

## Zechariah's Eight Night Visions

Vision	Reference	Meaning
The Red-horse Rider among the Myrtles	1:7–17	God's anger against the nations and blessing on restored Israel
The Four Horns and the Four Craftsmen	1:18–21	God's judgment on the nations that afflict Israel
The Surveyor with a Measuring Line	Chapter 2	God's future blessing on restored Israel
The Cleansing and Crowning of Joshua the High Priest	Chapter 3	Israel's future cleansing from sin and reinstatement as a priestly nation
The Golden Lampstand and the Two Olive Trees	Chapter 4	Israel as the light to the nations under Messiah, the King-Priest
The Flying Scroll	5:1–4	The severity and totality of divine judgment on individual Israelites
The Woman In the Ephah	5:5–11	The removal of national Israel's sin of rebellion against God
The Four Chariots	6:1–8	Divine judgment on Gentile nations <sup>1</sup>

So, last week, let's do a little recap.

There was **a lot of reading** last week—and that's on me, guys. Sometimes I nerd out when it comes to Old Testament stuff. But this week, we're going to **dive straight into Zechariah** and focus in on the visions.

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<sup>1</sup> Lindsey, F. D. (1985). [Zechariah](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 1549). Victor Books.

This week we are looking at the **eight night visions of Zechariah**. These visions follow a consistent pattern:

1. A description of the vision
2. Zechariah asks an angel what the vision means
3. An interpretation is given

After last week's reading, we now understand the history of Israel—their constant pull toward the sins of other nations, the Lord giving them over to those sins, their exile, their return, their laziness, and then the beginning of **Zechariah's message and the LORD's call** for the people to return and not be like their fathers, but to be faithful.

The LORD reveals to Zechariah words of encouragement for the people: **if they will be faithful, they will receive the promises conveyed in these eight visions**. These visions are believed to have taken place on **February 15, 519 BC**, just a few short months after Zechariah began his ministry. In each of these visions, **“the Angel of the LORD”** provides interpretation and explanation of their significance.

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## The Angel of the LORD

Before we go any further, we need to talk about **“the Angel of the LORD.”**

According to the *New Bible Dictionary*, the Angel of the LORD “in many passages is virtually identified with God and speaks not merely in the name of God, but as God in the first person.” Throughout the Old Testament, we see that God is a **personal God** who speaks to His people on their level. However, the full glory of God would destroy the people if He spoke to them in His perfect, unveiled form.

So God sends an angel—but this is not just any angel. This angel is given the authority to speak **as God**. As the *Interpreter's Dictionary* explains, “One effect of the ambiguity is that there can be no doubt Yahweh has spoken.”

Many scholars believe that the Angel of YHWH is actually **the Second Person of the Trinity appearing before the Incarnation**. Throughout Scripture, angels do not receive worship and do not bear God's divine name. Yet this Angel does. When we see **“LORD” in all capital letters**, that is a reference back to **Yahweh**, God's covenant name.

The word *angel* means **messenger**, and this messenger is sent with divine authority, worthy to bear God's name and even receive worship. That leads us to a very logical conclusion: this is a **Christophany**, meaning **an appearance of Christ in the Old Testament**.

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## The Chiastic Structure of the Visions

Another important thing to know about these visions is that they follow a **chiastic structure**.

If you're unfamiliar with what that is, a chiastic structure is commonly used in Hebrew literature to show that the beginning and the end mirror each other, as do the second and second-to-last sections. Everything points toward the **middle**, which is the most important part. No matter which direction you read, you are being led to the center.

We see this structure throughout the Psalms, and even in the book of Exodus, where the central focus is **the presence of the LORD**.

Here is the chiastic structure of the **eight visions in Zechariah**:

- **A:** Horsemen — *God rules the nations*
    - **B:** Four horns and four craftsmen — *God removes wickedness*
      - **C:** Man measuring Jerusalem — *God restores His people*
        - **D:** High priest Joshua — *God establishes His leaders*
        - **D':** Lampstand and two olive trees — *God establishes His leaders*
      - **C':** Flying scroll — *God restores His people*
    - **B':** Woman in a basket — *God removes wickedness*
  - **A':** Four chariots from between two bronze mountains — *God rules the nations*
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This structure acts like steps, whether you are walking up or down, always leading toward the center.

First, we see that **God rules the nations**. Every nation must submit to Him. Then we see how **God removes wickedness**—through the vision of the four horns and four craftsmen, and again through the woman in the basket, where wickedness is literally removed.

Next, we see how **God restores His people**. The measuring of Jerusalem is a beautiful picture showing that every inch of the city is known by the LORD and will be restored—not just to its former glory, but beyond it.

At the center, we have **Joshua the high priest** and the **lampstand with the two olive trees**. These visions point us to the most important truth: **God establishes, protects, restores, and empowers His leaders**.

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So this week, this is what we are going to discover and dive into:

- **God rules the nations**
- **God removes wickedness**
- **God restores His people**
- **God establishes His leaders**

Everything in these visions points back to that truth.

## Day One: Zechariah 1:7–17 — The First Vision

Alright, here we go.

**Day One’s reading is Zechariah 1:7–17**, and in this passage we are introduced to the **first of the eight night visions**. This vision takes place on the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month (Shebat) in **519 BC**.

In this vision, Zechariah sees **a man standing among the myrtle trees**—and no, we are *not* talking about Dirty Myrtle.

Zechariah describes what he sees this way:

“I saw in the night, and behold, a man riding on a red horse! He was standing among the myrtle trees in the glen, and behind him were red, sorrel, and white horses.”  
(*Zechariah 1:8, ESV*)

Zechariah then asks the obvious question: *What in the world am I looking at?*

“Then I said, ‘What are these, my lord?’ The angel who talked with me said to me, ‘I will show you what they are.’”  
(*Zechariah 1:9, ESV*)

The man standing among the myrtle trees—who is identified as **the Angel of the LORD**—explains the vision:

“These are they whom the LORD has sent to patrol the earth.”  
(*Zechariah 1:10, ESV*)

The horses then report back:

“We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth remains at rest.”  
(*Zechariah 1:11, ESV*)

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### Who Is Present in the Vision?

At this point, there are **three main figures** in the vision:

- **Zechariah**, the prophet
- **“The angel who talked with me”** (Zechariah 1:9, 13), who acts as a guide
- **“The Angel of the LORD”** (Zechariah 1:11), who is the man on the horse

As we talked about earlier, the **Angel of the LORD** is not just any angel. Based on Old Testament usage and theological understanding, this figure is best understood as **the preincarnate Christ** (see explanation above on the Angel of the LORD).

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## Why Myrtle Trees?

Now, if you're anything like me, you're probably wondering: *What in the world are myrtle trees, and why do they matter?*

Myrtle trees were typically **small, scrub-like trees**, usually only about **six to ten feet tall**, sometimes even shorter. They grow **low to the ground**, often in **valleys or shaded areas**.

This is important because throughout Scripture, we often see **cedars of Lebanon**, which are tall and powerful, associated with kingship and strength. We also see **oaks**, symbolizing strength, and **palms**, symbolizing victory and flourishing. Myrtle trees do none of that visually. They are low, unimpressive, and easily overlooked.

Culturally and symbolically, myrtle trees represented **lowliness and humility**.

And that is exactly where God's people are at this moment.

They have just returned from **seventy years of exile**. They are poor. The land is hard. Jerusalem is broken. And yet, **right there among the lowly**, we see the Angel of the LORD standing with them.

God has not forsaken His people.

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## Peace in the World, Concern for God's People

The horses report that the earth is "at rest." This fits the historical moment. Under the **Persian Empire**, many wars had ceased, and there was relative peace across the known world.

And yet, despite all that peace, **God's focus is on His people**.

What we see next is incredibly comforting. The Angel of the LORD **intercedes**:

"O LORD of hosts, how long will you have no mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah...?"  
*(Zechariah 1:12, ESV)*

This is not new behavior for God. Hebrews reminds us that we have a **great high priest** who understands our weaknesses and **intercedes on our behalf**. A mediator stands between two parties to restore relationship when direct access has been broken or strained.

Here, we see Christ interceding on behalf of Israel. And while this passage is about Israel, it is deeply comforting to know that **our God does not change**. The same God who interceded then is still at work today.

I love seeing the consistency of our God.

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## The Jealousy of God

Next, we are introduced to something that can feel uncomfortable at first: **the jealousy of God**.

When we hear the word *jealousy*, we usually associate it with something negative—and honestly, that’s fair. We are often jealous of things we don’t have, and that jealousy usually leads us into sin. But **God’s jealousy is not like human jealousy**.

God lacks nothing.

His jealousy is not rooted in insecurity; it is rooted in **covenant love**. God’s jealousy is **on behalf of His people**.

“Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion.”  
(*Zechariah 1:14, ESV*)

One commentary explains this really helpfully. Fuhr and Yates note that when the Lord declares His jealousy here, the Hebrew construction is emphatic. The root word for *jealous* (*qana*) is used for both the verb and the object—literally meaning, “*I am jealous with a great jealousy*.” This kind of language communicates intense emotion. It reflects both **God’s demand for exclusive devotion from His people** (Exodus 20:5; Joshua 24:19) and **His desire to protect and defend them from harm** (Isaiah 42:13).

At the same time, the same emphatic construction is used to describe the Lord as being “*fiercely angry*” with the nations. While those nations were used as instruments of judgment, they also acted out of their own evil intentions and went far beyond what God intended (Isaiah 10:5–7).  
(*Fuhr & Yates, n.d.*)

That’s important. God is saying: *Yes, I disciplined my people—but you abused them*. And now He is stepping in.

What amazes me is that **we benefit from God’s jealousy**. His jealousy is good. He desires His people, and He desires to dwell with them. He is not done with Israel, and He will not allow the nations to mistreat those who belong to Him without consequence.

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## Hope for a Broken People

The Lord then gives one of the most hopeful promises in the passage:

“I have returned to Jerusalem with mercy; my house shall be built in it...”  
(*Zechariah 1:16, ESV*)

This is hope for a people who have lost everything.

Things are bad in Jerusalem. Ezra and Nehemiah tell us that clearly—raids, mockery, poverty, no walls, no temple. Life is hard. It’s hard to grow food. It’s hard to feel secure. It’s hard to remember that you are God’s chosen people.

And yet, God says: *I am your God. I am jealous for you. I want to dwell with you. Build my house.*

The Lord ends this vision with a promise:

“My cities shall again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.”  
(*Zechariah 1:17, ESV*)

How beautiful.

The people are lowly now—but **God has not forgotten them**. Restoration is coming.

## Day One Questions: Zechariah 1:7–17

Answer the following questions based directly on the text.

1. **Who are the main figures present in this vision?**

List each one and describe their role in the vision using verse references.

2. **What does Zechariah see in verse 8?**

Describe the scene in detail (location, figures, and colors mentioned).

3. **What question does Zechariah ask in verse 9, and who responds to him?**

Why do you think this question is important for understanding the vision?

4. **According to verses 10–11, what is the purpose of the horses?**

What report do they bring back?

5. **What does it mean that “the whole earth remains at rest” (v. 11)?**

How does this statement fit with what is happening to God’s people at this time?

6. **What role does the Angel of the LORD play in verses 12–13?**

What does this tell us about how God communicates with His people?

7. **What does the LORD declare about Jerusalem and Zion in verses 14–15?**

List two things God says about His attitude toward:

- His people
- The nations

8. **What promises does the LORD make in verses 16–17?**

Identify at least two specific promises related to Jerusalem or the temple.

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## Food for Thought (Just for Fun)

9. **Do you think Myrtle Beach was named after the myrtle tree?**

I am kind of joking/serious... Why did they name it Myrtle beach? And why is it so dirty?

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## Day Two: Zechariah 1:18–21 — The Second Vision

**Reading:** Zechariah 1:18–21 (ESV)

In the second vision, Zechariah sees **four horns and four craftsmen**.

The horns represent the **nations that scattered Israel and Judah into exile**. There is some debate over which four nations these are—and like everything in the Bible, people love to debate. Some possibilities include:

- Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and Persia
- Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece
- Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Rome

No matter which list you land on, the main point stays the same: **these were powerful world empires that dominated God's people.**

Throughout Scripture, **horns symbolize strength, military power, and pride.** We see this imagery used in places like **1 Samuel 2:10**, **Daniel 7:8**, and **Daniel 8:8**. Horns represent nations or rulers who believe their power comes from themselves.

This vision connects directly to the first vision. At the end of the previous passage, the Lord declares that He is **jealous for His people** and **angry with the nations** that harmed them (Zechariah 1:14–15). Here, we see what that judgment looks like.

Zechariah then sees **four craftsmen**. These craftsmen are sent to **terrify, cast down, and overthrow the horns** that were lifted up against Judah. Some commentators try to get very specific about the craftsmen—suggesting they must be made of iron or represent specific empires—but sometimes people overthink it. What we know for sure is this: **God raises up forces that are strong enough to defeat the strongest nations on earth.**

The horns believed their success came from their own strength. In reality, they were **used by God as instruments of judgment**, and then they went too far. They acted in pride, cruelty, and violence. Now, the Lord holds them accountable.

When it comes to the identity of the craftsmen, there is debate again:

- Some say the craftsmen represent later empires that overthrow earlier ones
- Some say Persia is the craftsman used to judge Babylon
- Others say the specific identity isn't the point

I tend to fall into the camp of **it doesn't matter**. We don't want to get lost in the trees and miss the forest. The point of the vision is comfort:

God will deal with the nations that harmed His people.

God will judge pride and abuse of power.

God has not forgotten Israel.

## Day Two Questions: Zechariah 1:18–21

Answer the following questions based directly on the passage.

1. **What does Zechariah see in verses 18–19?**  
What explanation is given for the four horns?

2. **What do the four horns represent according to the text?**  
What actions had these horns taken against Israel and Judah?
3. **How are horns used symbolically in Scripture?**  
Look up one of the following passages and summarize how horns are used there:
  - 1 Samuel 2:10
  - Daniel 7:8
  - Daniel 8:8
4. **What does Zechariah see next in verses 20–21?**  
Who are the craftsmen, and what is their purpose?
5. **What actions do the craftsmen take against the horns?**  
List the verbs used to describe what they do.
6. **How does this vision connect to God’s jealousy and anger in Zechariah 1:14–15?**  
What does this tell us about how God responds to injustice?
7. **Why do you think the specific identity of the horns and craftsmen is debated?**  
Why might Scripture leave some details unclear?
8. **What is the main message this vision would have communicated to the people of Judah?**  
Summarize the purpose of the vision in one or two sentences.

## Day Three: Zechariah 2 — The Third Vision (Measuring Jerusalem)

**Reading:** Zechariah 2 (ESV)

In this vision, Zechariah sees **a man with a measuring line in his hand.**

Zechariah asks what is happening, and the man responds:

“I am going to measure Jerusalem, to see what is its width and what is its length.”  
(*Zechariah 2:2, ESV*)

Before the measuring can even finish, another message is given:

“Run, say to that young man, ‘Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls, because of the multitude of people and livestock in it. And I will be to her a wall of fire all around, declares the LORD, and I will be the glory in her midst.’”  
(*Zechariah 2:4–5, ESV*)

This vision is not about boundaries—it is about **overflow.**

Jerusalem will not be contained by walls because there will be **too many people and too much life.** Instead of physical walls, **the LORD Himself will be her protection.**

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## Fire, Glory, and Protection

Fire as a symbol of God's presence and protection is not new. In **Exodus and Numbers**, the LORD led His people by a **pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night**. That fire represented **God's glory dwelling among His people**.

Fire is powerful. It gives light, warmth, and protection—but it is also not something you mess with. And that's exactly the point here.

God says:

- *I will be a wall of fire around her*
- *I will be the glory in her midst*

Jerusalem will be protected not by stone, but by **the presence of God Himself**.

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## Walls, Symbolism, and the Future

This language is **symbolic**, not a denial of physical walls. Nehemiah will later come and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem in **445 BC**. But the vision points beyond that.

It shows:

- God's protection
- God's presence
- A thriving, vibrant city

It also points forward to the **New Jerusalem** in **Revelation 21–22**, where the city gates are never shut:

“Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.”  
(*Revelation 21:25, ESV*)

The message is clear: **God is there, and that is what matters most**.

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## A Call to Come Home

This vision is not only comfort for those already in Jerusalem—it is also a **call to those still in Babylon**.

“Up! Up! Flee from the land of the north, declares the LORD.”  
(*Zechariah 2:6, ESV*)

Babylon was to the north, and invasion had come from the north. God is calling His scattered people to **come back**.

“Up! Escape to Zion, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon.”  
(*Zechariah 2:7, ESV*)

God has not forgotten them. He wants His people **with Him**.

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## **The Apple of His Eye**

Then comes one of the most powerful statements in the chapter:

“For he who touches you touches the apple of his eye.”  
(*Zechariah 2:8, ESV*)

This is both a comfort to Israel and a warning to the nations.

Those who plundered God’s people went too far. God says He will act:

“Behold, I will shake my hand over them, and they shall become plunder for those who served them.”  
(*Zechariah 2:9, ESV*)

God is fiercely protective of what belongs to Him. Messing with God’s people is the same as **messing with what He loves most**.

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## **God’s Heart for the Nations**

But this chapter doesn’t stop with judgment—it expands outward.

“Many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people.”  
(*Zechariah 2:11, ESV*)

This goes all the way back to **God’s promise to Abraham**—that through him, **all the nations of the earth would be blessed** (Genesis 12:3).

God’s plan has always been global.

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## **Hope and Warning for New Testament Believers**

As New Testament believers, this passage gives us **great hope**.

Israel failed—I mean FACE PLANTED!!! And yet, **God did not forsake them**.

At the same time, Scripture gives us a warning. Paul says in **Romans 11**, speaking to the church:

“For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.”  
(*Romans 11:21, ESV*)

There is comfort here—but also seriousness.

The chapter ends with a reminder:

“Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD, for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.”  
(*Zechariah 2:13, ESV*)

God is kind. God is patient. But **God is holy**, and He fiercely protects His bride.

As believers today, that should shape how we treat **the church**, which Scripture calls **the bride of Christ**.

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## Day Three Questions: Zechariah 2

Answer the following questions based directly on the text.

1. **What is the man with the measuring line sent to do (vv. 1–2)?**  
Why might measuring Jerusalem be significant?
2. **According to verses 4–5, why will Jerusalem not need walls?**  
What will take the place of physical protection?
3. **How is fire used symbolically in this chapter?**  
How does this connect to earlier books like Exodus and Numbers?
4. **Why does the LORD call the people to flee from the land of the north (vv. 6–7)?**  
Who is He addressing?
5. **What does the phrase “the apple of his eye” communicate about God’s relationship with His people (v. 8)?**
6. **What promise is made regarding the nations in verse 11?**  
How does this connect to God’s promise to Abraham?
7. **How does Romans 11:21 help balance hope and warning for believers today?**
8. **Summarize the main message of Zechariah 2 in one or two sentences.**