

Zechariah

¹ The Lord sent a message to Zechariah the prophet, son of Berekiah, son of Iddo, in the eighth month of the second year of king Darius' reign, saying:*

² The Lord was very angry[†] with your forefathers. ³ So tell the people this: Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord Almighty.[‡]

⁴ You must not be like your forefathers. They were told by previous prophets: Give up your evil ways, and the evil things you do. But they would not listen or pay any attention to me,

* **1:1** There are quotes within quotes at the beginning of Zechariah, and if they were all identified then the result would be an unwieldy set of quote marks within quote marks—in fact there would be five degrees of quotations. Consequently here (and in most of the Minor Prophets) quote marks have generally not been used except where they help identify other speakers. † **1:2** “Angry.” In many of the prophetic books of the Old Testament God is spoken of as being angry. But it should be noted that this is a description of God's opposition and intense hostility to evil and rebellion, rather than anger as experienced by human beings which is very self-referenced, emotionally-based, and even irrational. God's anger is a rational response to wickedness, and is based on his desire to save and heal, rather than to exact retributive vengeance. His focus is on making sure people understand the terrible danger they are in by pursuing evil. ‡ **1:3** Literally, “The Lord Almighty says, Return to me, declares the Lord Almighty, and I will return to you, says the Lord Almighty.” The repetition has been removed for easier reading.

says the Lord. ⁵ Where are your forefathers now? And the prophets, did they live forever?

⁶ But didn't all my instructions and warnings[§] that I ordered my servants the prophets to communicate, didn't all that I said happen to your forefathers? So they repented and said, "What the Lord Almighty planned to do to us was what we deserved because of our ways and our actions. He did what he said he would."

⁷ The Lord sent a message to Zechariah the prophet, son of Berekiah, son of Iddo, on the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month (the month of Shebat) of the second year of king Darius' reign:

⁸ During the night I saw a man sitting on a red horse that stood among some myrtle trees in a narrow valley. Behind him were red, brown, and white horses with their riders.* ⁹ I asked him, "My lord, what are these?" The angel I was talking to replied, "I will show you." ¹⁰ The man who was there among the myrtle trees said, "These are the ones the Lord has sent out to patrol the earth." ¹¹ The riders[†] reported to the angel of the Lord who was among the myrtle trees, "We have been patrolling the earth and saw that the whole earth has been pacified.[‡]"

§ 1:6 Literally, "regulations." * 1:8 "With their riders." Implied, see verse 11. † 1:11 Implied. ‡ 1:11 "Pacified." In the context this "peace" has more to do with being forced into submission and defeat than a time of harmony and tranquility. It could be compared to the imposed "Pax Romana" of later times in which the Romans asserted their control over the nations they had defeated militarily and brought "peace."

¹² Then the angel of the Lord said, “Lord Almighty, how long will it be before you have mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah which you have been angry with for the past seventy years?”

¹³ So the Lord replied to the angel I was talking to with kind and comforting words.

¹⁴ Then the angel I was talking with told me, This is what you are to announce. The Lord Almighty says this: I am jealously protective[§] of Jerusalem and Mount Zion,¹⁵ and I am extremely angry with the arrogant nations who think they are secure. I was only a little angry with my people,^{*} but they made the punishment far worse.[†]

¹⁶ Therefore this is what the Lord says: I have returned to be merciful to Jerusalem. My Temple shall be rebuilt there, as well as the city,[‡] declares the Lord Almighty.

¹⁷ Announce this as well, says the Lord Almighty: Prosperity will flood out of my cities. I the Lord will comfort Zion, and Jerusalem will be my chosen city.

¹⁸ Then I looked and saw four animal horns.[§]
¹⁹ “What are these?” I asked the angel I was

§ 1:14 “Jealously protective”: To be justly concerned over loved ones. ***** **1:15** “With my people” implied. **† 1:15** In other words God had allowed the heathen nations to punish his people because of their sins, but these nations went too far in their attacks. **‡ 1:16** “As well as the city”: literally, “a measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem.” **§ 1:18** Horns in prophetic writings are symbolic of powers.

talking to.

“These are the horns that scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem,” he replied.

²⁰ Then the Lord showed me four craftsmen.*

²¹ “What are these men coming to do?” I asked.

The angel replied, “The four horns—these nations—scattered Judah, humbling the people so that they could not lift up their heads. These craftsmen have to come to terrify these nations, and to destroy them—those who used their power against the land of Judah, scattering the people.”

2

¹ Then I looked again and I saw a man with a measuring line in his hand. ² “Where are you going?” I asked him.

“I’m going to Jerusalem to measure its width and length,” he replied. ³ The angel I was talking to came forward and another angel came to meet him ⁴ and told him, “Run, and tell the young man* that Jerusalem will have so many people and farm animals that it will be too big to have walls.” ⁵ The Lord declares, I myself will be a wall of fire all around the city, and I will be the glory inside it.

⁶ Run! Run! Run away from the northern land, says the Lord, because I have scattered you to the four winds of heaven. ⁷ Run away, people of Zion! All of you who live in Babylon must

* **1:20** Probably blacksmiths or metal workers.

* **2:4** Referring to the man with the measuring line mentioned in 2:1.

escape. ⁸ For this is what the Lord Almighty said: Afterwards the glorious Lord[†] sent me against the nations that plundered you—for those who touch you touch the apple of his eye. ⁹ I will raise my hand against them and their former slaves will plunder them. Then you will know the Lord Almighty has sent me.[‡]

¹⁰ Sing in celebration, people of Zion, for I am coming to live with you, declares the Lord.

¹¹ Many nations will become believers[§] in Lord on that day, and they shall be my people. I will live among you, and you will know the Lord Almighty has sent me to you. ¹² The people of Judah will be the Lord's special people in the holy land, and he will once again choose Jerusalem as his special city. ¹³ Be silent before the Lord, everyone, for he has risen from the holy place where he lives.

3

¹ Then the Lord^{*} showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan[†] standing on his right accusing him. ² And the Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebukes you Satan. I, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you. Isn't he like a half-burned stick

[†] **2:8** “Afterwards the glorious Lord”: Hebrew unclear. Literally, “after glory.” [‡] **2:9** “Me.” Zechariah is referring to himself, and saying that the fulfillment of this prophecy will confirm the truth of his message. [§] **2:11** “Become believers”: literally, “join themselves.” ^{*} **3:1** Literally, “he” which could refer either to the Lord or the angel previously mentioned. [†] **3:1** Satan means “the accuser.”

snatched from the fire?” ³ Joshua was wearing filthy clothes as he stood in front of the angel.

⁴ The angel said to those[†] standing there, “Take off his filthy clothes.” Then he said to Joshua, “See how I have taken away your sins from you, and now I am dressing you with fine clothes.”

⁵ Then I said, “Wrap a clean turban around his head.” So they wrapped a clean turban around his head and put the clothes on him while the angel of the Lord stood there.

⁶ Then the angel of the Lord solemnly advised Joshua, saying, ⁷ “This is what the Lord Almighty says: If you follow my ways and observe my commands, then you will govern my Temple and its courtyards. I will allow you to walk among those standing here. ⁸ Pay attention, high priest Joshua and all your fellow-priests that you teach![§] You are a sign of good things to come. Look! I am going to bring my servant, the Branch.* ⁹ See that I have placed a precious stone in front of Joshua, a single stone with seven faces. Watch, for I myself am going to engrave seven eyes on it, declares the Lord Almighty, and I will wipe away the sins of this land in a single day. ¹⁰ On that day everyone will invite their friends to sit in peace[†] under their vines and fig trees, says the Lord Almighty.”

[†] **3:4** Presumably other angels. **§ 3:8** Literally, “friends who sit before you.” * **3:8** Both “my servant” and “the branch” are titles applied to the Messiah. [†] **3:10** “In peace” implied.

4

¹ Then the angel I had been talking to returned and got my attention, like waking someone from sleep.*

² “What do you see?” he asked me.

“I see a lampstand made of solid gold with a bowl at its top having seven lamps on it, each with seven lips.† ³ I also see olive trees, one to the right and one to the left of the bowl.”

⁴ Then I asked the angel I was talking to, “What are these, my lord?”

⁵ “Don't you know what these are?” the angel replied.

“No, my lord,” I responded.

⁶ Then he told me, “This is the Lord's message to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord Almighty. ⁷ Even obstacles as big as mountains will be flattened before Zerubbabel. Finally he will bring out the capstone‡ to shouts of ‘Blessings on it!’ ”

⁸ Then the Lord gave me another message. ⁹ Zerubbabel with his own hands laid the foundations for this Temple, and it will be completed the same way. Then you§ will know the Lord Almighty has sent me. ¹⁰ For who dares look down on this time of small beginnings? They

* **4:1** Clearly Zechariah was not actually asleep, only deep in thought. † **4:2** The lips are small channels holding the wicks. ‡ **4:7** Probably meaning the topmost stone of the rebuilt Temple. § **4:9** “You” here is singular, and so is taken to mean Zerubbabel.

will be happy when they see the plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand.

“The seven lamps represent the eyes of the Lord which see all over the world.”*

¹¹ Then I asked the angel, “What are the two olive trees that stand to the right and the left of the lampstand?” ¹² And I also asked him, “What are the two olive branches from which the golden oil pours out from through golden pipes?”

¹³ “Don't you know?” the angel replied.

“No, my lord,” I responded.

¹⁴ “These are the two who have been anointed† who stand by the Lord of all the earth,” he replied.

5

¹ I looked again and saw a flying scroll.

² “What do you see?” asked the angel.

“I see a flying scroll,” I replied. “It's thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide.”*

³ He told me, “This is the curse that is going out to all the world. Anyone who steals will be purged† from society, according to one side of the scroll. Anyone who swears lies under oath will

* **4:10** The angels is answering his own question from 4:5 regarding the meaning of the lamps. † **4:14** The identity of these two beings is debated. Some see them as heavenly beings, while others identify them as Joshua and Zerubbabel. * **5:2** Literally, “Twenty cubits in length and ten cubits in width.” † **5:3** Or “cut off.”

be purged from society, according to the other side of the scroll.”‡

4 “I have sent the curse out and it will go into the house of the thief and into the house of the one who swears lies in my name, declares the Lord Almighty. The curse will remain in that house, and will destroy it, both the timbers and the stones.”

5 Then the angel I had been talking to came over to me and said, “Look. What do you see moving away?”§

6 “What is it?” I asked.

“What you see moving away is a barrel* full of the sins† of everyone in the country,”‡ he replied.

7 Then the lead lid was lifted from the barrel and there was a woman sitting inside. 8 “She represents wickedness,” he said, and pushed her back inside, forcing the lead lid shut.

9 I looked once more and saw two women flying towards me. Their wings looked like those of a stork. They picked up the barrel and flew away, high into the sky.

10 “Where are they taking it?” I asked the angel I was talking to.

‡ 5:3 One side of the scroll/other side. This is the commonest understanding of the meaning here, but there are other interpretations. § 5:5 Or “going forth.” * 5:6 Literally, “ephah,” a container for measuring grain; sometimes translated “basket.” However, in this case it obviously needs to be large enough to hold a woman inside (5:7), so the word barrel has been used for translation. † 5:6 Septuagint reading. The Hebrew text currently reads “eye,” but this is hard to understand in this context, and the revised reading is only one letter different in the Hebrew. ‡ 5:6 The country of Judah.

¹¹ “They’re taking it to the land of Babylon[§] to build a house for it. When the house is ready, the barrel will be placed at its base.”*

6

¹ Then I looked again and I saw four chariots coming out from between two mountains that looked like bronze. ² The first chariot was pulled by red horses, the second by black horses, ³ the third by white horses, and the fourth by dappled grey horses—all of them strong horses.

⁴ “My lord, what are these?” I asked the angel I was talking to.

⁵ “They are going out to the four winds of heaven,* after presenting themselves to the Lord of all the earth,” the angel explained. ⁶ The chariot with the black horses went north, the one with the white horses went west, and the one with the dappled grey horses went south. ⁷ When the strong horses came out they were eager to set off to patrol the earth. And he said, “Go and patrol the earth!” So they left and patrolled the earth.

⁸ Then the angel called to me, saying, “Look! Those who went north have achieved what the Lord wanted† in the land of the north.”

§ 5:11 Literally, “Shinar.” * 5:11 “At its base.” Some interpret this to mean the woman who represents wickedness will be worshiped, and that the “house” is actually a temple. * 6:5 In other words they are all going in different directions. † 6:8 “Achieved what the Lord wanted”: literally, “set at rest my spirit.”

⁹ Then the Lord gave me another message:
¹⁰ Take the gifts brought by Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, the exiles returning from Babylon, and go immediately to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah. ¹¹ Use the silver and the gold they brought to make a crown, and place it on the head of Josiah, son of Jehozadak, the high priest.

¹² Tell him this is what the Lord Almighty says: Look! The man who is called the Branch will grow[‡] from where he is and will build the Lord's Temple. ¹³ He is the one who will build the Lord's Temple, and he will be the one given the honor to rule from both the royal throne and the priestly throne and there will be peace and understanding between the two roles. ¹⁴ The crown will be kept in the Temple of the Lord as a memorial to Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Joshua[§] the son of Zephaniah. ¹⁵ People who live in distant lands will come and build the Temple of the Lord, and you will know that the Lord Almighty sent me to you. This will happen if you listen attentively to what the Lord tells you.

7

¹ The Lord sent a message to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, the month of Chislev. This was during the fourth year of king Darius' reign. ² Bethel-sharezer sent Regem-melech and his men to ask for the Lord's blessing. ³ They were to ask the priests of the Temple of the Lord Almighty and the prophets,

[‡] **6:12** Or "sprout." [§] **6:14** Literally, "Hen."

“Should I go on mourning and fasting in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years?”

⁴ The Lord Almighty sent a message to me saying, ⁵ Tell everyone in the land and the priests, when you fasted and mourned in the fifth month and the seventh month during these seventy years, was it really me you were fasting for?

⁶ And when you eat and drink, don't you eat and drink for yourselves? ⁷ Isn't this what the Lord told you to do through the former prophets, when Jerusalem was prosperous and inhabited, and when people were living in the Negev and the Shephelah?*

⁸ The Lord Almighty sent another message to me. ⁹ This is what the Lord says. Judge fairly and truthfully. Show mercy and kindness to one another. ¹⁰ Don't exploit those who are widowed or fatherless, foreigners or the poor. Don't think up ways of mistreating one other.

¹¹ But they refused to listen. They were obstinate, turning their backs and closing their ears. ¹² They made their minds unreceptive, as hard as stone. They refused to listen to the law or to what the Lord Almighty told them by his Spirit through the former prophets. That's why the Lord Almighty became very angry with them.

¹³ So since they didn't listen when I called out to them, I wouldn't listen when they called out to me, says the Lord Almighty. ¹⁴ With the winds of a storm I scattered them among the nations

* **7:7** “The Negev and the Shephelah”: the area to the south and the west.

where they lived as foreigners. The land they left became so desolate that no one even traveled through it. They turned the Promised Land into a desert.

8

¹ Then the Lord Almighty sent another message to me. ² This is what the Lord Almighty says. I am jealously protective of the people of Zion; I am extremely passionate about them. ³ This is what the Lord says. I have returned to Zion, and I will live in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the “Faithful City,” and the mountain of the Lord Almighty the “Holy Mountain.”

⁴ This is what the Lord Almighty says. Old people will be able to sit again in the streets of Jerusalem, each with their walking sticks* they need because of their age. ⁵ The streets will be full of boys and girls playing happily.

⁶ This is what the Lord Almighty says. It may seem too good to be true† now, to you who remain of my people in these days. But is it impossible for me to do? asks the Lord Almighty.

⁷ This is what the Lord Almighty says. I will save my people from the countries to the east and to the west. ⁸ I will bring them back and they will live in Jerusalem, and they will be my people and I will be their God, trustworthy and true.‡

* **8:4** Literally, “staffs.” † **8:6** “It may seem too good to be true”: or “it may seem impossible (or marvelous).” ‡ **8:8** “True”: literally, “righteous.”

⁹ This is what the Lord Almighty says. Be strong, so that the Temple may be completed. Everyone who is here today is listening to the same words from the prophets who were present on the day when the foundation of the Lord Almighty's Temple was laid.

¹⁰ Before that time there wasn't enough§ for people or for animals. No one could live normally because they were not safe from their enemies, and I set everyone against each other.

¹¹ But now I won't treat those who remain of my people like I treated them before, declares the Lord Almighty. ¹² They will sow in peace; the vine will produce grapes; the soil will grow crops and the heavens will water them. I will make sure this happens to all those who remain of this people. ¹³ People of Judah and Israel: just as you were considered a curse among the nations, so I will save you and you will become a blessing. Don't be afraid! Be strong! ¹⁴ For this is what the Lord Almighty says: I decided to bring disaster on you when your forefathers angered me and I did not change my mind. ¹⁵ But now I have made up my mind to do good to Jerusalem and the people of Judah. Don't be afraid! ¹⁶ This what you have to do: Tell each other the truth. In your courts judge honestly and truthfully, which makes for peace. ¹⁷ Don't think up evil schemes against one another. Stop your love of lies. I hate all this, declares the Lord.

§ **8:10** This verse seems to be referring more to having enough to eat rather than money which was an uncommon commodity at that time.

18 The Lord Almighty gave me another message. 19 This is what the Lord Almighty says: The fasts you observe in the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth month will become times of joy and happiness for the people of Judah—they will be festivals of celebration. But love truth and peace.

20 This is what the Lord Almighty says: People from many nations and cities will yet come to Jerusalem,* 21 going from one city to another saying, “Let us be sure to go and seek the Lord and ask for the blessing of the Lord Almighty. I myself am going!” 22 Many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to ask for the blessing of the Lord Almighty and seek the Lord.

23 This is what the Lord Almighty says: At that time ten men from different nations and languages will grab hold of the hem of a Jewish man's robe and plead, “Please take us with you for we have heard that God is with you.”

9

1 A prophecy:* A message from the Lord to the land of Hadrach, and Damascus its main objective.† For the eyes of human beings together with all the tribes of Israel are on the Lord,‡ 2 and Hamath too since it is close by. Also Tyre and Sidon for they are very wise.

* 8:20 “To Jerusalem”: implied, see 8:22. * 9:1 Literally, “burden.” † 9:1 “Main objective” Literally, “resting place.” In other words this was the city to which the prophecy was particularly directed. ‡ 9:1 This could also be translated as “for the Lord has his eye on humanity as well as all the tribes of Israel.”

³ The people of Tyre built a fortress, and piled up silver like dust and gold like the dirt of the street. ⁴ But look at what will happen. The Lord will take away everything they have, and knock down their strong defenses[§] into the sea. The city will be burned down. ⁵ The people of Ashkelon will see this and be terrified; those in Gaza will thrash around in agony like a woman giving birth; and the people of Ekron too, because their hopes are shattered. The king of Gaza will be killed, and Ashkelon will be deserted. ⁶ Mixed-race people will live in Ashdod, and I will wipe out the Philistine's pride. ⁷ I will remove the blood-filled meat from their mouths; the unclean food from their jaws.* Those who remain will belong to our God—they shall become like a family of Judah—and those from Ekron will become part of my people, just as the Jebusites did. ⁸ I will make my camp in my Temple to guard it from invaders, and no oppressors will conquer them, for now I myself am keeping watch.

⁹ Be happy and celebrate, people of Zion! Shout loudly, people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you. He does what is right and has salvation;† he is humble, riding on a donkey—on

§ **9:4** “Strong defenses”: literally, “power.” Alternatively this could refer to the Lord destroying the sea power of Tyre. * **9:7** The Philistines did not follow the Jewish regulations regarding slaughtering animals, particularly in draining the blood from the flesh. Consequently their eating of meat still containing blood made them unclean. † **9:9** “Has salvation,” or “is victorious.”

a colt, the foal of a donkey. ¹⁰ (I will remove the chariots from Ephraim and the warhorses from Jerusalem. I will destroy the bows used in battle.) He will proclaim peace to the nations, and he will rule from sea to sea, from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth. ¹¹ And as for you,[†] because my agreement[§] with you, sealed with blood, I will set you free from the waterless pit.* ¹² Return to the stronghold,[†] you prisoners who have hope! Today I promise I will repay you double what you lost.[‡] ¹³ I will use Judah as my bow, and I will load it with Ephraim my arrow. I will call up you men of Zion to fight against you men of Greece, wielding you like a warrior's sword.

¹⁴ Then the Lord will appear over his people and his arrow will flash like lightning! The Lord God will blow the trumpet and march out like a windstorm from the south. ¹⁵ The Lord Almighty will protect them. They will destroy their enemies, conquering them with slingshots. They will drink and shout loudly like people who are drunk. They will be filled like a bowl, soaked liked the corners of an altar.[§] ¹⁶ On that day the Lord their God will save them—his people that are his flock—for they will glitter as crown jewels

[‡] **9:11** Referring back to the people of Jerusalem in 9:9. **§ 9:11** Literally, “covenant.” * **9:11** “Waterless pit”: referring to the exile. [†] **9:12** Understood to refer to Jerusalem. [‡] **9:12** “What you lost” implied. **§ 9:15** This refers to the sacrificial system where a bowl was used to catch the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkle the blood on the corners of the altar.

in his land. ¹⁷ How lovely and beautiful they* will be! Young men will grow strong on grain, and young women flourish on the new wine.

10

¹ Ask the Lord for rain in springtime, for he makes the rainclouds and sends showers to grow crops for everyone. ² Household idols give worthless answers, fortune-tellers tell lies, while interpreters of dreams just make things up and offer only false hope. As a result, people wander aimlessly like sheep, suffering because there is no shepherd.

³ I am angry with the shepherds, I will punish the leaders.* For the Lord Almighty cares for his flock, the people of Judah, and will make them like his splendid warhorse. ⁴ From the people of Judah will come the cornerstone, from them the tent-peg, the bow used in battle—all their rulers together.† ⁵ They will be like warriors going into battle, trampling their enemies in the mud. Because the Lord is with them they will fight and defeat the enemy cavalry. ⁶ I will strengthen the people of Judah; I will save the people of Joseph. I will bring them back home because I am concerned for them. It will be like I had never rejected them, for I am the Lord their God and I will answer their cries for help.‡ ⁷ The

* **9:17** Some believe these words are applied to the Lord, but the context suggests they refer back to the jewels, the people of God.

* **10:3** The speaker is the Lord. † **10:4** In other words the people of Judah will not be subject to foreign rulers. ‡ **10:6** “Their cries for help” implied.

people of Ephraim will become like warriors, and they will become so happy—as if they had drunk wine. Their children will see what is happening and will be glad too, joyful in the Lord. ⁸ I will whistle to them and they will run to me. I will rescue them, and there will be as many as there were before. ⁹ I have scattered them like seed among the nations, and in distant places they will remember me. They will bring up their children, and together they will return. ¹⁰ I will bring them back from the land of Egypt; I will gather them from Assyria. I will bring them to Gilead and Lebanon, and there won't be enough room for them! ¹¹ They will pass through the sea of trouble and strike the waves of the sea, and the waters of the Nile will dry up.* Assyria's pride will be brought down, and Egypt's rule will pass away. ¹² I will make them strong in the Lord, and they will follow all he says, declares the Lord.

11

¹ Open your doors, Lebanon, so that fire can burn up your cedars! ² Weep, juniper, because the cedar has fallen, the majestic trees are ruined! Weep, oaks of Bashan, for the thick forest has been cut down! ³ Listen to the howls of the shepherds, for their pastureland* is

§ **10:8** Literally, “They will multiply as they have multiplied.”

* **10:11** This is clearly a reference to the Exodus, even down to Moses striking the water. * **11:3** Literally, “glory.” The parallel with the second line of the verse indicates something in the natural world.

destroyed. Listen to the roars of the young lions, for their Jordan habitat[†] is ruined.

⁴ This is what the Lord my God says: Become a shepherd of the flock marked for slaughter.

⁵ Those who buy them kill them and don't feel guilty; those who sell them say, "Praise the Lord! Now I'm rich!" Even their shepherds don't care about them. ⁶ For I will no longer care about the people of the Land, declares the Lord. I am going to make them victims of each other, and of the king. They will devastate the earth and I won't help anyone get away from them.

⁷ So I became a shepherd of the flock marked for slaughter by the sheep merchants.[‡] Then I took two staffs, one named Grace, the other named Union, and I shepherded the flock. ⁸ In one month I dismissed three shepherds. I became impatient with them[§], and they also hated me. ⁹ Then I said, "I will not be your shepherd.* If the sheep die, they die. Let those that are to perish, perish. Let those who are left eat each other!"

¹⁰ Then I took my staff called Grace and broke it, breaking the agreement I had made with all

[†] **11:3** "Jordan habitat": literally, "majesty of Jordan." [‡] **11:7** Reading the text as "sheep merchants" rather than "oppressed sheep." [§] **11:8** Scholars are divided as to who "them" refers to. Some take it to mean the three shepherds, others the sheep, and still others the sheep merchants. ^{*} **11:9** Clearly Zechariah is now speaking to the sheep merchants for whom he was working as a shepherd (11:7)

the peoples.† ¹¹ It was broken on that day, and the sheep merchants who were watching me knew that it was a message from the Lord. ¹² I told them, “If you want to pay me my wages, then do so. If not, then don't.” So they paid me my wages—thirty pieces of silver. ¹³ And the Lord said to me, “Throw the money to the treasury,”‡ this measly sum they thought I was worth! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw it into the treasury of the Lord's Temple.

¹⁴ Then I broke my second staff called Union, breaking the family union between Judah and Israel. ¹⁵ The Lord told me, Get the things you use as a shepherd, a useless shepherd. ¹⁶ For I am placing a shepherd in charge of the land who won't care for those who are dying, or look for the lost,§ or heal the injured, or feed the healthy. Instead he will eat the meat from the fattest sheep. He even tears their hooves off.* ¹⁷ What disaster is coming to this useless shepherd who abandons the flock! The sword will strike his arm and his right eye. His arm will wither away and his right eye will become completely blind.

12

¹ A prophecy:* This message came from the

† **11:10** Since there is no record of an agreement, or “covenant,” with any other nation, it is presumed that “peoples” here refers to the Israelites. ‡ **11:13** Or “to the potter.” However, since “of the Lord's Temple” is mentioned later in the verse, this seems a more likely scenario. § **11:16** Or “the young.” * **11:16** Perhaps illustrating the extent of cruelty to the animals. * **12:1** Literally, “burden.”

Lord concerning Israel, a declaration of the Lord who spread out the heavens, who laid the foundations of the earth, and who placed the breath of life[†] within human beings.

² Look! I am going to make Jerusalem like a cup containing alcoholic drink that will make all the surrounding nations stagger like drunks when they come to attack Judah and Jerusalem.

³ On that day I will make Jerusalem like a heavy rock to all peoples. Anyone who tries to lift the rock will injure themselves badly. All the nations will join together to attack Jerusalem.

⁴ On that day I will make every horse panic-stricken and every rider go mad, declares the Lord, but I will watch over the people of Judah while I blind all the horses of their enemies.

⁵ Then the families of Judah will say to themselves, the people of Jerusalem are strong in their God, the Lord Almighty.

⁶ On that day I will make the families of Judah like burning coals in a wood, like a flaming torch in a field of straw. They will burn up to the right and to the left all the surrounding peoples, while the people of Jerusalem will live safely in their city.

⁷ The Lord will give the victory to the soldiers[‡] of Judah first so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not be greater than that of Judah.

⁸ On that day the Lord will place a shield around the people of Jerusalem so that even the clumsiest of them will be as skilled a warrior as David, and the house of David will

[†] 12:1 “Breath of life”: or “spirit.” [‡] 12:7 Literally, “tents.”

be like God, like the angel of the Lord who leads them. ⁹ On that day I will start destroying all those nations that attack Jerusalem. ¹⁰ I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They will look at me whom they pierced, and they will wail in grief over him, mourning as for an only child, weeping bitterly as for a firstborn. ¹¹ On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning in Hadad-Rimmon in the valley of Megiddo. § ¹² The land will mourn, every family alone: the family house of David alone and their women by themselves, the families of Nathan, ¹³ Levi, and Shimei— ¹⁴ and all the surviving families and their women, each group mourning alone by themselves.

13

¹ On that day a spring will be opened and continually flow* for the house of David and for the people of Jerusalem to wash away their sin and impurity. ² On that day, declares the Lord Almighty, I will wipe out idol worship from the land—the idols will not be remembered any longer. I will remove the false prophets and the spirit of impurity from the land. ³ If anyone continues to prophesy, his father and mother to whom he was born will tell him, “You shall

§ **12:11** Some have linked this reference to the mourning for the last “good” king of Judah after his death at the battle of Megiddo.

* **13:1** The verb indicates it is not a single action but an action which has continuing results.

not live, because you have told lies in the Lord's name.” Then his parents shall kill him because he has prophesied.

⁴ On that day such prophets will be too humiliated to prophesy their supposed visions. In order to deceive they will not put on their prophet's clothes made of coarse hair.[†] ⁵ They will say, “I'm not a prophet, I'm a farmer. I've worked on the land since I was a child.” ⁶ If somebody asks him, “What are those wounds on your back?”[‡] he will answer, “I was wounded in my friend's house.”

⁷ Wake up, my sword! Attack my shepherd, the man who stands beside me! declares the Lord. Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered, and I will raise my hand against the lambs. ⁸ Two thirds of the people of the land will be cut down, only one third will remain, says the Lord. ⁹ I will place this one third in the fire, and I will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on me for help, and I will answer them. I will say, “These are my people,” and they will say, “The Lord is my God.”

14

¹ Watch out! For the day of the Lord is coming when what has been plundered from you will be divided up right in front of you. ² I will bring together all the nations to attack Jerusalem. The

[†] **13:4** In other words they act deceptively in order to continue their practices. [‡] **13:6** Hebrew: “hands.” The reason for asking about wounds is that pagan worshipers often practiced self-mutilation.

city will be captured, the houses looted, and the women raped. Half the population will be taken into exile, but the rest of the people will not be removed from the city.

³ Then the Lord will go out to fight against the nations as he fights in times of war. ⁴ On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives which faces Jerusalem to the east. The Mount of Olives will split apart, with half moving north and half moving south, creating a wide valley from east to west. ⁵ You will run away through this mountain valley for it will reach as far as Azal.* You will run away like people did at the time of the earthquake during the reign of Uzzah, king of Judah. Then the Lord will come, accompanied by all his holy ones. ⁶ On that day there will be no longer cold and frost.† ⁷ It will be one continuous day (only the Lord knows how this could happen). It won't be day or night, because in the evening it will still be light.

⁸ On that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of it going east to the Dead Sea and half going west to the Mediterranean Sea, flowing in summer and winter alike. ⁹ The Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day there will be one true Lord, and his name the only one. ¹⁰ The whole land will be transformed into a plain, from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem.‡ But Jerusalem will be raised up to

* **14:5** If this is a place name its location is unknown. † **14:6**
The words used here and their meaning are debated. ‡ **14:10**
This indicates the whole of the land of Judah.

where it was, and people will live there from the Benjamin Gate to where the old gate was, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses. § 11 It will be inhabited and never again condemned to destruction again—people will be able to live in safety in Jerusalem. 12 This will be the plague that the Lord will use to strike all the nations that attacked Jerusalem. Their flesh shall rot while they are still standing on their feet; their eyes will rot in their sockets; their tongues will rot in their mouths.

13 On that day the Lord will strike them with a terrible panic, and they will seize one another, and fight hand-to-hand. 14 Even Judah will fight in* Jerusalem. The wealth of the surrounding nations shall be collected: lots of gold, silver, and clothes. 15 A similar plague will strike the horses, mules, camels, donkeys, and all other animals that may be in their camps.

16 After this every one of the survivors from the nations that attacked Jerusalem will go there to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the Festival of Shelters. 17 If any of the peoples of the world refuse to go to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, they will have no rain. 18 If the Egyptian people refuse to go and attend, then the Lord will inflict on them the same plague as on the other nations who will not go celebrate the Festival of Shelters.

§ 14:10 This would include the whole of the old city of Jerusalem. * 14:14 Septuagint reading. Hebrew “against.”

¹⁹ This will be the punishment on Egypt and all the nations if they do not go to Jerusalem and celebrate.

²⁰ On that day the bells worn by horses will be engraved with the words “Holy to the Lord.” The household cooking pots used in the Lord's Temple will be as holy as the bowls used on the altar in the presence of the Lord. ²¹ Every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to the Lord Almighty, so that everyone who comes to sacrifice can take them and cook their sacrificial meat in them.† On that day there will no longer be traders in the Lord's Temple.

† **14:21** These verses suggest that so many will come to worship the Lord in Jerusalem that every cooking pot will need to be used in the sacrificial system.

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