EDIFIED EDITION

Zechariah

A modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures

14	211	Old	38
chapters	verses	Testament	book of 66

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Edified Edition (EDE): a modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures from the original Hebrew and Greek, in everyday British English. www.edifiededition.com

Numbered notes follow each chapter.

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Chapter 1

Zechariah 1 opens in Darius's second year with the LORD's call through Zechariah that if the people return to Him, He will return to them. They are not to be like their ancestors, who would not listen to the former prophets, though in the end the LORD's words overtook them. Three months later Zechariah sees a vision at night: a man on a red horse standing among myrtle trees in a hollow, with red, sorrel and white horses behind him, which have patrolled the earth and found it at rest. The angel of the LORD asks how long the LORD will withhold mercy from Jerusalem and the towns of Judah, and the LORD answers with comforting words: He is jealous for Jerusalem and angry with the nations at ease, and He will return to Jerusalem with compassion; His house will be rebuilt there and His towns will again overflow with prosperity. In a second vision Zechariah sees four horns that scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem, and four craftsmen who come to throw them down.

[1] In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berechiah, son of Iddo:[1]

[2] "The LORD was very angry with your ancestors.

[3] So tell the people: This is what the LORD of Armies says: Return to Me, declares the LORD of Armies, and I will return to you, says the LORD of Armies.

[4] Do not be like your ancestors, to whom the earlier prophets proclaimed, 'This is what the LORD of Armies says: Turn from your evil ways and your evil deeds.' But they would not listen or pay attention to Me, declares the LORD.

[5] Where are your forefathers now? And did the prophets go on living for ever?

6 But did not My words and My decrees, which I
commanded My servants the prophets, overtake
your ancestors? Then they repented and said, ‘The
LORD of Armies has dealt with us as our ways and
deeds deserved, just as He determined to do.’”

7 On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month,
the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius,
the word of the LORD came to the prophet
Zechariah son of Berechiah, son of Iddo.[2]

8 I looked in the night, and there before me was a
man riding a red horse. He was standing among
the myrtle trees in the hollow, and behind him
were red, sorrel and white horses.

9 I asked, “What are these, my lord?” The angel
who was talking with me answered, “I will show
you what they are.”

10 Then the man standing among the myrtle trees
explained, “These are the ones the LORD has sent
to patrol the earth.”

11 And they reported to the angel of the LORD who
was standing among the myrtle trees, “We have
patrolled the earth, and the whole earth sits quiet
and at rest.”[3]

12 Then the angel of the LORD said, “LORD of
Armies, how long will You withhold mercy from
Jerusalem and the towns of Judah, which You have
been angry with these seventy years?”

13 And the LORD replied to the angel who spoke
with me in gracious words, words of comfort.

14 So the angel who spoke with me told me, “Cry
out: The LORD of Armies says this: My jealousy
burns for Jerusalem and for Zion; it is a great
jealousy.

15 But I am very angry with the nations that are at
ease. I was only a little angry, but they made the
disaster worse.

16 Therefore this is what the LORD says: I have
returned to Jerusalem with compassion; My house
will be rebuilt in it, declares the LORD of Armies,
and the measuring line will be stretched out over
Jerusalem.

17 Proclaim further: This is what the LORD of
Armies says: My towns will again overflow with
prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion
and again choose Jerusalem.”

18 Then I looked up, and there before me were four
horns.[4]

19 So I said to the angel who spoke with me, “What
do these mean?” He told me, “These are the horns
that drove Judah, Israel and Jerusalem into
scattering.”

20 Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen.

21 I asked, “What are these coming to do?” He
replied, “These are the horns that scattered Judah
so that no one could raise his head; but the
craftsmen have come to terrify them and to throw
down the horns of the nations that lifted up their
horns against the land of Judah to scatter it.”

1 October or November 520 BC, two months after Haggai’s first message (Haggai 1:1). Zechariah was from a priestly family that returned from exile (Nehemiah 12:16).

2 15 February 519 BC. The eight night visions that follow (1:8–6:8) were all seen that night.

3 The empire of Persia was at peace, but Jerusalem still lay largely in ruins.

4 In Hebrew 1:18–21 are 2:1–4, and 2:1–13 are numbered 2:5–17. Horns stand for power, here the nations that crushed God’s people.

Chapter 2

> *Zechariah 2 is the third vision: a man with a measuring line goes to measure Jerusalem. An angel is sent to tell him that Jerusalem will be a city without walls because of the multitude of people and animals in it, for the LORD Himself will be a wall of fire around it and the glory within it. The exiles are called to flee from the land of the north and escape from Babylon, for whoever touches God’s people touches the apple of His eye; the nations that plundered them will become plunder. Daughter of Zion is to sing and rejoice, for the LORD is coming to dwell among her, and many nations will join themselves to the LORD on that day and become His people. The LORD will take Judah as His portion in the holy land and again choose Jerusalem. All flesh is to be silent before the LORD, for He has roused Himself from His holy dwelling.*

1 Then I looked up, and there before me was a man
with a measuring line in his hand.

2 I asked, “Where are you going?” He answered
me, “To measure Jerusalem, to see how wide and
how long it is.”

3 Then the angel who was talking with me went
out, and another angel came out to meet him

4 and said to him, “Run, tell that young man: Jerusalem will be inhabited like villages without walls, because of the great number of people and animals in it.[1]

5 And I Myself will be a wall of fire all around it, declares the LORD, and I will be the glory within it.

6 Come! Come! Flee from the land of the north, declares the LORD, for I have scattered you to the four winds of heaven, declares the LORD.

7 Come, Zion! Escape, you who live in the daughter of Babylon!

8 For this is what the LORD of Armies says: After glory He has sent me against the nations that plundered you, for whoever touches you touches the apple of His eye.[2]

9 I will surely wave My hand over them, and they will become plunder for their own servants. Then you will know that the LORD of Armies has sent me.

10 Sing and rejoice, daughter of Zion! For I am coming, and I will dwell among you, declares the LORD.

11 Many nations will join themselves to the LORD on that day and will become My people. I will dwell among you, and you will know that the LORD of Armies has sent me to you.

12 The LORD will take possession of Judah as His portion in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem.[3]

13 Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD, for He has roused Himself from His holy dwelling.”

1 The young man is probably the man with the measuring line: no wall can contain the city God will build.

2 ‘After glory’ is obscure; perhaps ‘with glory’ or ‘after the glory appeared’. ‘The apple of His eye’ is literally ‘the pupil of His eye’. Ancient scribes record that the original reading was ‘My eye’.

3 This is the only place in the Bible where the phrase ‘the holy land’ is used.

Chapter 3

Zechariah 3 is the fourth vision: Joshua the high priest stands before the angel of the LORD in filthy garments, with Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. The LORD rebukes Satan: is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire? The angel orders the filthy clothes removed and tells Joshua that his guilt has been taken away; he is clothed in festal garments, and at Zechariah’s request a clean turban is set on his head. The angel charges Joshua that if he walks in the LORD’s ways and keeps His requirements, he will govern His house and have access among those standing here. Joshua and his companions are a sign, for the LORD will bring His Servant, the Branch. On the stone set before Joshua, with seven eyes, He will engrave an inscription, and He will remove the guilt of the land in a single day. On that day each of them will invite his neighbour to sit under his vine and fig tree.

1 Next he showed me the high priest Joshua, standing in the presence of the LORD’s angel, while at his right side stood Satan, ready to bring charges against him.[1]

2 The LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?”[2]

3 Now Joshua was dressed in filthy garments as he stood before the angel.

4 The angel said to those standing before him, “Take off his filthy clothes.” Then he said to Joshua, “See, I have taken your guilt away from you, and I will clothe you in fine garments.”

5 Then I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the LORD stood by.

6 Then the angel of the LORD solemnly charged Joshua:

7 “This is what the LORD of Armies says: If you walk in My ways and keep My charge, then you will govern My house and have charge of My courts, and I will give you a place among these who are standing here.

8 Listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your companions who sit before you, for they are men who are a sign: I am going to bring My Servant, the Branch.[3]

9 See the stone I have set before Joshua: on that one stone are seven eyes. I will engrave an inscription on it, declares the LORD of Armies, and I will remove the guilt of this land in a single day.[4]

10 On that day, declares the LORD of Armies, each of you will invite his neighbour to sit under his vine and under his fig tree.”

1 ‘Satan’ is literally ‘the accuser’ (ha-satan), and ‘to accuse him’ is a play on it (le-sitno). Compare Job 1:6.

2 Jude 9 echoes ‘The Lord rebuke you’.

3 The Branch is the promised King from David’s line (Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15). Compare 6:12.

4 ‘Eyes’ may also be ‘facets’ or ‘springs’. Compare 4:10, where the seven eyes of the LORD range through the earth.

Chapter 4

Zechariah 4 is the fifth vision. The angel wakes Zechariah, who sees a lampstand all of gold with a bowl on top and seven lamps, and two olive trees beside it. The angel gives the LORD’s word to Zerubbabel: “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the LORD of Armies. The great mountain before Zerubbabel will become level ground, and he will bring out the capstone with shouts of “Grace, grace to it!” The hands of Zerubbabel laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will complete it. Those who despised the day of small things will rejoice to see the plumb line in his hand; the seven lamps are the eyes of the LORD that range through all the earth. The two olive trees, the two branches pouring golden oil, are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of all the earth.

1 Then the angel who was talking with me came back and woke me, like someone wakened from sleep.

2 He asked me, “What do you see?” I answered, “I see a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl at its top and seven lamps on it, and seven spouts for each of the lamps on top of it.[1]

3 There are also two olive trees beside it, one on the right of the bowl and one on its left.”

4 I asked the angel who was talking with me, “What are these, my lord?”

5 The angel who was talking with me answered, “Do you not know what these are?” “No, my lord,” I replied.

6 So he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the LORD of Armies.

7 What are you, great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. He will bring out the capstone amid shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’”[2]

8 Then the word of the LORD came to me:

9 “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will complete it. Then you will know that the LORD of Armies has sent me to you.

10 For who has despised the day of small things? They will rejoice when they see the plumb line in Zerubbabel’s hand. These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range throughout the whole earth.”[3]

11 Then I asked him, “What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?”

12 And I asked him a second time, “What are these two olive branches beside the two gold pipes that pour out the golden oil?”

13 He said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” “No, my lord,” I said.

14 “These,” he said, “are the two anointed ones, who stand in attendance on the Lord of all the earth.”[4]

1 Literally ‘seven and seven spouts’, perhaps seven spouts on each lamp, giving forty-nine flames.

2 The mountain is every obstacle to rebuilding the temple. ‘Grace’ may also be ‘Beautiful!’

3 ‘Plumb line’ is literally ‘the stone of tin’, a builder’s weight or a final stone. Compare Revelation 5:6.

4 Literally ‘the two sons of oil’, probably Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest. Compare Revelation 11:4.

Chapter 5

Zechariah 5 contains the sixth and seventh visions. Zechariah sees a flying scroll twenty cubits long and ten wide: it is the curse going out over the whole land, which will enter the house of every thief and of everyone who swears falsely by the LORD's name, and will stay there until it consumes it, timber and stones. Then he sees a measuring basket going out, with a lead cover; when it is lifted there is a woman sitting inside, and the angel says, "This is Wickedness." He thrusts her back into the basket and presses the lead weight down on its mouth. Two women with wings like a stork's lift the basket between earth and heaven and carry it away to the land of Shinar, where a house will be built for it and it will be set there on its base.

1 Again I looked up, and there before me was a
flying scroll.
2 He asked me, "What do you see?" I answered, "I
see a flying scroll, twenty cubits long and ten
cubits wide."[1]
3 Then he said to me, "This is the curse that is
going out over the face of the whole land; for
according to what is written on one side, every
thief will be purged away, and according to what
is written on the other, everyone who swears
falsely will be purged away.
4 I will send it out, declares the LORD of Armies,
and it will enter the house of the thief and the
house of the one who swears falsely by My name.
It will lodge inside his house and consume it, both
its timber and its stones."
5 Then the angel who was talking with me came
forward and said to me, "Look up and see what
this is that is going out."
6 I asked, "What is it?" He said, "It is a measuring
basket going out." And he added, "This is their
iniquity in all the land."[2]
7 Then the lead cover was lifted, and there was a
woman sitting inside the basket.
8 He said, "This is Wickedness," and he pushed her
back into the basket and thrust the lead weight
down over its mouth.
9 Then I looked up, and there before me were two
women coming out, with the wind in their wings.
They had wings like the wings of a stork, and they
lifted up the basket between earth and sky.[3]
10 I asked the angel who was talking with me,
"Where are they taking the basket?"
11 He answered me, "To the land of Shinar, to build
a house for it. When it is ready, the basket will be
set there on its own base."[4]

1 About 9 metres by 4½ metres (30 feet by 15 feet), the size of the porch of Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6:3).

2 Literally 'an ephah', a basket holding about 22 litres. 'Their iniquity' follows the Greek; the Hebrew has 'their eye', that is, 'their appearance'.

3 The stork was an unclean bird (Leviticus 11:19), fitting bearers for Wickedness.

4 Shinar is Babylonia, home of the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:2). The 'house' is a temple: wickedness is sent back to be worshipped where it belongs.

Chapter 6

Zechariah 6 contains the last vision: four chariots coming out from between two bronze mountains, with red, black, white and dappled horses. They are the four spirits of heaven going out from standing before the Lord of all the earth; the black horses go north, the white after them and the dappled south, and those going north have given the LORD's Spirit rest there. Then the LORD tells Zechariah to take silver and gold from the returned exiles Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah, make a crown and set it on the head of Joshua the high priest, saying: here is the Man whose name is the Branch; He will branch out from His place and build the LORD's temple, bear royal honour and rule on His throne, and He will be a priest on His throne, with peace between the two offices. The crown is to be kept in the temple as a memorial. Those far off will come and help build the temple, if the people diligently obey the LORD their God.

1 Again I looked up, and there before me were four
chariots coming out from between two mountains,
and the mountains were mountains of bronze.[1]
2 The first chariot had red horses, the second black
horses,
3 the third white horses, and the fourth dappled
horses, all of them strong.
4 So I said to the angel who spoke with me, "My
lord, what do these mean?"

5 The angel answered me, “These are the four winds of heaven, going out after presenting themselves before the Lord of all the earth.[2]

6 The one with the black horses is going towards the north country, the white ones are going after them, and the dappled ones are going towards the south country.”

7 When the strong horses went out, they were eager to go and patrol the earth. And he said, “Go, patrol the earth!” So they patrolled the earth.

8 Then he called out to me, “See, those going towards the north country have given My Spirit rest in the north country.”[3]

9 The word of the LORD came to me:

10 “Take an offering from the exiles Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah, who have arrived from Babylon, and go that same day to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah.

11 Take silver and gold and make a crown, and set it on the head of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest.[4]

12 Tell him, ‘This is what the LORD of Armies says: Here is the Man whose name is the Branch. He will branch out from His place and build the temple of the LORD.[5]

13 It is He who will build the temple of the LORD; He will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on His throne. He will be a priest on His throne, and there will be counsel of peace between the two.’

14 The crown will be in the temple of the LORD as a memorial to Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah and Hen son of Zephaniah.[6]

15 Those who are far away will come and help to build the temple of the LORD, and you will know that the LORD of Armies has sent me to you. This will happen if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.”

1 The bronze mountains may be the gateway to God’s presence, like the two bronze pillars of the temple (1 Kings 7:15–22).

2 ‘Winds’ (ruchot) may also be translated ‘spirits’.

3 The north country is Babylon. God’s anger against it is satisfied, or His Spirit is now at work there to stir up the exiles to return.

4 The Hebrew has ‘crowns’, perhaps one crown of several bands, or two crowns (verse 14 also has the plural).

5 Compare 3:8. ‘Branch’ (tsemach) and ‘branch out’ (yitsmach) are the same root. The crowning of Joshua the priest is a sign pointing to the coming King who is also Priest (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 6:20–7:1).

6 Helem is probably another name for Heldai (verse 10), and Hen (‘gracious one’) for Josiah.

Chapter 7

Zechariah 7 dates to Darius’s fourth year, when the people of Bethel send men to ask the priests and prophets whether they should still mourn and fast in the fifth month, as they have done for so many years. The LORD asks whether their fasts in the fifth and seventh months these seventy years were really for Him, or their feasts for themselves; these were the very words the former prophets proclaimed when Jerusalem was prosperous. His message has always been to judge truly, show loyal kindness and compassion to one another, and not oppress the widow, the orphan, the foreigner or the poor, or plot evil against one another. But their ancestors refused to listen; they turned a stubborn shoulder, stopped their ears and made their hearts as hard as flint, so great anger came from the LORD of Armies. As they would not listen when He called, so He would not listen when they called, and He scattered them among the nations, leaving the pleasant land desolate.

1 In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, the month of Kislev.[1]

2 Now the people of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regem-melech with their men to seek the favour of the LORD,

3 and to ask the priests of the house of the LORD of Armies and the prophets, “Should I mourn and fast in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years?”[2]

4 Then the word of the LORD of Armies came to me:

5 Say to all the people of the land and to the priests: When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months these seventy years, was it really for Me that you fasted?[3]

6 And when you eat and drink, are you not eating and drinking for yourselves?

7 Are these not the words the LORD proclaimed through the earlier prophets, when Jerusalem and

the towns around it were inhabited and at ease, and the Negev and the lowlands were settled?

8 And the word of the LORD came to Zechariah:

9 This is what the LORD of Armies says: Judge with true justice; show loyal kindness and compassion to one another.

10 Do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the foreigner or the poor, and do not plot evil against one another in your hearts.

11 But they refused to pay attention; they turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped up their ears so as not to hear.

12 They made their hearts as hard as flint so as not to hear the law and the words that the LORD of Armies had sent by His Spirit through the earlier prophets. So great anger came from the LORD of Armies.[4]

13 Just as when I called they would not listen, so when they called I would not listen, says the LORD of Armies.

14 I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations they had not known, and the land they left behind became desolate, with no one coming or going. So they made the pleasant land a desolation.

1 7 December 518 BC, nearly two years after the night visions.

2 The fast of the fifth month mourned the burning of the temple in 586 BC (2 Kings 25:8–9). Now the temple was being rebuilt.

3 The fast of the seventh month remembered the murder of Gedaliah (2 Kings 25:25; Jeremiah 41:1–3).

4 'Flint' (shamir) is a very hard stone, perhaps emery or diamond (Jeremiah 17:1).

Chapter 8

> *Zechariah 8 is a series of ten promises from the LORD of Armies. He is jealous for Zion and has returned to dwell in Jerusalem, which will be called the City of Truth and the Holy Mountain. Old men and women will again sit in her streets, and the streets will be full of boys and girls playing. He will bring His people from east and west to live in Jerusalem; they will be His people and He will be their God. The builders are to take courage: before, there were no wages and no safety, but now He will sow peace, and as Judah and Israel were a curse among the nations, so they will be a blessing. They are to speak truth, judge with justice and love no false oath. The fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months will become joyful feasts. Many peoples will come to seek the LORD in Jerusalem, and ten men from every language will take hold of a Jew's robe, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."*

1 Again the word of the LORD of Armies came:

2 This is what the LORD of Armies says: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy; I am burning with jealousy for her.

3 This is what the LORD says: I have returned to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD of Armies will be called the Holy Mountain.

4 This is what the LORD of Armies says: Old men and old women will again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with a staff in hand because of great age.

5 And the city streets will be full of boys and girls playing there.

6 This is what the LORD of Armies says: Though it may seem too wonderful to the remnant of this people in those days, should it seem too wonderful to Me? declares the LORD of Armies.[1]

7 This is what the LORD of Armies says: I will save My people from the lands of the east and the west.

8 I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem; they will be My people, and I will be their God, in faithfulness and righteousness.

9 This is what the LORD of Armies says: Let your hands be strong, you who in these days have been hearing these words from the prophets who were there on the day the foundation was laid for the house of the LORD of Armies, so that the temple might be built.[2]

10 For before that time there were no wages for people or hire for animals, and no one could go out or come in safely because of the enemy, for I set everyone against his neighbour.

11 But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as in former days, declares the LORD of Armies.

12 For there will be a sowing of peace: the vine will yield its fruit, the ground will give its produce, and the heavens will give their dew. I will give the

remnant of this people all these things as their inheritance.

13 House of Judah and house of Israel, once the nations used your name as a curse; but I will rescue you, and your name will be a blessing. Have no fear; let your hands be strong.

14 For this is what the LORD of Armies says: Just as I determined to bring disaster on you when your ancestors provoked Me to anger, says the LORD of Armies, and I did not relent,

15 so now I have determined in these days to do good again to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Do not be afraid.

16 These are the things you must do: speak the truth to one another; render true and sound judgement in your gates.[3]

17 Do not plot evil against one another in your hearts, and do not love a false oath; for all these are things I hate, declares the LORD.

18 The word of the LORD of Armies came to me:

19 This is what the LORD of Armies says: The fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months will become times of joy and gladness and cheerful festivals for the house of Judah. So love truth and peace.[4]

20 This is what the LORD of Armies says: Peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will yet come.

21 The inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, “Let us go at once to seek the favour of the LORD and to seek the LORD of Armies. I myself am going.”

22 Many peoples and strong nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD of Armies and to ask the LORD’s favour.

23 This is what the LORD of Armies says: In those days ten men from nations of every language will take firm hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.”[5]

1 Compare Genesis 18:14; Jeremiah 32:17.

2 The prophets are Haggai and Zechariah himself (Ezra 5:1–2).

3 The gate of a town was where its elders sat to judge. Ephesians 4:25 echoes the first line.

4 The four fasts remembered the breach of Jerusalem’s wall, the burning of the temple, Gedaliah’s murder and the start of the siege (Jeremiah 39:1–2; 52:4–13; 41:1–3). This answers the question of 7:3.

5 ‘Robe’ is literally ‘the hem’ or ‘corner’, perhaps the tassel worn on the corner of the garment (Numbers 15:38).

Chapter 9

Zechariah 9 is an oracle: the word of the LORD is against the land of Hadrach and rests on Damascus, for the eyes of all people are on the LORD. Tyre has built herself a fortress and heaped up silver like dust, but the Lord will strip her and burn her; the Philistine cities will be terrified, and even Philistia will become a remnant for God, like a clan in Judah. The LORD will guard His house, and no oppressor will overrun them again. Daughter of Zion is to rejoice greatly, for her King is coming, righteous and victorious, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. He will take away the chariot and the war horse and proclaim peace to the nations, and His rule will reach from sea to sea. Because of the blood of His covenant, the LORD will set her prisoners free and restore double to her. He will bend Judah as His bow and rouse Zion’s sons against the sons of Greece; the LORD will appear over them, His arrow flashing like lightning, and save His people like a flock on that day. How good and how beautiful they will be!

1 An oracle: The word of the LORD is against the land of Hadrach and will rest on Damascus, for the eyes of all people, and of all the tribes of Israel, are on the LORD,[1]

2 and also on Hamath, which borders it, and on Tyre and Sidon, though they are very wise.

3 Tyre has built herself a stronghold; she has heaped up silver like dust and gold like the mud of the streets.

4 But the Lord will take away her possessions and strike down her power on the sea, and she will be consumed by fire.[2]

5 Ashkelon will see it and be afraid; Gaza will writhe in agony, and Ekron too, for her hope will be put to shame. Gaza will lose her king, and Ashkelon will be deserted.

6 A mixed people will live in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.

7 I will take the blood from their mouths and the forbidden food from between their teeth. Those who are left will belong to our God and become

like a clan in Judah, and Ekron will be like the Jebusites.[3]

8 But I will encamp at My house as a guard against those who march to and fro; no oppressor will overrun them again, for now I am watching with My own eyes.

9 Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, daughter of Jerusalem! See, your King is coming to you, righteous and victorious, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.[4]

10 I will do away with the chariots of Ephraim and the war horses of Jerusalem, and the bow of battle will be snapped. He will speak peace to the nations, and His dominion will stretch from one sea to the other, from the River to the far ends of the earth.[5]

11 As for you, because of the blood of My covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.[6]

12 Return to your stronghold, you prisoners of hope; even today I declare that I will restore to you double.

13 For I will bend Judah as My bow and fill it with Ephraim as the arrow. I will rouse your sons, Zion, against your sons, Greece, and make you like a warrior's sword.[7]

14 Then the LORD will appear over them, and His arrow will flash like lightning. The Lord GOD will sound the trumpet and march in the storms of the south.

15 The LORD of Armies will shield them. They will devour and trample the sling stones; they will drink and roar as with wine, and be filled like a sacrificial bowl, drenched like the corners of the altar.

16 On that day the LORD their God will save them as the flock of His people; they will sparkle on His land like jewels in a crown.

17 How good and how beautiful they will be! Grain will make the young men flourish, and new wine the young women.

1 Chapters 9–14 are two oracles (9–11 and 12–14), undated. Hadrach was a region of Syria north of Hamath. The march of judgement from the north down the coast to Philistia matches the campaign of Alexander the Great in 333–332 BC.

2 Tyre, built on an island, was thought impregnable; Alexander took it in 332 BC after a seven-month siege by building a causeway.

3 The Jebusites, the original people of Jerusalem, were absorbed into Judah (2 Samuel 24:18–24). So the Philistines too will be brought into God's people.

4 Fulfilled when Jesus rode into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:5; John 12:15). 'Victorious' is literally 'saved', that is, delivered and so bringing deliverance.

5 Compare Psalm 72:8. The River is the Euphrates.

6 Compare Exodus 24:8; Mark 14:24. A dry cistern was used as a prison (Genesis 37:24; Jeremiah 38:6).

7 Greece is literally 'Javan', the Ionian Greeks. The Maccabees fought the Greek kings of Syria in the second century BC.

Chapter 10

Zechariah 10 tells the people to ask the LORD for rain in the season of spring rain, for He makes the storm clouds and gives showers to everyone, while household idols speak nonsense and diviners see lies, so the people wander like sheep without a shepherd. The LORD is angry with the shepherds and will punish the leaders, for He cares for His flock, the house of Judah, and will make them like His proud war horse. From Judah will come the cornerstone, the tent peg and the battle bow. They will fight like warriors because the LORD is with them. He will strengthen the house of Judah and save the house of Joseph and bring them back, because He has compassion on them. He will whistle for them and gather them, bringing them back from Egypt and Assyria into Gilead and Lebanon until there is no room for them. They will pass through the sea of distress, the pride of Assyria will be brought down and the sceptre of Egypt will depart, and He will make them strong in the LORD, and they will walk in His name.

1 Ask the LORD for rain in the season of the late rain. It is the LORD who makes the storm clouds; He gives them showers of rain, and plants in the field to everyone.[1]

2 For the household gods utter nonsense, diviners see false visions and tell lying dreams; they give empty comfort. So the people wander like sheep; they suffer for lack of a shepherd.[2]

3 My anger burns against the shepherds, and I will punish the leaders. For the LORD of Armies cares for His flock, the house of Judah, and will make them like His majestic horse in battle.[3]

4 From Judah will come the cornerstone, from
Judah the tent peg, from Judah the battle bow,
from Judah every ruler together.[4]

5 Together they will be like warriors in battle,
trampling the enemy into the mud of the streets.
They will fight because the LORD is with them,
and they will put the horsemen to shame.

6 I will strengthen the house of Judah and save the
house of Joseph. I will bring them back because I
have compassion on them, and they will be as
though I had never rejected them, for I am the
LORD their God, and I will answer them.

7 Ephraim will become like warriors, and their
hearts will be glad as with wine. Their children
will see it and rejoice; their hearts will exult in the
LORD.

8 I will whistle for them and gather them in, for I
have redeemed them, and they will be as
numerous as they were before.

9 Though I scatter them among the peoples, in far
countries they will remember Me; they and their
children will live, and they will return.

10 I will bring them back from the land of Egypt
and gather them from Assyria. I will bring them
into Gilead and Lebanon, and there will not be
room enough for them.

11 They will cross the sea of trouble, but the waves
of the sea will be struck down, and the Nile will be
dried up to its depths. Assyria's pride will be
humbled, and Egypt's sceptre will be taken away.[5]

12 I will make them strong in the LORD, and they
will walk in His name, declares the LORD.

1 The late or spring rain fell in March and April and filled out the grain before harvest.

2 'Household gods' is teraphim, small images used for divination (Genesis 31:19; 1 Samuel 15:23).

3 'Leaders' is literally 'male goats', the animals that lead the flock.

4 The cornerstone and the tent peg are pictures of a leader on whom all rests (Isaiah 22:23; 28:16; Psalm 118:22). Many have seen here the coming Messiah.

5 A new exodus, like the crossing of the Red Sea. Assyria and Egypt stand for all the powers that held Israel captive.

Chapter 11

Zechariah 11 opens with Lebanon told to open its doors so that fire may devour its cedars; the cypresses and oaks wail, and the shepherds howl, for their glory is ruined. The LORD tells the prophet to shepherd the flock marked for slaughter, whose buyers kill them without guilt and whose sellers say, "Blessed be the LORD, for I have become rich!" So he shepherds the flock with two staffs, Favour and Union, and gets rid of three shepherds in one month, but the flock detests him and he gives them up. He breaks the staff Favour, annulling the covenant with the peoples, and asks for his wages; they weigh out thirty pieces of silver, and at the LORD's word he throws it into the house of the LORD to the potter, that lordly price at which they valued him. Then he breaks the second staff, Union, ending the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. Finally the LORD tells him to take the equipment of a foolish shepherd, for He will raise up a shepherd who will not care for the perishing; woe to the worthless shepherd who deserts the flock!

1 Open your doors, Lebanon, so that fire may
devour your cedars!

2 Wail, you cypress, for the cedar has fallen; the
mighty trees are ruined! Wail, oaks of Bashan, for
the dense forest has been cut down!

3 Listen to the wail of the shepherds, for their
glory is ruined! Listen to the roar of the young
lions, for the thickets of the Jordan are laid
waste![1]

4 This is what the LORD my God says: Shepherd
the flock marked for slaughter.

5 Their buyers slaughter them and go unpunished.
Those who sell them say, "Blessed be the LORD,
for I have become rich!" Their own shepherds
have no pity on them.

6 For I will no longer have pity on the people of the
land, declares the LORD. I will hand everyone
over to his neighbour and to his king. They will
crush the land, and I will not rescue anyone from
their hand.

7 So I shepherded the flock marked for slaughter,
the most afflicted of the flock. I took two staffs;
one I called Favour and the other Union, and I
shepherded the flock.[2]

8 In one month I got rid of the three shepherds. I
grew impatient with the flock, and they also
detested me.

9 So I said, "I will not be your shepherd. Let the
dying die and the perishing perish, and let those
who are left eat one another's flesh."

10 Then I took my staff called Favour and broke it, annulling the covenant I had made with all the peoples.

11 It was annulled on that day, and so the afflicted of the flock who were watching me knew that it was the word of the LORD.

12 I told them, “If it seems good to you, pay me what I am owed; if not, keep it.” So they counted out my pay: thirty pieces of silver.[3]

13 Then the LORD said to me, “Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which they valued Me!” So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD, to the potter.[4]

14 Then I broke my second staff, called Union, breaking the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

15 Then the LORD said to me, “Take again the equipment of a foolish shepherd.

16 For I am going to raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for those that are perishing, or seek the young, or heal the injured, or feed the healthy, but will eat the meat of the fat ones and tear off their hoofs.

17 Woe to the worthless shepherd who deserts the flock! May the sword strike his arm and his right eye! May his arm wither completely and his right eye be blinded!”

1 ‘Thickets’ is literally ‘the pride of the Jordan’, the dense growth along its banks (Jeremiah 12:5).

2 In this chapter the prophet acts out a parable of the LORD’s own shepherding of His people and their rejection of Him. ‘The most afflicted of the flock’ may also be read ‘for the sheep traders’ (Greek).

3 Thirty shekels of silver was the compensation for a slave gored by an ox (Exodus 21:32), an insulting price.

4 Matthew 27:9–10 sees this fulfilled when Judas’s thirty pieces of silver bought the potter’s field, and names Jeremiah, who also bought a field and spoke at the potter’s house (Jeremiah 18:1–4; 32:6–15).

Chapter 12

Zechariah 12 begins the second oracle, the word of the LORD concerning Israel from the One who stretched out the heavens, laid the foundations of the earth and formed the human spirit. He will make Jerusalem a cup that makes the surrounding peoples reel and a heavy stone that injures all who try to lift it. On that day He will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness; the clans of Judah will be like a firepot among sticks, and the LORD will shield the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the weakest among them will be like David, and the house of David like God, like the angel of the LORD going before them. Then He will pour out on the house of David and Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication, and they will look on Him whom they have pierced and mourn for Him as for an only child. The mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo, each family mourning apart, the house of David, Nathan, Levi and Shimei, and their wives by themselves.

1 An oracle: the word of the LORD concerning Israel. This is the declaration of the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth and forms the spirit of man within him:

2 I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah too will be under siege when Jerusalem is besieged.[1]

3 On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who try to lift it will injure themselves badly, and all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it.

4 On that day, declares the LORD, I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness. I will keep a watchful eye on the house of Judah, but I will strike all the horses of the peoples with blindness.

5 Then the clans of Judah will say in their hearts, “The people of Jerusalem are our strength, through the LORD of Armies, their God.”

6 On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a firepot in a pile of wood, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume all the surrounding peoples on the right and on the left, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place.

7 The LORD will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and of the people of Jerusalem may not be exalted above Judah.

8 On that day the LORD will shield the people of Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them on that day will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the LORD going before them.

9 On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

10 And I will pour out on the house of David and the people of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on Me, the One they have pierced, and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for Him as one grieves for a firstborn son.[2]

11 On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.[3]

12 The land will mourn, each family by itself: 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;

13 the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself, and their wives by themselves;

14 and all the remaining families, each by itself, and their wives by themselves.

1 The cup of the LORD's wrath, which makes those who drink it stagger (Isaiah 51:17; Jeremiah 25:15).

2 John 19:37 quotes this verse of Jesus' death: 'They will look on the One they have pierced'; compare Revelation 1:7. The speaker is the LORD, yet the One pierced is mourned as 'Him'.

3 Perhaps the mourning for King Josiah, killed at Megiddo (2 Chronicles 35:22–25), or a pagan rite of mourning for a dying god.

Chapter 13

Zechariah 13 promises that on that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and impurity. The LORD of Armies will cut off the names of the idols from the land and remove the prophets and the unclean spirit; if anyone still prophesies, his own parents will pierce him, and every prophet will be ashamed of his vision and deny being a prophet, claiming his wounds came from the house of his friends. Then the LORD calls the sword to awake against His Shepherd, the Man who stands next to Him: strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and He will turn His hand against the little ones. Two thirds in the land will be cut off, but one third will be left; He will bring them through the fire and refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on His name, and He will answer: "They are My people," and they will say, "The LORD is our God."

1 On that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and the people of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.[1]

2 On that day, declares the LORD of Armies, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they will be remembered no more. I will also remove from the land the prophets and the spirit of uncleanness.

3 And if anyone still prophesies, his father and mother who bore him will say to him, "You shall not live, for you have spoken lies in the name of the LORD." When he prophesies, his own father and mother will pierce him through.[2]

4 On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies. He will not put on a hairy cloak in order to deceive.[3]

5 He will say, "I am not a prophet; I work the land, for I have been a hired hand since my youth."

6 And if someone asks him, "What are these wounds on your chest?" he will answer, "Those are the wounds I was given in the house of my friends."[4]

7 Rise up, sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man who stands beside Me, declares the LORD of Armies. Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; then against the little ones I will turn My hand.[5]

8 In the whole land, declares the LORD, two thirds will be cut off and perish, but one third will be left in it.

9 I will bring that third into the fire; I will refine them as silver is refined and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, "They are My people," and they will say, "The LORD is our God."

1 ‘Impurity’ (niddah) is the uncleanness for which the water of cleansing was used (Numbers 19:9).

2 Compare Deuteronomy 13:6–10; 18:20.

3 The hairy cloak was the mark of a prophet (2 Kings 1:8).

4 Literally ‘between your hands’, that is, on the chest or back. The false prophets gashed themselves in their rites (1 Kings 18:28) and now try to explain away the scars.

5 Jesus quotes this before His arrest: ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered’ (Matthew 26:31; Mark 14:27). ‘The Man who stands beside Me’ is literally ‘the man, My companion’ (amiti), one who stands close beside, an equal.

Chapter 14

Zechariah 14 describes the coming day of the LORD. All nations will be gathered to fight against Jerusalem; the city will be taken and half its people exiled. Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations. On that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which will split in two from east to west, forming a great valley through which the people will flee; and the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with Him. There will be no light or cold or frost, but a unique day known to the LORD, and at evening there will be light. Living water will flow out from Jerusalem to the eastern and western seas, summer and winter, and the LORD will be King over the whole earth: on that day the LORD will be one and His name one. Jerusalem will be raised up and dwell securely, while a plague strikes the peoples who fought against it. The survivors of the nations will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of Armies, and to keep the Feast of Shelters, and the families that do not go will have no rain. On that day even the bells of the horses will be inscribed “Holy to the LORD”, and every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the LORD of Armies.

1 See, a day of the LORD is coming when your plunder will be divided among you.

2 For I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem for battle. The city will be captured, the houses plundered and the women raped. Half the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city.

3 Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as He fights on a day of battle.

4 On that day His feet will stand upon the Mount of Olives, facing Jerusalem on the east. The Mount of Olives will be torn apart from east to west, forming a vast valley, with one half of the mountain shifting to the north and the other half to the south.[1]

5 You will flee by My mountain valley, for the valley between the mountains will reach to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with Him.[2]

6 On that day there will be no light, no cold or frost.[3]

7 It will be a unique day, a day known to the LORD, without day or night; and at evening time there will be light.

8 On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half of it to the eastern sea and half to the western sea, in summer and in winter.[4]

9 The LORD will be King over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one, and His name the only name.[5]

10 All the land around, from Geba to Rimmon in the south, will be levelled into a plain like the Arabah. But Jerusalem will stand high and stay where it is, from the Benjamin Gate to where the First Gate stood and on to the Corner Gate, and from Hananel’s Tower to the king’s winepresses.

11 People will live in it, and never again will it be destroyed; Jerusalem will dwell in security.

12 This is the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples that waged war against Jerusalem: their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths.

13 On that day a great panic from the LORD will fall on them; each will seize the hand of his neighbour, and they will attack one another.

14 Judah also will fight in Jerusalem. The riches of every nation round about will be gathered up, gold and silver and garments, a vast amount.

15 A similar plague will strike the horses, mules, camels, donkeys and all the animals in those camps.

16 Then all who survive of the nations that came against Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of Armies, and to celebrate the Feast of Shelters.[6]

17 If any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of Armies, they will have no rain.

18 If the family of Egypt does not go up and take part, they will have no rain; instead there will come the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Shelters.[7]

19 This will be the punishment of Egypt and of all the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Shelters.

20 On that day ‘Holy to the LORD’ will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, and the cooking pots in the LORD’s house will be like the sacred bowls before the altar.[8]

21 Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the LORD of Armies, and all who come to sacrifice will take some of them and cook in them. On that day there will no longer be a trader in the house of the LORD of Armies.[9]

1 Compare Acts 1:11–12: Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives and will come back in the same way.

2 The earthquake is also mentioned in Amos 1:1. ‘With Him’ follows the Greek and other ancient versions; the Hebrew has ‘with you’. Compare 1 Thessalonians 3:13; Jude 14.

3 The Hebrew is difficult; it may mean ‘the shining ones will congeal’, that is, the stars will fade.

4 The eastern sea is the Dead Sea, the western the Mediterranean. Compare Ezekiel 47:1–12; John 7:38; Revelation 22:1.

5 An echo of Deuteronomy 6:4, ‘the LORD is one’.

6 The Feast of Shelters (Tabernacles) celebrated the harvest and God’s care in the wilderness (Leviticus 23:33–43).

7 Egypt did not depend on rain but on the Nile; the Hebrew here is difficult.

8 The words engraved on the high priest’s turban (Exodus 28:36). The most ordinary things will be as holy as the most sacred.

9 ‘Trader’ is literally ‘Canaanite’, a word also used for merchants. Compare John 2:16.