle with the Greeks which would precede His actual coming. In chapter ten, he returns to the theme of Zion triumphant through the Messiah.

(Verse 1) The key to this chapter seems to be "in the time of the latter rain."

To understand the symbolism here, we must know something of the climate of the holy land. During summer it almost literally never

rains. From May first through October fifteenth, one can almost guarantee no rain will fall.

The rainy season, from October to May, comes in three parts. They are known as the first or former rains, the winter rains, and the latter rains. The former are the light rains of October and the early days of November. These moisten the soil after the summer drought and allow the planting of winter grain.

The heaviest rains are the winter rains, which fall during December, January and February. The bulk of the water in the land comes from these rains.

Most vital to the completion of the harvest are the *latter rains*. These perfect the fruit and grain just prior to harvest, and so are most welcome and celebrated of all. (cf. Joel 2:21-24)

In a land where water is always in such critical supply as in Palestine, it is not surprising that rain should become a favorite symbol of divine blessing. (eg. Isaiah 44:3-4, Hosea 6:3, Psalms 72:6)

It is essential that the rains come, it is equally essential that they come at the proper time. Lack of rain at the right time results in complete crop failure. The *latter rains* are essential to the *final* perfection of the crop. Without the *latter rain* all that has developed through the former and winter rains will be lost.

By "rain in the time of the latter rain," Zechariah means God's blessing at the critical point in the history of His people when the fruit of His purpose was nearly ripe for harvest. The coming of the Messiah would usher in the fulfillment of God's purpose in Israel. Now that the people are back in the land and the temple is restored, the harvest season is rapidly drawing near.

God had planted the seed in the call of Abraham. His blessings upon the patriarchs were the "former rains." His continued blessings upon them through the centuries since Moses had nourished them as the winter rain. Now they must ask for the rain in the time of the latter rain in order that God's harvest may be realized in the coming of the long-awaited Christ.

(Verse 2) The prophet is concerned that prayer for the latter rains be made to Jehovah. Previous to the captivity their ancestors had asked the blessing of other gods.

The *teraphim* were household idols or images. (cp. Genesis 31:19,30, Judges 7:5) In light of I Samuel 19:13 it seems they bore the likeness of some human figure. They also took the form of the signs of the Zodiac and other instruments of astrology. Hosea had used

the word to describe the idolatrous state of the people prior to the captivity. (*Hosea 3:4*)

Zechariah's use of the term here indicates his desire that the returned people not repeat the error of their fathers. The blessings required for the realization of Jehovah's purpose must come from Him. All else is vanity.

The *diviners* have had false visions. In the mystery religions associated with Baal various absurd methods were used to conjure up supernatural information concerning future events. Hallucigens were drunk as potions and the mind-expanding "trips" of the diviners were considered as divinely directed visions.

Other devices included the shooting of arrows to predict the direction of a person whose name was engraved thereon. (eg. *Ezekiel 21: 21*) The declaring staff, or divining rod, employed by some present-day superstitions finds its origin in these practices.

The result of such ridiculous superstitions is to cause those who follow them to go their way like stray sheep. Isaiah had said of the pre-exilic people whose religion was shot through with Baal worship, "All we like sheep have gone astray." (*Isaiah 53:6*) Jesus would look with compassion on His contemporaries when He saw them "as sheep having no shepherd." (*Matthew 9:36*)

(Verse 3) The *shepherds* are the spiritual leaders of the people, the *he-goats* the civil leaders. Previously those who held these positions had led the people after false gods. God's anger is kindled against such leadership. He will not allow it to go unpunished.

Jehovah has personally visited His flock. They are no longer to be victimized by such leadership. Here we again see Zechariah's Messianic insight. In the coming of the Messiah, Jehovah visited His flock, the house of Judah.

The Hebrew *Yaweh* (Jehovah) literally means "the one who is." He is ultimate reality understood as a Person. The Septuagint uses the Greek *Kurios* (Lord) to translate *Yaweh*. This word is applied to Jesus by those who were familiar with its Old Testament meaning. The conclusion of the apostles was that He is "both Lord (*Kurios*) and Christ." (*Acts 2:36*) Jesus is Jehovah, Emanuel, God with us.

He visited Judah, the Jews, and the result was the setting aside of the shepherds (*ie.* spiritual leaders, priesthood) and the rejection of the he-goats when the political system which was national Israel was wiped out by the Romans.

The sense of Zechariah's statement here is the declaration of Jehovah's intention to accomplish the ultimate deliverance of His people.

(Verse 4) The Jews were no longer to be subject to foreign rule. "From him," *ie.* from Judah, shall come its ruler. The Maccabean deliverers from Antiochus Epiphanes fulfilled the primary meaning of this prophetic promise, but it looks forward to the Messiah.

The figure of the corner-stone is one of the best known of those applied to the Christ in the New Testament. Jesus applied it to Himself. (*Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:10, Luke 20:17*) Peter applied it to Him (*Acts 4:11, 1 Peter 2:7*) as did Paul (*Ephesians 2:20*).

The *nail* was in reality a large peg in the center of the tent upon which were hung most of the valuables of the nomadic shepherd. In prophetic type the glories of the people hung on Juda Maccabee. In point of factual fulfillment, they hang on the Messiah.

God's people will not need to depend upon any worldly alliance. He will Himself be their battle bow. (cp. *Psalms 45:4-5, Revelation 6:2*)

(Verses 5-12) This section must look beyond the Maccabean period as well as beyond the post-Babylonian restoration for its fulfillment. To see its real meaning we must bear in mind several significant terms used here by Zechariah, and we must keep in mind that he deliberately does *not* use certain other terms.

First, in this entire chapter the term Judah is used consistently, *never Israel*. Judah signifies the Jews as a political-ethnic group, whereas Israel, which does not appear here, is the covenant name for those whose relationship to God is based on faith rather than national or racial origin.

Second, the house of Judah is joined by the house of Joseph. Judah is, technically, the southern kingdom while Joseph is the ten northern tribes.

Third, the Hebrew verb here translated "I will bring (them) back" is a compound word which includes also "I will place them." (cp. *Jeremiah 32:37*)

Fourth, the reason for the restoration here is not merit on the part of the Jews, but "I have mercy upon them."

Fifth, "they shall be as though I had not cast them off. for I am Jehovah their God, and I will hear them."

We are dealing with God's ultimate intention for the Jewish people. *Jew* and *Israel* are now two separate concepts. Jew means the nation, the race. Israel means God's covenant people. In the Messianic age, especially in the writings of Paul, this distinction becomes very sharp. The church, composed of obedient believers from every race, is now God's Israel.

But what of the Jews?

(Verse 5) One cannot be dogmatic when dealing with apocalyptic prophecy. On the other hand, one cannot afford to be blind to what is taking place presently in the middle east. In four wars fought since the birth of the present state of Israel, not only those who warred against them, but the entire world has been confounded by the repeated victories of the Israelis against overwhelming odds.

(Verse 6-7) The term "Israel," applied to the modern state of the Jews is a misnomer, because the present state is Jewish. It ought more accurately be called Judah, meaning covenant people. The Christian church is Israel.

In this modern Jewish state the house of Judah (the ancient southern kingdom) and the house of Joseph (the people of the ancient northern kingdom) are indistinguishable. Few modern Jews, excepting those named Cohen (priest) or Levi, know their tribal origins.

The Jews, as a race and as a national entity, were cast off *per se* upon their rejection of Jesus. There is no other historic fulfillment of this threat to cast them off. Today they are as though they had not been cast off. Again there is no historic fulfillment of Zechariah's prophetic promise to bring back and place them until the establishment of the modern state of Israel.

Today's Jewish Israeli does indeed rejoice. Their hearts are glad in Jehovah. Specifically they rejoice because they believe (both Orthodox and Reformed) that the recent history of the Jewish state marks the beginning of the Messianic age. The irony of their rejoicing is not in their recognizing of the coming of the Messianic age, but in their misinterpreting the preparation for His *return* as preparation for His *first* appearing.

(Verses 8-12) In western Jerusalem today there is a grotesquely beautiful memorial to the Nazi holocaust in which six million Jews were exterminated. The building is built in the form of the gas chambers of the concentration camps. The stones in the walls are symbolic of the corpses piled high in their desperate attempts to escape the unexpected gas. An eternal flame burns in a wrought iron brazier to symbolize the cremation room, and on the black marble floor in gold letters are the names of Auschwitz, Buchenwald, and all the other horror chambers in which helpless men, women and children died for being Jews.

In the basement room are larger-than-life reproductions of Nazi anti-Jewish propaganda, and pictures of the concentration camp barracks: a record of utter nauseating barbarism.

To visit this shrine, in the midst of the modern miracle that is today's Jewish nation, is to know the meaning of "*I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them; they shall increase as they have increased.*" The word "hiss" should more accurately be translated "whistle." The Lord will call the Jews as the shepherd whistles for his sheep. Those who were sown among the peoples because of their rejection of the Christ, have indeed remembered Jehovah in far countries. True, they are plagued with their share of self-acclaimed atheists, as are all nations, but throughout the world and in the concentration camps of Europe they have paid dearly for remembering their God. It was their attempts to keep His law which stamped them as peculiar enough to foster the kind of racism and bigotry to which Nazi Germany subjected them.

It is true, the Jews stood outside Pilate's judgement hall and cried for the blood of God's Son to be upon their heads and the heads of their children. (*Matthew 27:25*) But enough is enough. "*Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had become Sodom and Gomorrah.*" (*Isaiah 1:9*, cp. *Romans 11:29*)

No time in history, since Zechariah, has seen a mass return of Jews to the ancient homeland until the years just following the second world war. It seems He has "brought them back" and "placed them." The reason is not merit, but mercy for the sake of the fathers.

Paul tells us "I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits, (we Gentile believers) that a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in . . ." (*Romans 11:25*) Modern historians are describing the age since World War II as the "post-Christian era." The term is a misnomer, but it is evidence of a significant historic phenomenon. The time when most Gentiles were willing at least to admit the influence of Christ on their culture, if not actually to accept Him personally, is past. In my opinion we are witnessing the end of Paul's "time of the Gentiles," as the primary participants in the program of God.

It is too soon to evaluate this in terms of eschatology, but there can be little doubt we are witnessing some very significant events in today's state of Israel.

Zechariah 10:10 predicts God's bringing of Jews from Egypt, Assyria, Gilead (modern Jordan) and Lebanon at a time when "*. . . place shall not be found for them.*" One hears much today about a million and a half Arab refugees who were driven from their homes in the establishment of the modern Jewish state. There is no way to

morally justify this, and no reason to assume it was God's will. But, it is not so commonly known that the United Nations' partitioning of Palestine also displaced some 700,000 Jews in the surrounding Arab lands. These have been assimilated into Israel, but "a place was not found for them" in the lands named here by Zechariah.

The exact meaning of *Zechariah 10:11* in the present middle eastern situation is difficult to ascertain. Egypt's much touted Aswan dam, which was supposed to be the means of a great economic revival in that nation has proven to be something less than an unmixed blessing. Marshes which once bred an abundance of game are now dried up. The death-dealing microscopic parasites which have always been a danger to those who would stick their feet in the Nile have reached near epidemic proportions. The Delta is receding since the river is no longer rushing into the Mediterranean, and the fishing grounds off the mouth of the Nile have been all but abandoned. Can this be what is described here by the prophet in connection with the restoration of the Jewish state?

The pride of Assyria has indeed been brought down in the Israeli defeat and occupation of the Golan heights overlooking the Galilee.

(Verse 12) If we are correct, if what we are seeing in the middle east is a fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy, there is a more and greater development yet to come. The world would indeed be confounded if the Israeli's should fully realize that it is God Who has wrought in and for them . . . if they did actually begin to "walk up and down in His name."

Chapter XXXIX—Questions

Israel Restored

1. In this chapter Zechariah returns to the theme _____.
2. The key to the chapter seems to be "in the time of the latter rain." Explain the climatic circumstances in the holy land which give rise to this term.
3. What is peculiarly essential about the *latter* rains as opposed to the former and winter rains?
4. What event in the Old Testament history of the Jewish people answers to the "former rain?"
5. What to the "winter rain?"
6. What were the teraphim?
7. What is Zechariah's desire concerning the prayers of the people?

8. What was the result of praying for protection to false gods?
9. Who are the shepherds of verse three? the he-goats?
10. What is the literal meaning of Yaweh (Jehovah)?
11. Show the relationship of this meaning of Jehovah to the term Lord applied to God in the Septuagint and to Jesus in the New Testament.
12. What was the result, in relation to the spiritual leaders, of Jesus' visit to Israel?
13. Discuss the "corner stone" in verse four.
14. Discuss the "nail" in verse four.
15. Verses five through twelve must look beyond _____ as well as _____ for its fulfillment.
16. In Zechariah 10, _____ and never _____ signifies the Jews.
17. The uniting of Joseph and Judah represents the uniting of the old _____ and _____ kingdoms.
18. The Hebrew word translated "I will bring them back" is a compound word which also includes _____.
19. The reason for the Jewish restoration described in chapter ten is not merit but _____.
20. In this chapter we are dealing with God's ultimate _____.
21. Jew and _____ are two separate concepts.
22. Jew means _____.
23. Israel means _____.
24. The _____ composed of obedient believers from every race is now God's _____.
25. The Jews as a race were cast off upon _____.
26. The modern Israeli Jew believes that the present Jewish state marks the beginning of the _____.
27. The word "hiss" really means _____. (10:8)
28. What is meant by "Except the Lord of Sabbaoth had left us a seed, we had become as Sodom and Gomorrah?"
29. Discuss this chapter in light of the current developments in the middle east, particularly the holy land.
30. In your opinion, what would be the effect upon the world if modern Israel were to openly declare that their victories have been wrought by God in fulfillment of prophecy?

CHAPTER XL

A PARABLE OF SHEPHERDS

RUIN OF HOSTILE POWERS . . . Zechariah 11:1-3

RV . . . Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars. Wail, O fir-tree, for the cedar is fallen, because the goodly ones are destroyed: wail, O ye oaks of Bashan, for the strong forest is come down. A voice of the wailing of the shepherds! for their glory is destroyed: a voice of the roaring of young lions! for the pride of the Jordan is laid waste.

LXX . . . Open thy doors, O Libanus, and let the fire devour thy cedars. Let the pine howl, because the cedar has fallen; for the mighty men have been greatly afflicted: howl, ye oaks of the land of Basan; for the thickly planted forest has been torn down. There is a voice of the shepherds mourning; for their greatness is brought low: a voice of roaring lions; for the pride of Jordan is brought down.

COMMENTS

It has been suggested that these verses alluding to Bashan and Lebanon describe an invasion of Israel. Bearing in mind the context (uninterrupted in the original text by a chapter heading or number) this seems very unlikely. It is more likely a threat of destruction against the enemies of Judah, particularly since great forests are used occasionally to symbolize military power (cp. *Isaiah* 10:34). The *shepherds* of verse three are the leaders of these hostile powers. *Devouring fire* (v. 1), symbol of irremediable destruction, is to come swiftly upon those powers whose rulers would then *howl* in despair like the lions driven out of the jungle along the Jordan.

The entire passage (10:3-11:3) is designed to point up the difference between the Jewish nation and its Gentile neighbors, especially those who have historically oppressed the Jews. It looks forward to the day when the shoe will be on the other foot. This could only happen when the Jews, both northern and southern, were returned to their homelands and established as an independent state.

FAITHFUL AND FOOLISH SHEPHERDS . . . Zechariah 11:4-17

RV . . . Thus said Jehovah my God: Feed the flock of slaughter; whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty; and they that sell them say, Blessed be Jehovah, for I am rich; and their own

shepherds pity them not. For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith Jehovah; but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbor's hand, and into the hand of his king; and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver them. So I fed the flock of slaughter, verily the poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock. And I cut off the three shepherds in one month; for my soul was weary of them, and their soul also loathed me. Then said I, I will not feed you: that which dieth, let it die; and that which is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let them that are left eat every one the flesh of another. And I took my staff Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the peoples. And it was broken in that day; and thus the poor of the flock that gave heed unto me knew that it was the word of Jehovah. And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my hire; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my hire thirty pieces of silver. And Jehovah said unto me, Cast it unto the potter, the goodly price that I was prized at by them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them unto the potter, in the house of Jehovah. Then I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. And Jehovah said unto me, Take unto thee yet again the instruments of a foolish shepherd. For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, who will not visit those that are cut off, neither will seek those that are scattered, nor heal that which is broken, nor feed that which is sound; but he will eat the flesh of the fat sheep, and will tear their hoofs in pieces. Woe to the worthless shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.

LXX . . . Thus saith the Lord Almighty, Feed the sheep of the slaughter; which their possessors have slain, and have not repented; and they that sold them said, Blessed be the Lord; for we have become rich; and their shepherds have suffered no sorrow for them. Therefore I will no longer have mercy upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord: but, behold, I will deliver up the men every one into the hand of his neighbour, and into the hand of his king; and they shall destroy the land, and I will not rescue out of their hand. And I will tend the flock of slaughter in the land of Chanaan: and I will take for myself two rods; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Line; and I will tend the flock. And I will cut off three shep-

herds in one month; and my soul shall grieve over them, for their souls cried out against me. And I said, I will not tend you: that which dies, let it die; and that which falls off, let it fall off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of his neighbor. And I will take my beautiful staff, and cast it away, that I may break my covenant which I made with all the people. And it shall be broken in that day; and the Chananites, the sheep that are kept for me, shall know that it is the word of the Lord. And I will say to them, If it be good in your eyes, give me my price, or refuse it. And they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said to me, Drop them into the furnace, and I will see if it is good metal, as I was proved for their sakes. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them into the furnace in the house of the Lord. And I cast away my second rod, even Line, that I might break the possession between Juda and Israel. And the Lord said to me, Take yet to thee shepherd's implements belonging to an unskilful shepherd. For, behold, I will raise up a shepherd against the land: he shall not visit that which is perishing, and he shall not seek that which is scattered, and he shall not heal that which is bruised, nor guide that which is whole: but he shall devour the flesh of the choice ones, and shall dislocate the joints of their necks. Alas for the vain shepherds that have forsaken the sheep! the sword shall be upon the arms of such a one, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be completely withered, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.

COMMENTS

Between the time Zechariah and the establishment of the Jewish people as described in the last section, there was to be another period during which they will feel the wrath of Jehovah. The time of the fulfillment of this prediction is fixed beyond question by the verses twelve and thirteen. The verses are applied very literally to the betrayal of Jesus in *Matthew* 26:5, 27:9-10. Therefore, the prediction of the passage must have to do with the "hardening in part" (*Romans* 11:25) which caused Him to take the kingdom from the Jews and give it to the church. "A nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (*Matthew* 21:33-43)

The prediction is presented allegorically. The nation is the flock, the Messiah is the faithful Shepherd. Because of their stubbornness, the Shepherd turns from them as they sell Him for thirty pieces of silver. The key is verse ten in which Jehovah severs His covenant relationship with the nation.

(Verses 4-5) As we turn to a detailed examination of the passage, we are immediately confronted with a strange command given by Jehovah to the prophet, "Feed the flock of slaughter." The term "flock of slaughter" is what gives the command a strange ring. We will find it again in verse seven.

The Jews, during the Roman period, were like sheep, bought and sold by their *shepherds*, *ie.* rulers who not only used the people for their own aggrandizement, but actually thanked God for their evilly procured riches and power. They felt no guilt for using the people to accomplish their own ends.

It would be difficult to imagine a more vivid description of the Herods, and the temple priests who served in their puppet government of the Jews.

With the people at the mercy of such leadership, the prophet is called upon to feed the flock as one exposed for slaughter.

(Verse 6) The consequence of the leadership of the Herods and the self-seeking priests of his day was that described here. It became a time for riots, for the guerilla warfare of the Zealots, for false Messiahs and finally anarchy which brought the legions of Rome down upon them in a fury. God delivered them into the hand of the king (emperor) who did indeed smite the land. And, as He warns here, God did not intervene.

When the armies of Titus marched against Jerusalem in a campaign which ended on September 7, 70 A.D., it was the last of a chain of events which included a call by the Sanhedrin to the Roman procurator, Florus, and the puppet king, Herod Agrippa II, for military aid. The tumult in Judea grew into anarchy as a result of the Jews' refusal to accept Roman occupation. Conditions worsened, despite frequent changes of procurators by imperial appointment.

The Jews broke up into factions at all social, religious and economic levels. Even the appointment of high priests brought riot.

Rome's answer to such conditions in occupied lands was unchanging . . . the swift decisive use of the *Makaira* . . . the short sword.

The death of Festus in 62 A.D. left the power of Judean government in the hands of Annas the high priest. His calling of a clandestine session of the Sanhedrin at which James, the just, and other leading Christians were condemned, alienated whatever Gentile sympathy may have survived to this point.

At the same time, Herod's temple, which had been under construction for decades was completed, throwing hundreds of workers into unemployment.

Shortly thereafter, Albinus arrived to succeed Festus as procurator. Unable to control the Zealots, he was replaced in 64 A.D. by Gessius Florus.

Gessius was a true Roman, relying on brute force. He was greeted by riots in Caesarea of such proportion that hundreds of Jews fled the land never to return.

In 66 A.D. Gessius raided the temple treasury to make up a 40 talent deficit in the tribute demanded annually by Rome. The result was near revolution, averted only by a speech in which Agrippa convinced the Jews that such action would bring about the final utter destruction of the Jewish nation by Rome. (*Acts 12:21-23*)

Shortly thereafter, Agrippa left Jerusalem. During his absence the revolutionary forces again threatened war. Realizing the inevitable consequences of this threatened action, the Sanhedrin sent for military assistance.

In late summer of 66 A.D. Galles left Antioch for Jerusalem with 44,000 battle-hardened legionnaires. He arrived in September, having been delayed by a revolt in Galilee, long a breeding ground for the Zealot Sicari.

By this time, the revolutionaries controlled Jerusalem and Galles was unable to breach the walls.

The rebels not only stood firm, but routed the Romans, killing 6,000 of them as they retreated to Caesarea.

In response to this defeat of Roman force, Nero reacted by sending his greatest general Titus Flavius Vespasian to restore order in Palestine.

Titus arrived in Galilee, re-establishing Roman control there, and went into winter quarters with fifty thousand troops.

Meanwhile, the Jews who had succeeded in holding Jerusalem against Galles, began to fight among themselves and anarchy again gripped the city. Such was the state of affairs when Titus lay siege from Mount Scopus in the summer of 68 A.D.

A brief respite came to the Jews upon the death of Nero in June of 68 A.D. and the period of turmoil in which three emperors in quick succession were overthrown in Rome. This led the army of Titus Vespasian to decide to place their general on the imperial throne. To accomplish this it was necessary to settle matters quickly in Jerusalem.

Titus gave Jerusalem a chance to surrender. When his offer was refused, the bloodbath began. By July 5 the tower of Antonia, in the northwest corner of the temple area, was occupied by Legionnaires. The carnage in the temple itself, where the revolutionaries fought to the

last man, was the worst to that time in Jewish history. Over a million Jews died in the siege by the time the last Sicari committed suicide at Massada.

As emperor, Titus Vespasian, issued a decree that the Jewish religion should be ended for all time. The priesthood and Sanhedrin were abolished, the temple tax was now paid to the shrine of Jupiter. A colony of Roman veterans was settled near the ruins of the demolished capital of Judaism.

But it was not finally over. In 131 A.D., one Bar Cocheba, with the endorsement of the leading rabbi, Akiba, was accepted by the Jews as Messiah. The result was a desperate religious war which ended when Vespasian's successor, Hadrian, utterly flattened the city of Jerusalem and caused it to be ploughed as a field.

Upon the sight Hadrian erected Colonia Aelia Capitolina, a colony dedicated to Jupiter capitolinus. It was the end of the Jewish state until 1948. It was the last time the Jews would control the temple site until June, 1967.

(Verse 7) In response to Jehovah's command, the prophet fed the flock destined for slaughter. "*The poor of the flock*" here is more accurately "*the most miserable of sheep*." (Re: marginal rendering in the Standard Edition)

In this verse the prophet's role blends forward into that of the Messiah. As was done by real shepherds, he took two staffs. They are named *grace* and *binders*, or unity. (*Beauty* here in the English version expresses graciousness rather than physical beauty. *Bands* is an attempt to render for smooth reading a word which means binders.)

The first of the staffs, *grace*, represents the divine favor of Jehovah in guaranteeing to protect the Jews against outside forces. The second symbolizes the unity which was to prevail between the tribes of Joseph and Judah following the return from exile.

(Verse 8) The response to the shepherding of the post-exilic prophets on the part of the Jews was such that "*their soul loathed me*." It was seen ultimately in the rejection of Him Who presented Himself to them as "the Good Shepherd." (cp. *John 10:11*) There can be little doubt that Jesus had these verses in mind when He called Himself the Good Shepherd.

Verse nine, in which the prophet states his intention not to feed the flock, but rather to let it die, brings to mind two key New Testament passages. One in which Jesus wept over Jerusalem because of her historic failure to heed the prophets (*Luke 13:33-35*) and the other one in which He predicted the destruction of the city (*Luke 21:5-6*).

The cannibalism described here was fulfilled literally when, during the final days of the siege of Titus, those who held out in the temple area ate the bodies of their fallen comrades.

(Verses 10-11) The symbolic breaking of the staff of grace (beauty) has significance which cannot be overstated. It is cut asunder "*That I might break my covenant.*" The Jews came into being as a people because of the covenant. Their national identity was established in the Law given upon their agreement to keep the covenant. (cf. *Exodus 19:5-9*) Generation after generation, century upon century, they had failed to do so.

God's patience was mistaken as slackness by this stiffnecked people. We saw how they refused to believe the warnings of the pre-exilic prophets on the ground that Jehovah would not so treat His people. Punished by the destruction of the northern kingdom and the captivity of the southern, they refused to rebuild His temple after their release.

In the intervening years, between the return from Babylon and the coming of Jesus, their concern turned completely from the covenant intended to bless all races of people to fanatic nationalism. The promised Seed of Abraham became, to them, a warrior . . . a revolutionist who would make them masters of the world. When He refused such a kingdom, they convicted Him of trumped-up charges and nailed Him, by the hands of lawless men, (*Acts 2:23*) to a cross. *From this time forward the fulfillment of the covenant and the fate of the Jew per se are two entirely separate matters.*

A covenant is always conditional. The failure of one party frees the other from the terms of the covenant. In all justice, God could have terminated His relationship to the Jews many times in the Old Testament period. When the time finally came that He did take the kingdom from them, only the remnant saw the justice of it.

The poor of the flock, the remnant *that gave heed* to the prophets knew the termination of the covenant with the Jews was according to the word of Jehovah.

(Verses 12-14) The final act of unfaithfulness came when the Good Shepherd appealed to the Jews for His hire, *ie.* for that which was rightly His in payment for all He had done for them. Even without the covenant, indeed if it had never existed in the first place, His care, protection and even His chastisement of the Jewish people above the other races of the world should have entitled Him to their immediate acceptance and undying allegiance.

Instead they betrayed Him, and sold Him for the price of an injured slave. Thirty pieces of silver (about \$25) was the amount fixed by the law in compensation for the injury of another's slave. (cf. *Exodus* 21:32)

It is no coincidence that this prophecy was fulfilled by one whose chief concern was the establishment of Israel as the ruling world empire. Judas had followed Jesus for three years in the full expectation that He would indeed prove to be another Judas Maccabee, that He would not only free the Jews from Roman rule but establish them as the greatest and final world power. When he saw Jesus riding into Jerusalem on an ass instead of a war horse to the shouts of children instead of the cheers of an army, when he heard Jesus foretell the destruction of the city which, in Jewish ambition, was to become the capital of the Messianic world, it was too much. He bartered his revenge for the price of an injured slave. (cf. *Matthew* 26:5, 27:9-10)

The accuracy of Zechariah's prophecy is seen in the minute fulfillment of it in the detailed disposal of the money paid Judas. Verse thirteen says it was "*cast unto the potter.*" *Matthew* 27:9 quotes the prophecy of *Jeremiah* 18:2, 19:2, 11, 32:6-9 in recording that the money returned by Judas prior to his suicide was used to purchase a potters field. *Acts* 1:18-19 mentions this fact also.

Following the crucifixion, and the consequent destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and Hadrian, (see above on verse six), the Jews were scattered throughout the world. The unity which had prevailed following their return from exile was thus broken, an historic event predicted symbolically in verse fourteen by the breaking of the second staff called Bands or unity. The result was a nearly nineteen century postponement of the fulfillment of the promises made in Zechariah, chapter ten.

(Verses 15-17) G. A. Smith is quoted by Professor J. E. McFadyen as saying, concerning the crucifixion of Jesus, "The guilty sacrifice the innocent, but in this execute their own doom. That is the summary of the history of Israel." The message of *Zechariah* 11:15-17 could scarcely be better paraphrased.

Following the crucifixion, as we have seen (see above on 11:6) the nation of the Jews became a political football in the hands of the Herods and a series of inept Roman procurators. These, personified here as the foolish shepherd, presided over the final dissolution of the nation into anarchy and final obliteration.

The foolish shepherd may well have been personified in Bar Cocheba and his ill-fated attempt at revolt against Hadrian. The futility of his military activity is well described here in verse seventeen.

Chapter XL—Questions

A Parable of Shepherds

1. Discuss the symbolism of the forests in 11:1-3.
2. Of what is fire symbolic in verse one?
3. The entire passage (10:3-11:3) is designed to point up the difference between _____ and _____.
4. Between the time of Zechariah and the establishment of the Jewish people as described in chapter ten, there was to be _____.
5. *Zechariah* 11:12-13 is applied literally to _____ in *Matthew* 26:5, 27:9-10.
6. Explain the allegory of the flock and the shepherd in this passage.
7. Why does God promise to sever His covenant relationship to the Jews?
8. What is meant by "flock of slaughter?"
9. What is described in verse six?
10. Review the events leading to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and 135 A.C.
11. Who was Bar Cocheba?
12. What is the symbolism of the two staffs?
13. Who fulfills the picture of the good shepherd in this passage? (Compare *John* 10:11)
14. Why, in verse nine, does the shepherd decide to let the flock die rather than feed it?
15. What was symbolized in the breaking of the two staffs?
16. God's patience was mistaken by the Jews as _____.
17. In the intervening years between the Babylonian exile and the coming of Jesus, the concern of the Jews turned completely from _____ to _____.
18. A covenant is always _____.
19. The final act of unfaithfulness came when _____.
20. Instead of paying him his due, the people _____ him and sold him.
21. What is the significance of the thirty pieces of silver?
22. How does the disposal of the blood money by Judas demonstrate the accuracy of Zechariah's prediction?
23. What happened to the Jewish people immediately following the destruction of Jerusalem in 135 A.D.?

CHAPTER XLI

IN THE FIRST DAY

The future glory of the restored nation of the Jews, predicted in chapter ten (see comments), was to be delayed in its accomplishment by their rejection of the Good Shepherd, the dissolving of the covenant between the nation and Jehovah, and the prolonged dispersion following the defeat of Bar Cocheba, the self-acclaimed Messiah in 135 A.D.

Chapters 12, 13, and 14 actually compose a single unit of thought which climaxes Zechariah's prophecy in a blaze of apocalyptic eschatology, some of which is nearly impossible to understand clearly.

The key to these final chapters is found in the phrase "*in the day*" which is repeated no less than sixteen times throughout the passage.

This unit of thought is expressed in regard to two "days," which from Zechariah's point of view remained in the future. The first day and its happenings comprise 12:3-13:7 and prefigures the Messianic age.

The final day of the Lord is described in the final chapter, 14:1-21.

It will be helpful here to go back and read the comment on *yom YHWH* (the day of Jehovah) in the Introduction to Zechariah, Chapter XIX. We noted there four characteristics of "that day:" (1) the judgement of Israel, Judah and the nations of the pre-Christian world, (2) the deliverance and preservation of the remnant during and after the captivity, (3) the first coming of the Messiah and (4) the second coming of the Messiah and His final judgement of all men and nations.

To understand Zechariah's "in that day," we must be alert to all four elements.

The term first appears in Zechariah in chapter three, verse 10. There it refers to the time when Jehovah will bring forth His Servant, The Branch. *In that day*, everyone will invite his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree. The intention is obviously to describe a time of peace and plenty. The significant aspect here is the sending of the Branch and the removal of the iniquity of the land in one day. (*Zechariah 3:8-10*)

As we saw in our study of that passage (see comment) *in that day* here referred to the coming of the living stone and true priest in whom God will remove the sins of His people and invite their neighbors to share the fruits of the Messianic Presence.

THE BURDEN OF THE LORD . . . Zechariah 12:1-2

RV . . . The burden of the word of Jehovah concerning Israel. Thus saith Jehovah, who stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the founda-

tion of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him; Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of reeling unto all the peoples round about, and upon Judah also shall it be in the siege against Jerusalem.

LXX . . . The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel; saith the Lord, that stretches out the sky, and lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him. Behold, I will make Jerusalem as trembling door-posts to all the nations round about, and in Judea there shall be a siege against Jerusalem.

COMMENTS

The lengthy section (chapters 12, 13, 14) in which the term "*in that day*" is used repeatedly, is introduced as "*the burden of the word of Jehovah concerning Israel.*" Israel as we have seen, is in the minor prophets a term designating the covenant people. The time would come (11:10) when the relationship would be broken off with the Jewish race, but as Zechariah wrote this had not yet occurred. What he is about to write has to do with the fulfillment of God's covenant purpose.

Jehovah is here referred to as the creator of the heavens, the earth, and the spirit of man. These are words calculated to remind the prophet's readers that the purpose which is to be fulfilled is the eternal purpose in the mind of God before creation. It is the reason man was created. It is the reason the covenant was established and a covenant people developed. It is the purpose behind all God's activity in history, both of the Jews and of the nations of the earth. This purpose is the reason God will bring to pass those things which Zechariah is about to describe.

The purpose is stated many times in many ways throughout the Bible, but never more succinctly than the Pauline statement of *Ephesians* 1:3-10. There the apostle informs us that, before the foundation of the earth, God chose in Christ to have a people holy and pure and adopted to Himself as children. That purpose and its accomplishment in Christ is the meaning of the entire Bible.

The days referred to by "in that day" in these chapters are two different periods. The first is addressed to Israel, the covenant people (*v. 1*) and has to do with the first coming of the Messiah who will be looked upon as pierced (12:10).

The second period referred to by "in that day" is designated by "Behold, a *yom* YHWH (day of Jehovah) cometh" (14:1). It has to do with the final consummation and the second coming of the Messiah.

IN THAT DAY (1) . . . Zechariah 12:3

RV . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all the peoples; all that burden themselves with it shall be sore wounded; and all the nations of the earth shall be gathered together against it.

LXX . . . And it shall come to pass in that day that I will make Jerusalem a trodden stone to all the nations; every one that tramples on it shall utterly mock at it, and all the nations of the earth shall be gathered together against it.

COMMENTS

The first statement of what will happen "in that day" is made briefly in *Zechariah* 12:3. It introduces the time of Messiah's first coming, and is addressed to Israel (*v.* 1). Israel at the time of this writing could be none other than the faithful remnant among those Jews who had returned from exile.

In the time of Messiah's first coming, Jerusalem will be made a burdensome stone for all the peoples. This statement sets the stage for the struggle described in the next three verses.

IN THAT DAY (2) (3) . . . Zechariah 12:4-6

RV . . . In that day, saith Jehovah, I will smite every horse with terror, and his rider with madness; and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the peoples with blindness. And the chieftains of Judah shall say in their hearts, The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in Jehovah of hosts their God. In that day will I make the chieftains of Judah like a pan of fire among wood, and like a flaming torch among sheaves; and they shall devour all the peoples round about, on the right hand and on the left; and they of Jerusalem shall yet again dwell in their own place, even in Jerusalem.

LXX . . . In that day, saith the Lord Almighty, I will smite every horse with amazement, and his rider with madness; but I will open mine eyes upon the house of Juda, and I will smite all the horses of the nations with blindness. And the captains of thousands of Juda shall say in their hearts, We shall find for ourselves the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the Lord Almighty their God. In that day I will make the captains of thousands of Juda as a firebrand among wood, and as a torch of fire in stubble; and they shall devour on the right hand and on the left all the nations round about; and Jerusalem shall dwell again by herself, even in Jerusalem.

COMMENTS

During the time of the Messiah the Jews would struggle with all nations. Jehovah will sustain them in the struggle and they shall "yet again dwell in their own place." (see comment above on 10:6)

Please note this is to be during the time of the Messiah, *ie.* in the Messianic age.

IN THAT DAY (2) . . . verses 4-5

Historically, that form of attack against which the Jewish defense had proved least effective was a cavalry charge. It was this from which Jehovah had miraculously delivered them in the exodus. (cf. *Exodus* 15:19-21) God promises symbolically to protect the Jews in their weakness. He will "open His eyes" and watch over them.

At the same time He will smite the horse of the peoples with blindness. Those who seek to destroy the Jews will plunge blindly to their own destruction. We have seen a classic example of this in our day in Nazi Germany.

The strength of the Jews over the centuries of the Christian era has been their regard for Jehovah worship, here symbolized by the name of Jerusalem, the center of monotheism.

IN THAT DAY (3) . . . verse 6-7

In the day of Judah's restoration to her homeland, though small, she will consume the enemies that surround her.

They of Jerusalem, *ie.* the Jews who are true to the worship of Jerusalem, "shall again dwell in their own place, even Jerusalem." It is interesting to note that in the establishment of the Jewish state at present, the Orthodox Jews are virtually all gathered in a selfimposed ghetto in the city of Jerusalem.

IN THAT DAY (4) . . . Zechariah 12:8

RV . . . In that day shall Jehovah defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of Jehovah before them.

LXX . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and the weak one among them in that day shall be as David, and the house of David as the house of God, as the angel of the Lord before them.

COMMENTS

Ask any modern Israeli to explain the fantastic success of his little country against impossible odds in the four wars they have fought and he will reply, "We know why we are fighting." Zechariah foresees the weakest of them as strong as David, inspired by the knowledge that God is "on their side." (cp. *v.* 5)

IN THAT DAY (5) (6) . . . Zechariah 12:9-14

RV . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of the Shimeites apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

LX . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and compassion; and they shall look upon me, because they have mocked me, and they shall make lamentation for him, as for a beloved friend, and they shall grieve intensely, as for a first-born son. In that day the lamentation in Jerusalem shall be very great, as the mourning for the pomegranate grove cut down in the plain. And the land shall lament in separate families, the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of Symeon by itself, and their wives by themselves; all the families that are left, each family by itself, and their wives by themselves.

COMMENTS

IN THAT DAY (5) . . . v. 9

Jehovah Himself will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. Since God does what He attempts to do, it will be a black day for anyone who attacks the city He defends.

This is a significant verse, in as much as every attacker of Jerusalem to the present day has been successful in overthrowing it. If it means symbolically that God will defend His worshippers against the attacks of skepticism, as some have suggested, this has been done repeatedly in all ages.

If, on the other hand, this verse describes the defense of Jerusalem literally in the days of the present restoration of the Jewish nation, one may rest assured that any nation will be defeated who attempts the overthrow of that city.

(Verse 10) It is this verse which fixes "in that day" in this section as the Messianic age. It would be difficult to imagine a clearer prediction of the detail of Christ's crucifixion. As Halley points out, "this description is in nowise applicable to any other known person."

IN THAT DAY (6) . . . v. 11-14

The apostle John sees in Jesus' death the fulfillment of this verse. (cp. *John* 19:34-37) John also recalls this verse in connection with the second coming. (cp. *Revelation* 1:7)

Some have seen in the mourning for Him Whom they have pierced a prediction that the Jews will be converted to Christ. This cannot, of course, be ruled out. Paul speaks of the possibility that the Jews who rejected Jesus may be grafted into God's true Israel. This, however, is definitely conditioned upon ". . . if they continue not in their unbelief." (*Romans* 11:17-24)

In view of the nature of conversion, which is *always* an individual experience, it seems unlikely that the whole Jewish nation could be said to be converted. It seems more likely that this mourning came to pass at the preaching on Pentecost, when those who stood accused of murdering their Messiah, were cut to the heart so deeply that three thousand of them accepted Him as "both Lord and Christ." (cp. *Acts* 2:22-41)

The mourning over the pierced one is compared to "the mourning of Hadad-Rimmon in the valley of Megiddo." This was probably the village in the plain of Megiddo where king Josiah was killed in

the battle against the Egyptians. (cp. *II Chronicles* 35:22-25) There had been great mourning at his death because it marked the end of his great religious reform.

The mourning is from the highest (David) to the lowest (Nathan) of the royal house, and from the highest (Levi) to the lowest (Shemei) of the priestly order. All the families that remain, *ie.* those who are of neither the kingly or priestly houses, shall also mourn.

Each family shall mourn alone, and the women separately from the men. (cp. *Exodus* 15:1,20)

IN THAT DAY (7) . . . Zechariah 13:1

RV . . . In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.

LXX . . . In that day every place shall be opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for removal and for separation.

COMMENTS

In connection with the mourning over Him Whom they pierced, a fountain is to be opened for sin and uncleanness. Sin is transgression against the law of God. Uncleanness is that condition of one's soul which makes him unfit for the presence of God. The death of David's Branch (cp. 3:8 and 6:12) Who is seen here in the hour of His death (pierced) provides the fountain for sin and uncleanness.

Jesus' understanding of the Old Testament was that the Christ should suffer, and rise again the third day. When this has been done, repentance and remission of sins is to be preached in His name. (cf. *Luke* 24:44-47)

The death and resurrection opened the fountain. The preaching of repentance, which is a deliberate decision for the will of God by one who has stood against it, relates the fountain to sin which is a transgression of the Law. Remission of sins, which is God's answer to the moral impurity resulting from sin, relates the fountain to uncleanness.

An entire volume could be written showing, from Scripture, that this fountain is the blood of Jesus.

IN THAT DAY (8) . . . Zechariah 13:2-3

RV . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered; and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. And it shall come to pass that, when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of Jehovah; and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth.

LXX . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will utterly destroy the names of the idols from off the land, and there shall be no longer any remembrance of them: and I will cut off the false prophets and the evil spirit from the land. And it shall come to pass, if a man will yet prophesy, that his father and his mother which gave birth to him shall say to him, Thou shalt not live; for thou hast spoken lies in the name of the Lord: and his father and his mother who gave him birth shall bind him as he is prophesying.

COMMENTS

Still referring to the Messianic age, Jehovah promises that the names of idols will be cut out of the land and forgotten. Idolatry is frequently associated with uncleanness. (eg. *Ezekiel* 36:25 cp. *Romans* 1:18-ff)

The preaching of the Christian gospel is generally credited with ministering the *coup de grace* to the classic idolatry which had been a constant blight on the Jews throughout their pre-Christian history. Excepting for the shrines of Catholicism, one will search the holy land in vain for such practices today.

The prophecy condemned here is false prophecy. The passage is a sort of paraphrase of *Deuteronomy* 13:6-10, 18:20 which roundly condemns false prophets. Should any utter such prophecies he would incur the wrath of his own parents. The loyalty of Messiah's people to Him will exceed the tenderest natural affections. (cp. *Matthew* 10:37 and *Luke* 14:26)

IN THAT DAY (9) . . . Zechariah 13:4-6

RV . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he prophesieth; neither shall

they wear a hairy mantle to deceive: but he shall say, I am no prophet, I am a tiller of the ground; for I have been made a bondman from my youth. And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds between thine arms? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.

LXX . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision when he prophesies; and they shall clothe themselves with a garment of hair, because they have lied. And one shall say, I am not a prophet, for I am a tiller of the ground, for a man brought me up thus from my youth. And I will say to him What are these wounds between thine hands? and he shall say, Those with which I was wounded in my beloved house.

COMMENTS

The false prophet shall himself be ashamed of his calling and his vision. In *Acts 19:13-20*, Luke records a detailed description of one incident when this became literally true. Following their conversion at the preaching of Paul, certain false prophets, whom Luke describes as practicing magical arts, repented of their false teaching and burned their own books.

(Verse 6) Here is another clear prediction of the crucified Messiah. Its presence in this particular context, just following the reference to false prophets could be misleading. *Him* in this verse refers not to the false prophet, but to Him Whom they have pierced. (12:10)

The wounds "between thine arms" are a vivid description of the scourging suffered by Jesus. The word is *makkah* and means a wound made by a stroke or blow.

We are reminded of *Isaiah 53:5*, "*He was wounded (chalal—pierced) for our transgression and by His stripes we are healed.*"

He was wounded in the house of His friends. To quote a cliché, with friends like that, He needed no enemies!

EPILOGUE TO THE FIRST DAY . . . Zechariah 12:7-9

RV . . . Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith Jehovah of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn my hand upon the little ones. And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith Jehovah, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left

therein. And I will bring the third part into the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my People; and they shall say, Jehovah is my God.

LXX . . . Awake, O sword, against my shepherds, and against the man who is my citizen, saith the Lord Almighty: smite the shepherds, and draw out the sheep: and I will bring mine hand upon the little ones. And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts thereof shall be cut off and perish; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and I will try them as silver is tried, and I will prove them as gold is proved: they shall call upon my name, and I will hear them, and say, This is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God.

COMMENTS

(Verse 7) When Peter preached the first recorded sermon following the resurrection, he pointed out that the suffering of Jesus had been by "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." (*Acts* 2:23) Here is evidence to support that claim.

Jehovah of hosts, *ie.* the God of the covenant, gives specific orders that the sword awake against the shepherd. We have seen that the good shepherd of Zechariah is indeed the Christ (see on *11:10-ff*). That this Christ is Jesus, Who was crucified by the Romans is evidenced by the particular weapon named to symbolize those who were to smite Him. Many ancient powers were symbolized by their most characteristic weapon, *eg.* Persia by the bow, Egypt by the chariot, Greece by the lance and phalanx, etc. Rome is characterized by the short sword. Because of prevailing circumstances at the time of Jesus' trial, He could be legally executed only by Rome, since the Jews were denied the right of capital punishment. (There is much question concerning the legality of Jesus' trials, but there is no doubt His execution was performed by Romans.)

Jesus Himself applied this verse to His own death. (*Matthew* 26:31, *Mark*, 14:27). At His arrest, His disciples fled or followed afar off. During and after His crucifixion all but John were in hiding, and John apparently joined the others just following His death. The sheep were indeed scattered when the Shepherd was smitten.

Here is further evidence that "in that day" in this section applies to the day of the Messiah rather than to the time of the end.

(Verse 8) After the death and resurrection of Jesus, the number of his followers was greatly reduced. Apparently there were five hundred who could be counted as disciples (cf. *I Corinthians* 15:6). One hundred twenty were present when the church was born on Pentecost (cf. *Acts* 1:15). If one adds the three thousand baptized that day, the number totals some three thousand, six hundred. It was a small group indeed, compared to the six hundred thousand Jewish males who formed the original flock. (*Exodus* 12:37).

(Verse 9) The few followers of Jesus in the early days of the church soon found themselves the object of the most savage religious persecution ever, to that time, raised against a people. Peter described this persecution in words borrowed from *Zechariah* 13:9. "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (*I Peter* 1:6-7)

There is no doubt the early church interpreted these verses in reference first to Jesus and then to themselves.

To those who endured persecution, Jehovah gives recognition that they are His people. They acknowledge Jehovah as their God. Both terms, people and Jehovah, are covenant terms. The church is God's new Israel!

Chapter XLI—Questions

In the First Day

1. The future glory of the restored Jewish nation was delayed by their_____.
2. The key to the final chapters of *Zechariah* is found in the phrase _____.
3. This term describes two days which from *Zechariah's* point of view were both in_____.
4. The first of these days describes_____.
5. The second "day" describes_____.
6. Review the four characteristics of the day of Jehovah. (See introduction of *Zechariah*.)
7. *Zechariah's* first use of "in the day" (3:8-10) refers to_____.
8. What is the significance of the term *Israel* in *Zechariah* 12:1?

9. Why does Zechariah here refer to Jehovah as the creator of the heavens and the earth and the spirit of man?
10. The first period referred to by "in that day" is addressed to _____ and has to do with _____.
11. The second period referred to as "in that day" has to do with _____.
12. Several things are said to be going to happen in the Messianic age. Each is introduced by "in that day." They are:
 - a. In that day (1)
 - b. In that day (2)
 - c. In that day (3)
 - d. In that day (4)
12. e. In that day (5)
- f. In that day (6)
- g. In that day (7)
- h. In that day (8)
- i. In that day (9)
13. *Israel* at the time of Zechariah could be none other than _____.
14. What of Jerusalem in the time of Messiah's first coming?
15. What was to be the relationship of the Jews to all nations during the Messianic age?
16. Historically the military action against which the Jews were least effective was the _____.
17. What is meant by Jehovah smiting the peoples and horses with "blindness?"
18. Who are "they of Jerusalem?" (12:7)
19. How does *Zechariah* 12:10 fix this section as being fulfilled in the Messianic age?
20. Compare *Zechariah* 12:10-14 with *John* 19:34-37.
21. What is the condition upon which Jews may again become part of God's true Israel? (cf. *Romans* 11:17-24)
22. Conversion is always an _____ experience.
23. How was the mourning over Him who they had pierced fulfilled on Pentecost?
24. Who are "all the families that remain?"
25. In connection with the mourning over Him whom they pierced a _____ was to be opened for _____ and _____.
26. The _____ opened the fountain.
27. _____ relates the fountain to sin.
28. _____ relates the fountain to moral impurity or _____.
29. _____ is frequently associated with uncleanness.

30. The _____ is generally credited with ministering the *coup de grace* to classic idolatry.
31. What prophecy is condemned during the Messianic age?
32. How does *Zechariah* 13:6 relate to Him whom they pierced?
33. What is meant by the wounds "between thine arms?"
34. Discuss *Zechariah* 12:7 in light of *Acts* 2:23.
35. What nation is symbolized historically by the sword?
36. Jesus could be legally executed by _____.
37. Compare *Zechariah* 13:7 to *Matthew* 26:31 and *Mark* 14:27.
38. Following the death of Jesus the number of His followers was about _____.
39. Compare *Zechariah* 13:9 and *I Peter* 1:6-7.
40. To those who endured persecution, Jehovah gives _____, and they acknowledge _____. Both are _____.
41. The _____ is God's new Israel.

CHAPTER XLII

IN THE SECOND DAY

If our overall understanding of Zechariah to this point is correct, chapter fourteen, deals almost exclusively with eschatology. Eschatology may be defined simply as the study of the last things, or last times.

Most commentators agree that this is the subject matter of the present chapter. However, unanimity of opinion concerning Zechariah's last chapter ends with this agreement. Rabid pre-millennialists have a field day here, as they do with the other apocalyptic writings of the Bible, because of the apocalyptic nature of the work itself. They see here the proof of their contention that Jesus plans, upon His second coming, to establish an earthly kingdom which will stand for a thousand years, and in which the Jews, with Him as king, will rule the world, and in general do what Jesus refused to do the first time He came to earth. They also claim the Jews will do what the church has failed to do, namely convert the world to Jehovah and Christ. These conclusions are arrived at by ignoring the symbolic nature of apocalypsis almost entirely.

The post-millennialists on the other hand, shift from the literal to the symbolic and back with surprising ease and assure us the last chapter of Zechariah describes the bringing of the world to the worship of God during our present Messianic age. When this is done, Messiah, they claim, will return and reign over a perfect world. The fact that

the developments of history during the past nineteen hundred years, and especially in our own century, are obviously not moving toward any such Utopian world does not phase the post-millennialist in the least.

As we mentioned previously, one can never be intellectually honest and be dogmatic about the interpretation of eschatology, particularly that which the Bible writers couch in apocalypsis. The very fact that the events of eschatology, by their nature, have yet to occur deprives us of what, in the understanding of other prophecy, is a very useful tool; namely the events of history. With other predictive prophecy one can, with some accuracy, say—this was foretold, and here in such a place it has happened. Not so with those events which are yet to come.

Deprived of historic fulfillment, and faced with the elusive figures, often indecipherable, of apocalyptic writing, we can only suggest the possible, at most the probable, meaning of such predictions. With this limitation firmly fixed in our consciousness, we shall now attempt to understand at least the gist of Zechariah fourteen.

A DAY OF JEHOVAH COMETH . . . Zechariah 14:1-3

RV . . . Behold a day of Jehovah cometh, when thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall Jehovah go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

LXX . . . Behold, the days of the Lord come, and thy spoils shall be divided in thee. And I will gather all the Gentiles to Jerusalem to war, and the city shall be taken, and the houses plundered, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, but the rest of my people shall not be utterly cut off from the city. And the Lord shall go forth, and fight with those Gentiles as when he fought in the day of war.

COMMENTS

(Verse 1) For an understanding of the term "a Day of Jehovah," please review the comments in the Introduction to Zechariah and in the beginning of Chapter XLI.

"A Day of Jehovah" is always a closing of one historic era and the beginning of another. It is upon this premise that we postulated

the belief that the term "in that day" in chapter thirteen and chapter fourteen refers to two different times. (See comment.) The first day, referred to in chapter thirteen, is the Messianic age in which we live. The second day, referred to in chapter fourteen, is the last time.

(Verse 1(b)-3) In the coming day of Jehovah the spoil of Jerusalem is to be divided in her midst. The occasion for this pillage will be the gathering of the nations against Jerusalem for battle. The treatment of the city's inhabitants is to be barbaric with half the population being taken into slavery. Those not taken into captivity are to remain in the city.

Those who see the subsequent verses symbolically fulfilled in the church, take this verse to refer to the Roman conquest of Jerusalem. This raises grave questions. For example, if we are to take this verse literally of the invasion by Rome, why are we to assume the subsequent verses are figurative? And, how can we identify Rome as "all nations?"

The Roman occupation of Palestine was by invitation, initially, and so does not fit the description here at all. The final destruction of Jerusalem by Rome, as the result of the failure of the Jews to accept Roman rule, more closely resembles the picture presented by Zechariah, but to explain these verses solely on this basis requires a sudden unexplainable shifting from the literal to the figurative in the verses immediately following.

For example, those who take "Jerusalem" as meaning the city literally, in verses one through three, insist that the term is metaphorically used in following verses concerning the Mount of Olives. Such inconsistency is a gross violation of the rules of sound exegesis. It is more honest to simply say we do not know exactly what is being described here.

It seems quite likely that we are dealing with events of the end time and the last rebellion of man against God. Perhaps we must leave the explanation of the prophet's language to Him in Whose hands such things rest. Perhaps we, as the twelve, must reluctantly accept the fact that there are certain matters which it is not our prerogative to know as completely as we might like. (cp. *Acts 1:6-7*)

IN THAT DAY (10) . . . Zechariah 14:4-5

RV . . . And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the mount of Olives shall be cleft in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall

remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee by the valley of my mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azel; yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah; and Jehovah my God shall come, and all the holy ones with thee.

LXX . . . And his feet shall stand in that day on the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave asunder, half of it toward the east and the west, a very great division; and half the mountain shall lean to the north, and half of it to the south. And the valley of my mountains shall be closed up, and the valley of the mountains shall be joined on to Jasod, and shall be blocked up as it was blocked up in the days of the earthquake, in the days of Ozias king of Juda; and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with him.

COMMENTS

This is one of the most difficult of all prophetic predictions. It has called forth some of the most ludicrous explanations ever offered as interpretation of Scripture. A nationally known television evangelist tells a wild story in which a large motel chain, investigating the possibility of building on the Mount of Olives, found a fault in the mountain of such extent that it could not support such a building. Just how preposterous this is is obvious to anyone who has visited the holy land and has seen the huge buildings which do stand on Olivet! Near the summit is the church of the *Pater Noster*. Just to the south a few hundred yards is the luxurious Intercontinental Hotel. South of the Intercontinental is another hotel, the Panorama, and not far away a mosque has recently been erected.

If the Mount of Olives is to literally split at the coming of Jesus, it will not be because of any fault in the earth, but because of the power of God!

The Mount of Olives is the predominant peak of a line of hills which begins just less than a mile east of Jerusalem and ranges north and south about a mile. Between the Mount of Olives, on the slopes of which the Garden of Gethsemane, a sabbath day's journey (7/8 of a mile) from the city. The mountain is separated from Jerusalem by the Kidron Valley. It stands some 295 feet higher than Mount Moriah, the site of the temple.

To the east of the Mount of Olives lies the Judean wilderness. On a clear day one can stand on the mountain's top and view the Dead

Sea in the distance. The road to Bethany winds round the north, beyond which lies Mount Scopus.

It seems likely that Jesus ascended to Heaven from the slopes of Olivet, (*Acts 1:11*), though such is not specifically stated. (Others believe He ascended from a hill in Galilee. (cp. *Mark 16:19*, etc.) Upon this assumption, some have seen *Zechariah 14:4* as a prediction that He will return to the very spot from which He departed.

The statement that the Mount of Olives will cleave when the Lord stands upon it has given rise, as we have seen, to all sorts of speculations. What is described is the division, east and west, of the mountain resulting in the formation of "a very great valley." If such were to happen literally, the city of Jerusalem would be much more accessible from the east.

(Verse 5) Such a valley would also form a way of easy escape from the city. Zechariah pictures the inhabitants of Jerusalem fleeing down the newly-formed valley between the northern and southern extremities of the then divided Mount of Olives. In verse three he has said that Jehovah will fight "as in the day of battle." As He separated the Red Sea to allow the Jews to escape from Pharaoh's chariots, He will then separate the mountain to allow those in Jerusalem to escape from the assembled nations.

Azel has not been identified by archeologists. Many have speculated as to its location, but none have offered any real help.

Two hundred years before Zechariah, in the days of king Uzziah, a severe earthquake had caused many to flee Jerusalem. The prophet sees the exodus following the division of the Mount of Olives as similar to that historic event.

The Lord is next pictured as coming in company with all the saints. This prediction is reminiscent of one made in *Jude 14*. "And to these also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones . . ." It is also quite similar to John's description of Christ's coming in *Revelation 1:7*, "Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him." Jesus Himself predicted in *Matthew 24:30*, ". . . and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

Such descriptions of the Lord in Scripture are always in association with Christ's second coming. It is therefore unlikely that what Zechariah is presenting here is, as some have suggested, a metaphorical

description of the preaching of the gospel and the escape of some Jews by accepting it in 30 A.D.

IN THAT DAY (11) . . . Zechariah 14:6-7

RV . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that there shall not be light; the bright ones shall withdraw themselves: but it shall be one day which is known unto Jehovah; not day, and not night; but it shall come to pass, that at evening time there shall be light.

LXX . . . And it shall come to pass in that day that there shall be no light, and there shall be for one day cold and frost, and that day shall be known to the Lord, and it shall not be day nor night: but towards evening it shall be light.

COMMENTS

The description is typical of many in which the day of Jehovah is pictured in the prophets. Isaiah said "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously," (*Isaiah* 24:23) and "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." (*Isaiah* 13:9-10) Joel stated "The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining." (*Joel* 3:15) Jesus' own description was "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (*Matthew* 24:29-31)

On Pentecost Peter saw at least the beginning of this prediction being fulfilled in the coming of the Holy Spirit. Nothing that happened on Pentecost, however, answers to the last two verses of Joel's prediction, as quoted by Peter (cf. *Acts* 2:17-20). Perhaps here is a clue to the events described by Zechariah. The coming of the Holy

Spirit marked the beginning of the day of Jehovah (*Acts 2:17-18*). The happenings pictured by Isaiah, Joel, Jesus, and John marked its end. (*Acts 2:19-20*)

IN THAT DAY (12) . . . Zechariah 14:8-12

RV . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea; in summer and in winter shall it be. And Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall Jehovah be one, and his name one. All the land shall be made like the Arabah, from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; and she shall be lifted up, and shall dwell in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananel unto the king's winepresses. And men shall dwell therein, and there shall be no more curse; but Jerusalem shall dwell safely. And this shall be the plague wherewith Jehovah will smite all the peoples that have warred against Jerusalem: their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their sockets, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.

LXX . . . And in that day living water shall come forth out of Jerusalem; half of it toward the former sea, and half of it toward the latter sea; and so shall it be in summer and spring. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one, compassing all the earth, and the wilderness from Gabe unto Remmon south of Jerusalem. And Rama shall remain in its place. From the gate of Benjamin to the place of the first gate, to the gate of the corners, and to the tower of Anameel, as far as the king's winepresses, they shall dwell in the city; and there shall be no more any curse, and Jerusalem shall dwell securely. And this shall be the overthrow with which the Lord will smite all the nations, as many as have fought against Jerusalem; their flesh shall consume away while they are standing upon their feet, and their eyes shall melt out of their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.

COMMENTS

(Verses 8-9) If the Day of Jehovah (*verse 1*) did begin on Pentecost (see above on *Zechariah 14:6-7*) and the violence described in *14:4-7* are to occur at the end of it, the present verse is easily identifiable with Jesus' statement to the Samaritan woman in John chapter

four. "Jesus answered and said unto her, Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life." This living water did indeed flow east and west from Jerusalem as repentance and remission of sin began to be preached in the whole world, beginning from Jerusalem.

In the end of the day in which the living water began to flow, the Lord shall be king over the whole earth.

God has always been king over the whole earth. In the end He will be universally recognized as what He has always been. Evidence of His universal reign is to be the abolishing of false gods. Zechariah has already informed us that this would happen in the holy land. In the end it will happen throughout the earth. That it has by no means happened yet proves further that Zechariah's prediction remains to be completely fulfilled.

(Verses 10-11) *Geba* . . . the name literally means a *hill*— was located on the northern border of the land of Benjamin. (cf. *Joshua* 31:17, cp. *I Kings* 15:22) *Rimmon*, meaning pomegranate, was situated south of Jerusalem, in Judah. It was rebuilt following the Babylonian exile. (cf. *Joshua* 15:32, 19:7)

It seems that the phenomenon which is to split the Mount of Olives, opening a new valley, will also cause other topographical changes in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Geba and Rimmon marked the northern and southern limits of post-exilic Judah. The mountain ridge thus occupied is pictured here as sinking to form a plain above which Jerusalem is lifted up or exalted.

Zechariah speaks of Jerusalem as it appeared in his own day. The gate of Benjamin was on the north and is probably to be identified with the gate of Ephraim (cp. *II Chronicles* 25:23, *Nehemiah* 8:16, 22:39) The tower of Hananeel still stood, while the first gate seems to have been destroyed, since he speaks of its "place" rather than the gate itself.

(Verse 11) During this cataclysmic upheaval, the city itself will be untouched. Those in it will be safe.

(Verse 12) Those who are arrayed against Jerusalem at the time of the upheaval will shortly thereafter be smitten by a plague. The description of those struck by it is appalling. The only thing like it so far seen on earth was seen at Hiroshima and Nagasaki! If what we are reading here is the symbolic description of a final war on earth, the weapons for it are already in the arsenals.

IN THAT DAY (14) . . . Zechariah 14:13-19

RV . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from Jehovah shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the nations round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of the beasts that shall be in those camps, as that plague. And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso of all the families of the earth goeth not up unto Jerusalem to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, upon them there shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, neither shall it be upon them; there shall be the plague wherewith Jehovah will smite the nations that go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations that go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

LXX . . . And there shall be in that day a great panic from the Lord upon them; and they shall lay hold every man of the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall be clasped with the hand of his neighbour. Juda also shall fight in Jerusalem; and God shall gather the strength of all the nations round about, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. And this shall be the overthrow of the horses, and mules, and camels, and asses, and all the beasts that are in those camps, according to this overthrow. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall be left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem, shall even come up every year to worship the king, the Lord Almighty, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever of all the families of the earth shall not come up to Jerusalem to worship the king, the Lord Almighty, even these shall be added to the others. And if the family of Egypt shall not go up, nor come; then upon them shall be the overthrow with which the Lord shall smite all the nations, whichever of them shall not come up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the sin of Egypt, and the sin of all the nations, whosoever shall not come up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

COMMENTS

(Verse 13) The result of the previously described cataclysm and plague is consternation. Mutual lack of trust seems to run amuck. Each one lays hold of the hand of his neighbor and raises up his own hand against him.

(Verse 14) Judah (the Jews) shall also fight at Jerusalem in that day. Whatever has been taken in the pillage described in *Zechariah* 14:1-2 will be returned, and more beside.

(Verse 15) The plague which strikes the nations gathered against Jerusalem shall also smite the animals. The law said that, if an entire city became polluted by idolatry, not only the people but their animals were to be destroyed (cf. *Deuteronomy* 8:15). Here the justice of God fulfills His law against the pagan people who have attacked His holy city.

(Verse 16) The result of God's judgement is to be repentance. Those left of those who warred against Jerusalem now turn and worship her King.

The feast of the tabernacles commemorated the pilgrim life of the Jews during their years between the Red Sea and the Jordan. It celebrated not only entrance into the promised land, but the lessons learned through forty years of desert wandering during which an entire rebellious generation died. The nations who have at last learned, as Israel of old, the consequence of rebellion against God will keep the feast which commemorates that learning experience.

(Verse 17) If any nation fails to keep the feast of tabernacles, the result will be drought. Lack of rain soon turns the richest land to waste. The withholding of water as a means of chastisement has a long history in the Old Testament. (cf. *Amos* 4:7, *I Kings* 18:9-16, 28:5.)

(Verses 18-19) Egypt is singled out for special treatment should she refuse to keep the feast. This nation, whose history in ancient times was as interwoven with that of the Jewish nation as it is today, has had more first-hand experience of the power of God at work in His people than anyone else.

Drought was no threat to Egypt through the withholding of rain. It virtually never rains in Egypt anyway. Therefore, should Egypt fail to repent and keep the feast, she will suffer a special plague. Just what that plague will be is not stated.

Ultimately the plague visited upon unrepentant Egypt is to be shared by all nations which refuse to keep the feast.

IN THAT DAY (15) (16) . . . Zechariah 14:20-21

RV . . . In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLY UNTO JEHOVAH; and the pots in Jehovah's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holy unto Jehovah of hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and boil therein; and in that day there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of Jehovah of hosts.

LXX . . . In that day there shall be upon the bridle of every horse Holiness to the Lord Almighty; and the caldrons in the house of the Lord shall be as bowls before the altar. And every pot in Jerusalem, and in Juda shall be holy to the Lord Almighty: and all that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and shall seethe meat in them: and in that day there shall be no more Chanaanite in the house of the Lord Almighty.

COMMENTS

Finally, everything in Jerusalem is inscribed with HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD, from the bells on the horses of the trade caravans to the pots in the temple. The utensils in the houses will share this inscription. The artificial distinction between the sacred and the secular will be broken down and everything, even the most commonplace things, such as kitchen utensils will be recognized as sacred because all of life is sacred.

There will be no more Canaanite in the land. Those who were the first enemies of God's people in His land, whose heathen gods were the first to turn Israel from Jehovah are no more.

Chapter XLII—Questions

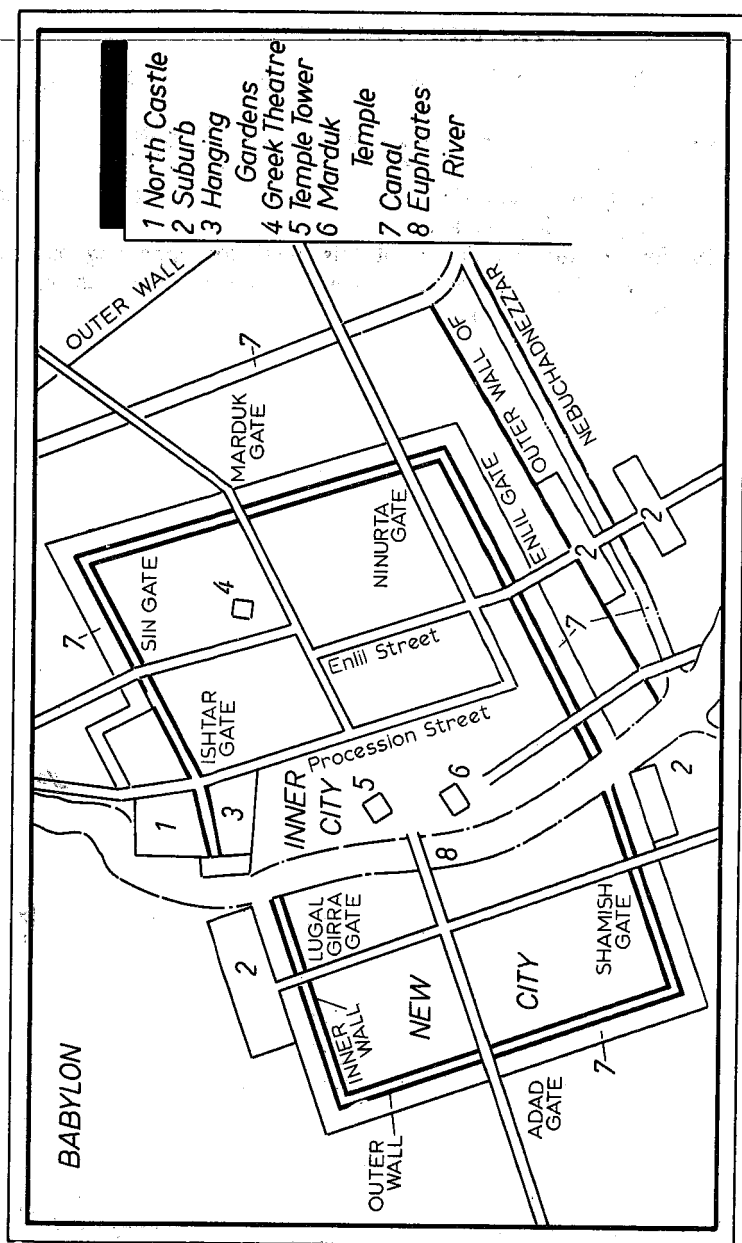
In the Second Day

1. Chapter fourteen deals almost exclusively with _____.
2. Eschatology may be defined simply as _____.
3. Do scholars generally agree on the meaning of this chapter?
4. Discuss the two extreme views of pre and post millennialists in regard to Zechariah fourteen.
5. One can never be _____ and be dogmatic about eschatology, especially when it is written in apocalyptic form.

6. In the study of eschatology we are deprived of a very useful tool in the interpretation of prophecy in general. What is that tool?
7. Review the meaning of "a day of Jehovah" in chapter forty-one.
8. In the day of Jehovah described in Zechariah fourteen the _____ of Jerusalem is to be divided in her midst.
9. Half the population of Jerusalem is to be _____.
10. Why does the Roman occupation of Jerusalem not fit the description here?
11. List the events of Zechariah
 - a. In that day (10)
 - b. In that day (11)
 - c. In that day (12)
 - d. In that day (13)
 - e. In that day (14)
 - f. In that day (15)
 - g. In that day (16)
12. Describe the present setting of the Mount of Olives.
13. The division of the Mount of Olives would provide an easy _____.
14. The events here are compared to an historic earthquake in the days of _____.
15. The description of the Lord in company with all the saints always refers to _____.
16. What other prophets described the day of the Lord in terms similar to those used here by Zechariah?
17. Peter saw at least the beginning of the fulfillment of a similar prediction by Joel in _____.
18. God has always been king over the whole earth.
In the end He will be _____.
19. Locate Geba and Rimmon.
20. What other topographical alterations accompany the splitting of the Mount of Olives?
21. Who will be safe during these cataclysmic events?
22. Describe the plague which is to come upon those arrayed against Jerusalem.
23. What is the result of this plague?
24. What Jewish feast is to be celebrated by all the nations?
What is its significance?

IN THE SECOND DAY

25. What is to be the consequence if any nation fails to keep the feast?
26. Why is Egypt here singled out for special punishment should she fail to keep the feast?
27. Finally the inscription _____ is to be seen on everything in Jerusalem.
28. Explain the significance of this inscription appearing on such diverse items as altar utensils and cook pots in the home.
29. Who were the Canaanites?



PART VIII
MALACHI

OUTLINE OF MALACHI

Superscription . . . 1:1

- I. Denunciation of unfaithfulness . . . 1:2—2:16
 - A. God loves Israel . . . 1:2-5
 - B. The unfaithful priesthood . . . 1:6-2:9
 - C. God despises infidelity . . . 2:10-16
- II. The coming day of the Lord . . . 2:17—4:3
 - A. The Lord will send His messenger to prepare for His day . . . 2:17-3:6
 - B. If the people will return in devotion to God, He will yet bless them . . . 3:7-12
 - C. When the day comes, true worshipers will be spared . . . 3:13—4:3

Conclusion

Remember . . . 4:4-6

CHAPTER XLIII

INTRODUCTION

Jewish tradition says that prophecy continued forty years under the second temple, and this prophet (Malachi) they call the *seal of prophecy*, because in him the series or succession of prophets broke off.

The traditional Christian view is that Malachi is the link between the Old and New Covenants. Tertullian called him "the shirt and boundary of Christianity."

The authenticity of this writing is established by references to it in the New Testament. (eg. *Matthew* 11:10, 17:12, *Mark* 1:2, 9:11, 12, *Luke* 1:17, *Romans* 9:13)

Malachi's exact date we do not know, but it is probably about 460 B.C. Some have placed it as late as 424 B.C.

The remnant had returned from Babylon in 538 B.C. Haggai and Zechariah had succeeded in getting them to rebuild the temple in 520-516 B.C. In 457 Ezra had lent his assistance to Jewish national restoration. Fifteen years later in 444 B.C., Nehemiah had rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem.

In all, about a century had lapsed since the return from captivity. There was no resurgence of the idolatry which had driven their fathers into such punishment, but indifference and lack of real commitment were the order of the day. The laxity of the priests in teaching and en-

forcing the law was evidenced in the people's lack of support of the temple services. Unacceptable sacrifice of the worst rather than the first of their flocks were brought to God. Tithes went unpaid and the practice of intermarrying with Gentile women again reared its ugly head. (cp. *Ezra* 9)

In this state the coming of the Messiah for Whom they waited was in reality a threat rather than a promise.

We do not know the name of the author of this last Old Testament writing. The word Malachi means "*my messenger*" and is the name of the writer's function. It is suggested that he is called Malachi because of his emphatic prediction of a personal Messiah. The term "Malachi" is actually translated "*my messenger*" in 3:1.

This primary prediction of the book (3:1) is applied to John the Baptist, also the Messiah's messenger. (cp. *Matthew* 11:10, *Mark* 1:2, *Luke* 7:17, *Matthew* 17:10-12, *Mark* 9:11-12, *Luke* 1:16-17)

Most commentators point out that Malachi's prophecy coincided with the first period of Daniel's seventy weeks (cf. *Daniel* 9:24). Thus the emphasis upon him as the Messiah's messenger seems fitting.

MALACHI'S MESSAGE . . .

Malachi's central concern is for fidelity to the covenant. (See the Covenant Theme in the Prophets, chapter III.) The priests have corrupted the worship which was designed to perpetuate covenant consciousness among the people. The men are marrying foreign women and so opening the door to idolatry as had Solomon of old.

In refuting this evil, Malachi rises to one of the heights of Old Testament prophecy in describing the purpose of the covenant in the ultimate worship of God among the Gentiles. His references to God as Father, the ideal priest, and the blessings of true obedience are equally striking in their Messianic overtones. He further clarifies, "the Day of the Lord," and points to the forerunner of the Messiah.

It is no doubt for these reasons that Malachi immediately precedes the New Testament in our English versions of the Bible.

The next word from Jehovah to His people is John's preaching.

CHAPTER XLIV

DENUNCIATION OF UNFAITHFULNESS

SUPERScription . . . Malachi 1:1

RV . . . The burden of the word of Jehovah to Israel by Malachi.

LXX . . . The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by the hand of his messenger. Lay it, I pray you, to heart.

COMMENTS

Malachi begins with the prophet's usual claim to inspiration, "the burden of the word of Jehovah." The message is to Israel.

The term "Israel" appears four times in Malachi. (1:1, 1:5, 2:16, and 4:4) There can be little doubt that its use in this context is designed to underscore the covenant relationship of the people to Jehovah. (See review of the use of "Israel" in Chapter IV, comments on *Micah* 1:5)

The message will first convince, then comfort; first discover sin, then reprove it. It will reach its climax in the promise of Him Who is to take away sin.

GOD LOVES ISRAEL . . . Malachi 1:2-5

RV . . . I have loved you, saith Jehovah. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith Jehovah: yet I loved Jacob; but Esau I hated, and made his mountains a desolation, and gave his heritage to the jackals of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are beaten down but we will return and build the waste places; thus saith Jehovah of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and men shall call them The border of wickedness, and The people against whom Jehovah hath indignation for ever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, Jehovah be magnified beyond the border of Israel.

LXX . . . I have loved you, saith the Lord. And ye said, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and hated Esau, and laid waste his borders, and made his heritage as dwellings of the wilderness? Because one will say, Idumea has been overthrown, but let us return and rebuild the desolate places; thus saith the Lord Almighty, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall be called The borders of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord has set himself for ever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The Lord has been magnified upon the borders of Israel.

COMMENTS

In these verses Israel is charged with being insensible to God's love. To overcome this insensitivity, He says emphatically, "I have loved you."

It is not the first time He has declared His love. (cp. *Jeremiah* 31:3-4) All of His dealings, from the initial establishment of the covenant, have been the result of this love.

In answer to the anticipated question "Wherein hast thou loved us?" Jehovah answers specifically in terms of His preference for Jacob over Esau.

The Jews were prone to think of themselves as superior to other races. Here God reminds them He has shown His love to them, not just in preference to other races, but in preference over those of their own race. Jacob and Esau were twin brothers, yet God established His covenant with Jacob, father of all Israelites, rather than with Esau, father of the Edomites. "I loved Jacob . . . I hated Esau."

God does not, of course, unequivocally, hate any man or race of men. (cf. *Acts* 10:34, 35) This statement must be kept in context. It is in contrast to His great love for His covenant people that His love for others seems hatred by comparison. Much in the same vein, Jesus demands that we "hate" father, mother, brother, sister, wife and even self. (*Luke* 14:26) We know He does not want us to literally hate anyone. (cp. *Matthew* 5:43-48) Neither does He hate anyone, excepting in comparison to His love for His chosen people.

The evidence of His preferential love for Israel over Edom is pictured in contrast of Edom's homeland to the "land flowing with milk and honey" into which He led His people. Edom lies southeast of the Dead Sea in the Arabian desert. Its capital, Petra, was cut out of solid red limestone cliffs. The surrounding area is desolate and barren.

Paul set upon the contrast between Jacob and Esau in establishing God's love for His covenant people. (*Romans* 9:13) The apostle points out the contrast is not between two nations *per se*, for "they are not all Israel that are of Israel." (*Romans* 9:6) The real contrast is between the covenant people and the noncovenant people for "this is a word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." (*Romans* 9:9-13)

Since it was His promise to redeem all mankind that was the heart of His covenant, His preferential treatment of Israel is ultimately evidence of His love even for Edom!

Nevertheless, in the years before Christ, He could point with justification to His treatment of His people in comparison to others as evidence of His love.

ISRAEL IS UNFAITHFUL . . . Malachi 1:6-2:9

RV . . . A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master; if then I am a father, where is mine honor? and if I am a master, where is my fear? saith Jehovah of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar. And ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of Jehovah is contemptible. And when ye offer the blind for sacrifice, it is no evil! and when ye offer the lame and sick, it is no evil! Present it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee? or will he accept thy person? saith Jehovah of hosts. And now, I pray you, entreat the favor of God, that he may be gracious unto us; this hath been by your means: will he accept any of your persons? saith Jehovah of hosts. Oh that there were one among you that would shut the doors, that ye might not kindle fire on mine altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, saith Jehovah of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the Gentiles, saith Jehovah of hosts. But ye profane it, in that ye say, The table of Jehovah is polluted, and the fruit thereof, even its food, is contemptible. Ye say also, Behold what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith Jehovah of hosts; and ye have brought that which was taken by violence, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye bring the offering; should I accept this at your hand? saith Jehovah. But cursed be the deceiver, who hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a blemished thing; for I am a great King, saith Jehovah of hosts, and my name is terrible among the Gentiles. And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith Jehovah of hosts, then will I send the curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart. Behold, I will rebuke your seed, and will spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your feasts; and ye shall be taken away with it. And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant may be with Levi, saith Jehovah of hosts. My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him that he might fear; and he feared

me, and stood in awe of my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and unrighteousness was not found in his lips; he walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many away from iniquity. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of Jehovah of hosts. But ye are turned aside out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble in the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith Jehovah of hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have had respect of persons in the law.

LXX . . . A son honours his father, and a servant his master: if then I am a father, where is mine honour? and if I am a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord Almighty. Yet the priests are they that despise my name: yet ye said, Wherein have we despised thy name? In that ye bring to mine altar polluted bread; and ye said, Wherein have ye polluted it? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted, and that which was set thereon ye have despised. For if ye bring a blind victim for sacrifices, is it not evil? and if ye bring the lame or the sick, is it not evil? offer it now to thy ruler, and see if he will receive thee, if he will accept thy person, saith the Lord Almighty. And now intreat the face of your God, and make supplication to him. These things have been done by your hands; shall I accept you? saith the Lord Almighty. Because even among you the doors shall be shut, and one will not kindle the fire of mine altar for nothing, I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord Almighty, and I will not accept a sacrifice at your hands. For from the rising of the sun even to the going down thereof my name has been glorified among the Gentiles; and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering: for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord Almighty. But ye profane it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted, and his meats set thereon are despised. And ye said, These services are troublesome: therefore I have utterly rejected them with scorn, saith the Lord Almighty: and ye brought in torn victims, and lame, and sick: if then ye should bring an offering, shall I accept them at your hands? saith the Lord Almighty. And cursed is the man who had the power, and possessed a male in his flock, and whose vow is upon him, and who sacrifices a corrupt thing to the Lord; for I am a great King, saith the Lord Almighty, and my name is glorious among the nations. And now, O priests, this commandment is to you. If ye will not hearken, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory to my name, saith the Lord Almighty, then I will send forth the

curse upon you, and I will bring a curse upon your blessing; yea, I will curse it, and I will scatter your blessing, and it shall not exist among you, because ye lay not this to heart. Behold, I turn my back upon you, and I will scatter dung upon your faces, the dung of your feasts, and I will carry you away at the same time. And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment to you, that my covenant might be with the sons of Levi, saith the Lord Almighty. My covenant of life and peace was with him, and I gave it him that he might reverently fear me, and that he might be awe-struck at my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked before me directing his way in peace, and he turned many from unrighteousness. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty. But ye have turned aside from the way, and caused many to fail in following the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord Almighty. And I have made you despised and cast out among all the people, because ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.

COMMENTS

God's love and faithfulness to His covenant people stands in stark contrast to their unfaithfulness to Him. They neither fear Him as a master nor honor Him as a father . . . and their priests are the chief offenders.

The severe reproof of the priests is a just one. They have profaned the holy things of God with which they were intrusted. It was their sin that was leading the people to be unfaithful.

They took His name in vain, not by pronouncing it in profanity, but by offering unacceptable sacrifices to him. They are accused of polluting the altar.

When they deny the charge, saying, "Wherein have we polluted thee?", Jehovah's answer is "In that ye say the table of Jehovah is contemptible."

The term "bread of God" is synonymous with "sacrifices to God" (*Leviticus* 21:8), so we should not think here of the table of shew-bread, but of the sacrificial flesh offered upon the altar.

The priests have declared the table of God contemptible by sanctioning the offering of skimpy and blemished sacrifices. The sacrificial animals Darius, and no doubt his successors had provided Israel as a

vassal state were kept to replenish their own flocks and only the culls were brought to God.

Such cheap religion is less than worthless, it is an affront to God.

The law said such animals were not to be offered as sacrifice (cp. *Leviticus* 22:17-25, *Deuteronomy* 15:21) yet the priests addressed here saw no harm in it.

The governor appointed by the Gentile emperor would not eat the meat they offered to God, yet they presented it as an act of worship and said, "it is not evil."

Their real error in offering blemished sacrifices lies in the fact that such animals could not do what the sacrifices were designed to do, namely, typify the ultimate Sacrifice, without spot or blemish. (*1 Peter* 1:19) It was to keep this prophetic object lesson before the people that the temple had been rebuilt. It was to maintain this constant covenant reminder in the eyes of the people that the sacrifices *must* be made according to divine directive. A blemished animal could not possibly portend the coming Lamb of God, and without that portent the entire sacrificial system was meaningless.

The scathing irony of verse nine underscores this truth. Malachi challenges the unfaithful priests to try it, if they think such unacceptable sacrifices will win them the favor of God.

The entire passage draws a vivid contrast between man's religion and God's sacrificial scheme of redemption. Men, in their religious efforts to curry God's favor, always think of themselves as bringing *Him* something. The advent of the Christ, toward which the sacrificial system pointed, is the exact opposite. God was bringing the Real Sacrifice to man.

From the beginning God has not been served by men's hands as though *He* needed anything. (cp. *Psalms* 10:1-12, *Acts* 17:25) In demanding the presentation of the very best of Israel's flocks to be slain upon the altar, God intended that they learn something of the price *He* would pay for our redemption when *He* offered the "Choice Jewel of Heaven" on Calvary. If *He* were to tolerate a lesser offering, the whole point of the sacrifices would be missed.

GOD DESPISES INFIDELITY . . .

(Verse 10) Calvin points out that, in the temple, one priest was stationed at the doors of the court of burnt offerings for the express purpose of keeping out animals unfit for sacrifice. In this verse, God cries out in anguish for just one priest whose concern for God's law

would cause him to shut the door against such blemished sacrifices as were being offered daily. It would be better to let the fires go unkindled than to continue to desecrate the altar and mar the meaning of God's covenant by offering animals unfit to depict the coming Real Sacrifice. Better none at all than these. (cp. *Isaiah* 1:11-15)

Since no such priest stood at the door, God would Himself refuse to accept their sacrifices.

(Verse 11) This verse is reminiscent of Paul's attitude toward those Jews who rejected the preaching of the Gospel. (*Acts* 13:46) God, Who lives in eternity and so is much less pre-occupied with time than we, treats the acceptance of His Sacrifice by the Gentiles as an already accomplished fact. He Who knows the end from the beginning is able of the very stones to raise up children to Abraham (*Matthew* 3:9). Other sheep He has which are not of this fold (*John* 10:16). "For when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves . . ." (*Romans* 2:14) and God is glorified. His name is, in fact, great among the nations. (cp. *Isaiah* 1:11-15)

"Sacrifice," in verse 11, is used figuratively as in *Psalms* 51:17, *Hebrews* 13:10,15,16 and *I Peter* 2:5,12, but the truth is that "in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him." (*Acts* 10:35)

(Verses 12-13) Whereas the ineffable name of God is thus glorified among the nations who have not the law and are thus separated from the Messianic hope, foreigners in the commonwealth of Israel, oblivious of the promises of God and unaware of any hope as yet (*Ephesians* 2:12), that same name is made a mockery among those who have for centuries been His covenant people.

They offer to God what they would not eat themselves, and even this is "a drag," irksome service! Isaiah had informed their fathers that it was God Who is wearied by such service and not they. (*Isaiah* 43:22-f)

Meat taken by violence, *ie.* torn by animals, was not even lawful for human consumption, yet they offered it to God. (cp. *Exodus* 22:31)

(Verse 14) For "deceiver" here, read hypocrite. It was not poverty, as some pretended, which caused such niggardly sacrifices. It was greed which placed personal gain above God's required service. They possessed "a male," *ie.* such as required by law sacrifice, yet they offered God blemished animals. (cp. *Leviticus* 1:3-10) Even the Gentiles would be too fearful of God to do such things.

ESPECIALLY FOR PRIESTS . . .

(2:1-2) Here begins a special decree for the priests of Israel who are the cause of Israel's infidelity. "Ministers," Moore points out, "cannot sin or suffer alone. They drag down others if they fall." Thus does God, for the sake of His people, pronounce a curse on their unfaithful spiritual leaders. That which had been their special blessing as priests would become a curse.

(Verse 3) The maw of the sacrificial victims was, on feast days, the special food of the priests. (*Deuteronomy 18:3*) The stomach, or maw, was regarded as one of the choice delicacies. Instead of receiving this, God threatens to fling dung in their faces because of the defiled offerings from which it came.

By law, the dung of the sacrifices was to be carried outside the gate and disposed of. Because of the awful way the priests insulted God in the offering of blemished animals, they were to be carried with it.

Whether the threat to fling dung in their faces and to carry themselves to the dung heap is to be understood literally or not, it leaves little doubt as to how much God despises those who make a sham of His services. They are to be banished from His presence.

(Verse 4) The reason for God's rebuke of the priests is that the special priestly covenant which He had made with Levi, the priestly tribe, must be maintained.

(Verses 5-9) Here Malachi describes the promises and conditions of the Levitical covenant, Levi's former observance of this covenant, and the rewards of such observance. Over against these he sets the consequences of violating this covenant as these priests were doing.

Formerly, God had bestowed life and prosperity upon Levi (the priestly tribe). On him God laid the duty of reverence. In return the priests had revered God and respected His name. They had given true instructions to the people and had spoken no injustice. They had lived in accord with Him and in so doing had turned many people from sin to God. Men then stood in respect of the priests and sought to learn from them because they recognized in them God's messengers.

The unfaithful priests of Malachi's time, in contrast, have left off the righteous practices of their predecessors. Instead of leading many from sin to God, they have caused many to fall into sin. Whereas the former priests of Levi had taken their special relationship to God very much to heart, these have treated it as of no consequence.

As a result, God will make them despicable in the eyes of the people. Because of their sinful lives and unjust application of the law

for favor (cp. *Leviticus 19:15*) the people would no longer respect them as a special class and their special privileges would cease.

The principles underlying God's denunciation of the priests through Malachi merit our attention. We, as Christians, are all priests of God (*I Peter 2:9*). As such, we enjoy blessings those outside of Christ never dream of. We, too, are charged to offer sacrifices to God, holy and acceptable (*Romans 12:1-2*). To do less is to make a mockery of His name before the world.

If we do not offer ourselves as holy and acceptable sacrifices to God, we may be assured that our relationship to Him will become a curse rather than a blessing. Un-Christian men will be able to point at us and say they have more fear of God than do we. We shall then be stumbling blocks, leading them deeper into sin rather than teaching them God's truth, for they will not heed the words of priests whose lives do not match their doctrines.

GOD DESPISES INFIDELITY . . . Malachi 2:10-16

RV . . . Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers? Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of Jehovah which he loveth, and hath married the daughter of a foreign god. Jehovah will cut off, to the man that doeth this, him that waketh and him that answereth, out of the tents of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto Jehovah of hosts. And this again ye do: ye cover the altar of Jehovah with tears, with weeping, and with sighing, insomuch that he regardeth nor the offering any more, neither receiveth it with good will at your hand. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because Jehovah hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously, though she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did he not make one, although he had the residue of the Spirit? And wherefore one? He sought a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For I hate putting away, saith Jehovah the God of Israel, and him that covereth his garment with violence, saith Jehovah of hosts; therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

LXX . . . Have ye not all one father? Did not one God create you? why have ye forsaken every man his brother, to profane the covenant of your fathers? Juda has been forsaken, and an abomination has been

DENUNCIATION OF UNFAITHFULNESS 2:10-16

committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Juda has profaned the holy things of the Lord, which he delighted in, and has gone after other gods. The Lord will utterly destroy the man that does these things, until he be even cast down from out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and from among them that offer sacrifice to the Lord Almighty. And these things which I hated, ye did: ye covered with tears the altar of the Lord, and with weeping and groaning because of troubles: is it meet for me to have respect to your sacrifice, or to receive anything from your hands as welcome? Yet ye said, Wherefore? Because the Lord has borne witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, whom thou hast forsaken, and yet she was thy partner, and the wife of thy covenant. And did he not do well? and there was the residue of his spirit. But ye said, What does God seek but a seed? But take ye heed to your spirit, and forsake not the wife of thy youth. But if thou shouldest hate thy wife and put her away, saith the Lord God of Israel, then ungodliness shall cover thy thoughts, saith the Lord Almighty: therefore take ye heed to your spirit, and forsake them not.

COMMENTS

(Verses 10-12) The special covenant which made priests of the tribe of Levi was not unrelated to the everlasting covenant which is the prophet's primary concern. The common father here (*v. 10*) is not God as some have said, but Jacob. The Levites as well as the people were the children of Israel (*i.e.* Jacob).

Of all the nations on earth, they alone worshipped but one God. In any other nation the people professed varied loyalties to various household deities.

Because all Israel, priests and people alike, stood under one covenant before one God, unfaithfulness to one another constituted unfaithfulness to the covenant. And such abominable practices were present, the prophet assures his readers, in all Judah and even in the holy city in the shadow of the temple. The holy relationship of the covenant was being violated in loving and marrying pagan women.

(Verse 12) The words of verse twelve are not idle threat. The practice of inter-marriage with foreign women had brought Baal worship among the people and it was this which brought about the destruction of the northern tribes as well as the captivity of the southern tribes. If it again gained ascendance among the returned remnant, God's covenant purpose would indeed be in jeopardy.

To avoid this, God here threatens to cut off to the man, *ie.* on an individual basis, all who indulge in such practice. "Out of the tents of Jacob" signifies separation from the people of the covenant.

(Verse 13-a) This sin had once, since the return, been checked by Ezra (*Ezra 9:10*). Malachi here addresses a relapse. "This again ye do."

(Verse 13(b)-14) The covering of the altar with tears is symbolic of the weeping of wives who were being deserted for foreign women. These were Israelite women who were of the covenant people. Their abuse covered the altar *ie.* the covenant with tears.

It was customary for such marriages, *ie.* "the wife of thy youth," to be contracted when the parties were very young. Many were only thirteen or fourteen and their wives even younger. (cf. *Proverbs 5:8, Isaiah 54:6*) The couple was bound not only by the covenant of marriage, but by the even deeper relationship they shared as children of God's covenant. Those who, at later age, abandoned the wives of their youth to marry foreign women were not only breaking their own marriage vows, they were violating God's everlasting covenant with Israel.

(Verse 15) "Did He not make one . . ." Malachi's argument here in reference to this abandonment is similar to that of Jesus concerning divorce. (cp. *Matthew 19:3-ff*) God, in the beginning, made one male and one female, although He had unlimited spiritual resources and could have made more of either. These two, male and female, are called *one man* (humankind). (cf. *Genesis 1:27*) Malachi, as Jesus, understands this to indicate God's intent that there be one wife for each man.

The prophet says the reason God established this unity is that He "sought a godly seed." The modern concern of the sociologist for the effect of broken marriages upon the children (seed) of those marriages is well-founded. Eternity alone will reveal the number of children who have turned from God because their fathers abandoned their mothers to marry pagan women!

Every Christian father stands in covenant relationship to God, as did those in Israel who were addressed by Malachi. Such a father always jeopardizes his children's relationship to God when he leaves the "wife of his youth" for another woman.

"Therefore," says Malachi, "take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth."

(Verse 16) "I hate putting away . . ." Whatever doubt may linger concerning God's attitude toward divorce is certainly dispelled

by this verse. The statement of His hatred of the practice is accompanied by His name *Jehovah* as God of the covenant people. It could not be more emphatic.

"*Him that covereth his garments with violence.*" A better translation would be "*Him that covereth his violence with a garment.*" One commentator has suggested "their *violence* is the putting away of their wives; the *garment* with which they try to cover it is the plea of Moses permission."

The terminology of *Genesis* 20:16, *Deuteronomy* 22:30, *Ruth* 3:9, and *Ezekiel* 16:8 in which husbands and wives are each described as a covering for the eyes of the other would tend to indicate that the *garment* here is the wife and the *violence* with which the *garment* is covered is the divorce. The thought in these passages is that one's love for and marriage to one's wife should cover his eyes against the attraction of other women.

Whatever the meaning of this idiomatic expression, it is obvious that Malachi is denouncing, in God's name, the practice of leaving a wife who is of the faith for another who is not of the faith, and denouncing divorce in general.

Chapter XLIV—Questions

Denunciation of Unfaithfulness

1. The prophet _____ is considered by Jewish tradition as the *seal of prophecy*.
2. The traditional Christian view is that Malachi is the bridge between the _____ and the _____.
3. Malachi probably wrote about _____ B.C.
4. Malachi means _____.
5. Malachi's prophecy coincides with the _____ period of Daniel's seventy weeks.
6. Malachi's central concern is _____.
7. Discuss the corruption of the priesthood as addressed by Malachi and show its effect upon the people.
8. Why does Malachi immediately precede the New Testament in our English versions of the Bible?
9. Outline the book of Malachi.
10. The next word from Jehovah to His people after Malachi would be spoken by _____.

CHAPTER XLV

THE COMING DAY OF THE LORD

THE LORD WILL SEND A MESSENGER TO PREPARE FOR HIS
DAY . . . Malachi 2:17—3:6.

RV . . . Ye have wearied Jehovah with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? In that ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of Jehovah, and he delighteth in them; or where is the God of justice? Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts. But who can abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver; and they shall offer unto Jehovah offerings in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto Jehovah, as in the days of old, and as in ancient years. And I will come near to you to judgement; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against the false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the sojourner from his right, and fear not me, saith Jehovah of hosts. For I, Jehovah, change not; therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

LXX . . . ye that have provoked God with your words. But ye said, Wherein have we provoked him? In that ye say, Every one that does evil is a pleasing object in the sight of the Lord, and he takes pleasure in such; and where is the God of justice? Behold, I send forth my messenger, and he shall survey the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come into his temple, even the angel of the covenant, whom ye take pleasure in: behold, he is coming, saith the Lord Almighty. And who will abide the day of his coming? or who will withstand at his appearing? for he is coming in as the fire of a furnace and as the herb of fullers. He shall sit to melt and purify as it were silver, and as it were gold: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver, and they shall offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness. And the sacrifice of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasing to the Lord, according to the former days, and according to the former years. And I will draw near to you in judgement;

and I will be a swift witness against the witches, and against the adulteresses, and against them that swear falsely by my name, and against them that keep back the hireling's wages, and them that oppress the widow, and afflict orphans, and that wrest the judgement of the stranger, and fear not me, saith the Lord Almighty. For I am the Lord your God, and I am not changed:

COMMENTS

WHERE IS THE GOD OF JUSTICE . . . v. 17

Two things in the arguments of the priests wearied Jehovah. *First*, they considered evil to be good, so they declared it good "in the sight of Jehovah."

Second, they said "where is the God of justice." They looked at the drought, crop failures and generally unprosperous conditions of Judah on the one hand, and on the other, the fact that the forms of the ceremonial law were being observed and concluded that God was slack in His justice. As we have seen, the *quality* of the sacrifices and the *spirit* in which they were offered put the lie to their arguments.

BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER . . . v. 1

Here is God's answer to their question, "where is the God of justice." Suddenly the Lord will appear in the temple heralded by His forerunner.

Isaiah had made a similar prediction. (*Isaiah 40:3-5*).

The New Testament applies Malachi's prophecy to John the Baptist. (eg. *Matthew 3:3, 11:10, Mark 1:2-3, Luke 1:76, 3:4, 7:26-27, John 1:23*) The obvious fulfillment of this promise in the baptist's ministry would be difficult for any open-minded Bible student to overlook.

The sudden appearance of the Lord mentioned here was interpreted by the Rabbis as a dramatic explosive visitation by which the Messiah would announce His presence. It was this popular expectation which the devil exploited in tempting Jesus to cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple. (*Luke 4:9*) To have done so would have won for Him instant acceptance as the Messiah on the basis of popular though erroneous expectation.

"*The messenger of the covenant . . .*" What more apt description could there be of Him Whose coming formed the heart of God's covenant promise? How fitting that the writer of Hebrews should intro-

duce his comparison of the Old and New Covenants with the argument for the superiority of the New based on the superiority of the Son over the prophets, angels and Moses, who were the messengers of the Old. (cp. *Hebrews* 1:1-2:4)

(Verses 2-6) "*Who can abide the day of His coming?*" The Messiah was coming but not to confirm the racial arrogance or religious exclusiveness of these false Israelites. John will speak of Him as one "whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly cleanse His threshing-floor; and He will gather His wheat into the garner but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire." (*Matthew* 3:12).

Malachi here makes a like prediction. By a change of metaphors he describes the Messiah's judgement first as fuller's soap then as refiners fire.

In this sense, soap and fire have one thing in common, both remove impurity. The entire ministry of the Messiah, including His first coming, the intervening age and His second coming, will purge the impurities from the people of God. Those whose profession is false, whose hope is based on false ambition and nationalistic exclusiveness will be removed from Israel. The remnant will be saved.

This refining process is described by Zechariah as removing all but a third of those who call themselves Israel. (cp. *Isaiah* 1:25)

(Verses 3-4) Since Malachi's primary concern is with false priests (see above on 1:10-ff), he pictures the Messiah, in verse three, as a refiner sitting before the crucible in which the sons of Levi are purged of those who are unfaithful so that they will offer to Jehovah offerings in righteousness.

The offerings to the Christ are not the blemished animals of Malachi's day. Rather they are to be "holy and acceptable unto God," (cf. *Romans* 12:1, *Hebrews* 13:5, *1 Peter* 2:5) as were those offered in the beginning by Aaron.

(Verses 5-6) They have asked "where is the God of justice." (2:17) When Messiah comes they will have their answer. He will testify against the sorcerers (*Acts* 8:1, 13:6, *Galatians* 5:20), against adulterers (*Matthew* 5:28), against false swearers (*Matthew* 5:34,36), against those that oppress the hireling, the widows, the fatherless, and they that turn aside the sojourners (*Matthew* 25:31-46), and that fear not me (*Matthew* 10:26-28).

Special notice should be taken of the inclusion in this list of priestly sins of "those that turn aside the sojourner." A sojourner was one of another land who was not a Jew. God's concern for all men, rather than just for the Jew, as stated in the covenant is apparent throughout

His dealings with the people through whom He purposed to bless all men.

(Verse 6) It is a tragic error to assume that, because God has not smitten the wicked, He has changed from a God of justice to one of easy-going tolerance. Malachi points out to his readers that God's unchanging nature is the only reason they were not themselves long since wiped out!

Paul points out in Romans eleven (cf. *v.* 29) that God's mercy toward even the covenant people finds its source in His unfailing faithfulness to His own covenant.

Peter speaks to the same fatal fallacy when he writes, "But forget not this one thing beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness; but is long-suffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (*II Peter* 3:8-9)

IF THE PEOPLE WILL RETURN IN DEVOTION TO GOD HE WILL YET BLESS THEM . . . Malachi 3:7-12

RV . . . From the days of your fathers ye have turned aside from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts. But ye say, Wherein shall we return? Will a man rob God? yet ye rob me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with the curse; for ye rob me, even this whole nation. Bring ye the whole tithe into the store-house, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast its fruit before the time in the field, saith Jehovah of hosts. And all nations shall call you happy; for ye shall be a delightful land, saith Jehovah of hosts.

LXX . . . but ye, the sons of Jacob, have not refrained from the iniquities of your fathers: ye have perverted my statutes, and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, saith the Lord Almighty. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? Will a man insult God? for ye insult me. But ye say, Wherein have we insulted thee? In that the tithes and first-fruits are with you still. And ye do surely look off from me, and ye insult me. The year is completed, and ye

have brought all the produce into the store-houses; but there shall be the plunder thereof in its house: return now on this behalf, saith the Lord Almighty, see if I will not open to you the torrents of heaven, and pour out my blessings upon you, until ye are satisfied. And I will appoint food for you, and I will not destroy the fruit of your land; and your vine in the field shall not fail, saith the Lord Almighty. And all nations shall call you blessed; for ye shall be a desirable land, saith the Lord Almighty.

COMMENTS

FROM THE DAYS OF YOUR FATHERS . . . v. 7

When Stephen stood before the council and accused them with, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears . . . as your fathers did, so do ye," (*Acts 7:51*) he was in good company. Malachi here levels the same charge against his readers.

Just as their ancestors had turned aside from God's ordinances to worship Baal, these were turning aside in making a mockery of the same ordinances. The withholding of tithes, the offering of blemished animals, the indulging in sorcery and adultery and false swearing while showing unconcern for human need by oppressing wage-earners, widows, orphans and non-Jews indicated theirs was a religion of form rather than sincerity. The prophet sees no advantage in this over the false religion which had brought on the Babylonian captivity.

There is an eternal principle presented here which the modern church member cannot afford to ignore. The observance of outward form and the passive abstention from false religion are a sham if done as these did them. The cheapening of the ordinances of God as they did in offering unacceptable sacrifices, or as is often done in present day churches by penny-wise and niggardly church budgets are no more advantageous than false doctrine. The lack of any real concern for the poor, the abandoned, the downtrodden, that is frequently hidden under an annual Christmas basket, does not deceive Him Who knows the hearts of His people.

The entreaty of God to such people to return to Him is frequently met today as in Malachi's time (*v. 7*) with a blank faced and feigned innocence expressed in "wherein shall we return?"

(Verse 8-13) Malachi's answer to this sham is "will a man rob God?" When their response was again an assumed innocence expressed in, "wherein have we robbed thee," the prophet goes directly to the heart of the matter . . . "*in tithes and offerings.*"

That they could answer in such false righteousness after what the prophet has written in the preceding chapters about their unholy sacrifices, is amazing. It is no more so than the assumed correctness of the "New Testament Christian" today whose sacrifices of himself is an hour or two on Sunday and whose giving of "tithes and offerings" consists of less than he spends for soft drinks and tobacco.

"Ye are cursed with a curse because ye rob me" declares Malachi (v. 9). Our own consciences may accept a cut-rate allegiance to God, but He will not. The country parson who said, "Salvation is free but it ain't cheap," spoke the truth!

There is a significant distinction drawn here between tithes and offerings. The law defined the first tithe as a tenth of all that was left *after* the first fruits were paid. This tenth went directly to the Levites for their support. (*Leviticus 27:30-33*) A tenth was to be paid in turn to the priests. (*Numbers 18:26-28*)

A second tithe was to be paid for the entertainment of the Levites and their own families at the temple. (*Deuteronomy 12:18*)

A third tithe was to be paid every third year for the welfare of the poor, etc. (*Deuteronomy 14:28*) It has been estimated that the total tithes amounted annually to approximately 27% of one's gross income.

The offerings were in addition to the tithes. These consisted of not less than 1/60 of one's corn, wine, and oil (*Deuteronomy 18:4, Nehemiah 13:10-12*).

So the Israelite under the Old Covenant gave in three categories. (1) He sacrificed the first fruits of his fields and flocks (2) he tithed three times, first of all remaining after the sacrifices, second for the entertainment (expenses) of the Levites and thirdly for the sake of supporting the poor, and (3) he then gave an offering of at least 1/60 of all his grain, wine and oil.

It was common, during the lean years, such as those which prevailed at the time of this writing, to neglect the tithes and offerings. Malachi, as we have seen, accuses his readers of also bringing much less than the first fruits for sacrifice.

Jehovah's challenge (v. 10) is to bring all the tithes (he whole tithe) into the storehouse and see if times do not change. Jesus would say, "seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." (cp. *Matthew 6:19-34*)

Here is the eternal principle of giving which continues from covenant to covenant. The support of the Lord's work must come *first*

in the economic lives of His covenant people. He who gives only what he can afford has not given at all!

This passage, especially verses nine and ten, are frequently used to prove that one who does not give ten per cent of his income to the church is robbing God. Conversely, on the basis of these same verses, promises are frequently extended that "God will open the windows of Heaven" to those who practice "store-house tithing."

Before one makes such accusations or promises from these verses it would be wise to keep in mind several pertinent points concerning Mosaic tithing; (1) The tithes spoken of here had to do with the tithes of the fruit of the land, not wages *per se*. (2) These words are directed specifically to Judah because of the neglect of the ordinances of the law. (3) No *money* was involved. The tithe was a portion of the produce of an agrarian society. (4) The promise to "open the windows of heaven" has to do with rain which would end a drought and cause the land to again become productive when the people met the requirements of giving.

The principle taught, which must be learned by Christians, is stated by Jesus, not as a command to count one dollar of every ten into the offering, but to put the kingdom of God before the material necessities of life. (cf. *Matthew 6:33*) When this principle is applied to the giving of money, ten per cent seems a frightfully immature and inadequate amount, especially when those who "had witness borne to them through their faith, (even though they) received not the promise . . ." (*Hebrews 11:39*) were *required* to give 27% of all they produced on the land.

(Verses 11-12) Upon their return to faithfulness in tithes and offerings, God promised to remove the blight from the land. Whatever was organically wrong with the crops would be corrected. They had robbed God (*v. 8*) from the very first (*v. 7*). They were now cursed (*v. 9*) with drought (*v. 10*). The curse brought about by their dishonesty had taken two forms, drought and locusts (*v. 11*). Their repentance would be the occasion of unmeasured blessing, blessing so great they would be the envy of surrounding nations. (*v. 12*)

God's provisions are always more than adequate to those who are honest in their dealings with Him.

WHEN THE DAY COMES, TRUE WORSHIPPERS WILL BE
SPARED . . . Malachi 3:13—4:3

RV . . . Your words have been stout against me, saith Jehovah. Yet ye say, What have we spoken against thee? Ye have said, It is vain

to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his charge, and that we have walked mournfully before Jehovah of hosts? and now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are built up; yea, they tempt God, and escape. Then they that feared Jehovah spake one with another; and Jehovah hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared Jehovah, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith Jehovah of hosts, even mine own possession, in the day that I make; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not. For, behold, the day cometh, it burneth as a furnace; and all the proud, and all that work wickedness shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith Jehovah of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the sun or righteousness arise with healing in its wings; and ye shall go forth, and gambol as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I make, saith Jehovah of hosts.

LXX . . . Ye have spoken grievous words against me, saith the Lord. Yet he said, Wherein have we spoken against thee? Ye said, He that serves God labours in vain: and what have we gained in that we have kept his ordinances, and in that we have walked as suppliants before the face of the Lord Almighty? And now we pronounce strangers blessed; and all they who act unlawfully are built up; and they have resisted God, and yet have been delivered. Thus spoke they that feared the Lord, every one to his neighbour; and the Lord gave heed, and hearkened, and he wrote a book of remembrance before him for them that feared the Lord and revered his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord Almighty, in the day which I appoint for a peculiar possession; and I will make choice of them, as a man makes choice of his son that serves him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, and between him that serves God, and him that serves him not. For, behold, a day comes burning as an oven, and it shall consume them; and all the aliens, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that is coming shall set them on fire, saith the Lord Almighty, and there shall not be left of them root or branch. But to you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise, and healing shall be in his wings: and ye shall go forth, and bound as young calves let loose from bonds. And ye shall trample

the wicked; for they shall be ashes underneath your feet in the day which I appoint, saith the Lord Almighty.

COMMENTS

(Verses 13-15) Malachi continues to list Jehovah's grievances against the people. They needed to return and they feigned unawareness of any such need (*v.* 7). They robbed God, yet pretended not to be aware of the robbing (*v.* 8). They have spoken against God, and again pretended innocence (*v.* 13 cp. 2:17)

The prophet continues to speak frankly, as he answers this latest question, "Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we keep his charge?"

Such complaining is not uncommon among those who cannot understand the spiritual nature of God's covenant. Those who see the covenant as a mercenary bargain, attend to outward observance in the hope of receiving material blessings. When such are not forthcoming, because they are at most incidental to God's purpose in His people, such worshippers are always disappointed and prone to despair.

God has never promised wealth to the faithful or poverty to the unjust. We manifest a gross ignorance of His nature and His love when we judge the worth of service to Him on such basis.

The evidence of this misunderstanding on the part of Malachi's readers is seen in the last part of verses fourteen and fifteen. They equate their sacrifice of blemished animals and the withholding of tithes and offerings out of concern for material necessities with "keeping His charge." They equate piety with walking "mournfully." They mistake pride for real happiness and complain that the wicked are better off than the rest. They accuse God, very subtly, of injustice because the wicked "tempt God and escape."

(Verses 16-18) Rather than continuing to rebuke their lack of perception, Malachi turns to words of comfort. He assures them the faithful will not be forgotten. They will be spared who are God-fearers, and ultimately made to understand the real difference between the righteous and the wicked.

A book of remembrance is being written he assures them, in which the names of the faithful were being recorded (cp. *Esther* 6). In the day when Jehovah acts, they will be spared His judgment and beyond this, they will be revealed as Jehovah's peculiar treasure. (cp. *John* 3:18, *I Peter* 2:9)

THE COMING DAY OF THE LORD 3:16—4:1

Even in dark times there are those few who fear Him and so "speak," *i.e.* converse with one another about Him.

THEY THAT FEARED JEHOVAH . . . v. 16

Malachi foresees the repentance of some, though not all the people. They would speak with one another. No doubt their speaking would concern the need for repentance, for genuine worship. As always, the fear of Jehovah would prove the beginning of wisdom for Jehovah would hear and remember.

THEY SHALL BE MINE . . . v. 17-18

Malachi's covenant consciousness is evident here. It is those who fear Jehovah and think on His name who are His people. No reference is made to religious ritual or racial origin.

Peter voiced this same conviction. Following the thrice repeated vision which convinced him to go to a non-Jewish home with the gospel, and the resultant demonstration of God's overwhelming approval of his action in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Peter exclaimed, "of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him." (*Acts 11:34-35*) Paul confirms this same truth in *Romans 2:13*, "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified."

Malachi would have his readers understand this truth. In the days of Jehovah His people will be those who really serve.

BEHOLD, THE DAY COMETH . . . 4:1

The association of fire with the final judgement is a theme which runs throughout much of the Scriptures. Daniel describes it vividly. (*Daniel 7:9-10*) The Psalmist sang of it. (*Psalms 1:3*) Peter affirms it at some length. (*II Peter 3:7-10*)

Malachi promises that those who feel this final fire will be without hope of springing again to life. They will be without branch or root. (See *Amos 2:9*)

(Verse 2) The prophet does not, however, limit his vision of the coming day to that of doom. In contrast, he presents the effects of its coming on God's people. On those who fear His name the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its (His) wings..

Here is one of the most picturesque descriptions of the Messiah to be found in the Old Testament. To dissect it is to destroy it. Suffice

it to say, that as the sun is the light and source of life to all the earth, so the Christ is the light and giver of life to the true worshipper.

In the warmth of this sun of righteousness, God's people shall be as carefree as calves playing in the sunlight.

(Verse 3) When this day comes, and the wicked are punished by fire while God's people are freed from all care, the question of 3:15 will finally be answered.

Jesus' rehearsal of the fate of the rich man and Lazarus is a fine illustration of this truth. (cf. *Luke 16:19-ff*) The unrighteous rich who lord it over the righteous poor will, in that day, find their situations completely reversed . . . eternally and completely.

In our present day, when churches have become pre-occupied with alleviating the temporal needs of men, regardless of their spiritual condition, and when making a profit in business has become, to some, immoral regardless of the good that may be done with such wealth, the idea that the iniquities of this life will be rectified in the next is *passé* to some. In the presence of this spiritual blindness, God's people dare not lose sight of our obligation to be concerned for men's temporal needs in Jesus' name. (cf. *Matthew 25:31-46*, *I John 3:16-18*) But this concern can, by no form of logic, negate the coming day of judgement.

Nor can such concern negate the fact that the injustices of wicked men who prey upon the righteous and deprive the weak obviously go unpunished here and now. Honesty, in business, is not always the "best policy" for those whose chief purpose is personal gain.

Just as surely as this is so, so does the justice of God demand a day of reckoning. For those who come to Christ, the day of reckoning was held on Calvary (*Romans 3:25-26*). For those who do not fear God, the time of reckoning is yet to come and it will.

CONCLUSION . . . MALACHI 4:4-6

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, even statutes and ordinances. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

LXX . . . And, behold, I will send to you Elias the Thesbite, before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes; who shall turn again the heart of the father to the son, and the heart of a man to his neighbour, lest I come and smite the earth grievously. Remember the law

of my servant Moses, accordingly as I charged him with it in Choreb for all Israel, even the commandments and ordinances.

COMMENTS

The Old Testament Scriptures close with a prophetic plea to God's people to remember the law of Moses. It would be some four hundred years before Jehovah would speak again. In the interim, if they are to survive as His people, the law must be remembered.

Special attention is called to the statutes, that is those portions of the law dealing with religious ceremony. These ceremonies, as we have seen, were designed to keep visually and tangibly before the people an object lesson of the coming Lamb of God. If they were to fall into disuse before He came, Calvary would indeed be hard to comprehend.

Fortunately, they did not fall into disuse. During the Maccabean period and shortly thereafter (c. 160 B.C.), the party known as the Pharisees came into being for the express purpose of maintaining the literal outward observances of the statutes governing the Mosaic ceremonies in worship. Regrettably the Pharisees became obsessed with the letter to the neglect of the spirit of these observances, but they did, quite significantly, preserve the form.

In calling for remembrance of the law, Malachi does so in such a way as to provide the people one last term of its covenant meaning. The burden of the last Old Testament writer was delivered to a stiff-necked and rebellious people. They prided themselves on being Jehovah's people, but he bluntly declared, "I have no pleasure in you, saith Jehovah of hosts." (*Malachi 1:10*) They thought they could play fast and loose with God, but Malachi reminded them of the greatness of Him with Whom they had to do. (*Malachi 1:14*) In their faithlessness, Malachi reminds them of the covenant, and told them flatly they were breaking it. (*Malachi 2:1-9*) He despaired of the nation as a whole and of the race as a race. He foresaw the coming of a terrible day in which this proud and wicked people would be utterly consumed.

But the remnant would survive, made up of those who individually feared Jehovah (*Malachi 4:2*) and thought upon His name. That is, those who had come to understand the true character of the eternal God and His purpose for all men. (*Malachi 3:16*) These faithful would be spared *only because they had fulfilled God's covenant conditions* (cf. *Exodus 19:5-6*) laid down on Mount Horeb (Sinai). Those who were so spared would be God's true Israel; all the rest were doomed.

Before the terrible day of the Lord, Elijah would come to once more call the remnant. His purpose would be the reconciliation of those present at his coming with the covenant faith of their fathers. Elijah, perhaps more than any other prophet of the pre-exilic period, had pled for a return to the pure worship of Jehovah as implemented in the law. The second Elijah would have the same purpose. Unless this be done, there would be not even a remnant in that day and the whole earth, which Jehovah had striven to redeem, would stand under a curse. The word "curse" (Hebrew *cherem*) means literally a *ban*.

Just as those Gentiles who had not the law and were ignorant of the covenant were without God and without hope in the world (cf. *Ephesians* 2:12), so, if the remnant were not finally called in preparation for the day of the Lord, the whole world would stand permanently alienated, banned forever from the presence of God.

The Old Testament is continuous with the New. The Bible is, in this sense, a single book. The coming of Christ did not constitute an abrupt break, but a fulfillment. The method and purpose of Jesus is a continuation and fulfillment of the method and purpose revealed in the call of Abraham. The new factor is the personal presence of the Messiah.

Malachi's promise of Elijah's coming is fulfilled in the ministry of John the Baptist. Jesus began where Malachi left off and *consciously* continued the work of the prophets. His ministry is understood only in light of God's plan to redeem all the world through a people prepared as the instrument of divine worldwide purpose. (cp. *Luke* 24:44-47 and *Ephesians* 1:23)

Chapter XLV—Questions

The Coming Day of the Lord

1. What were the two arguments of the wicked priests?
2. What was God's answer to the questions, "Where is the God of justice?"
3. The New Testament applies *Malachi* 3:1 to _____.
4. Relate the rabbinic interpretation of this verse to Jesus' temptations.
5. What is meant by Malachi's description of the Messiah as fullers' soap and refiner's fire?
6. When Messiah came He would testify against the _____, _____, and against _____.
7. Comment on those "who turn aside the sojourner."

THE COMING DAY OF THE LORD

8. Discuss the proposition that, because God does not immediately smite the wicked, He is no longer a God of justice.
9. Note the similarity of *Malachi* 3:7-12 to Stephen's defense (*Acts* 7).
10. What is the eternal principle presented in these passages?
11. How were Malachi's readers robbing God?
12. What is the distinction between tithes and offerings?
13. What were the first, second and third tithes required by the Law?
14. The offering consisted of not less than _____ of one's corn, wine and oil.
15. The Israelites were commanded to give in three categories: _____, _____, and _____.
16. How does Jesus express the thought of *Malachi* 3:10?
17. Is this passage a valid proof text for modern "store house tithing?"
18. List four pertinent points concerning Mosaic tithing.
19. When the principles of stewardship presented by Malachi is applied to modern giving, ten per cent seems. _____.
20. What is meant by the promise of Malachi that God would "open the windows of heaven?"
21. God's provisions are always adequate to those who _____.
22. Not only have Malachi's readers robbed God, they have _____.
23. God has never promised _____ to the faithful nor _____ to the unjust.
24. The people equated the sacrifice of blemished animals and withholding of tithes and offerings with _____.
25. A book of _____ is being written.
26. To whom does "they shall be mine" (*Malachi* 3:17-18) refer?
27. Discuss *Malachi* 3:17-18 in comparison to *Acts* 11:34-35.
28. Trace the association of fire with judgement.
29. The sun of righteousness shall _____.
30. The wicked are to be punished by fire while God's people are freed from _____.
31. Does the unequal distribution of wealth negate the necessity of righteousness?
32. The justice of God demands a _____.
33. The Old Testament closes with a plea to God's people to _____.
34. Why was it essential that the formal observance of the sacrificial system be preserved?
35. The proud and wicked would be consumed but the _____ would survive.

36. Who is the second Elijah?
37. How is the New Testament continuous with the Old?
38. What is the new factor in the New Testament not present in the Old?
39. The coming of Christ did not constitute an abrupt break but a _____
40. Approximately how much time lapsed between Malachi and Jesus?

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