

## Z'kharyah ~ Part 2

In the second vision for **Z'kharyah**, there is an assurance that **Isra'el's** oppressors will indeed be punished.

### Horns and Craftsman

*2<sup>1(1:18)</sup> Then I looked up and saw four horns. 2<sup>(1:19)</sup> I asked the angel who was speaking to me, "What are these?" He answered, "These are the horns that scattered Y'hudah, Isra'el, and Yerushalayim." 3<sup>(1:20)</sup> Next, Adonai showed me four artisans. 4<sup>(1:21)</sup> I asked, "What are these coming to do?" He said, "Those horns that scattered Y'hudah so completely that no one could even raise his head - well, these men have come to terrify them, to overthrow the nations that raised their horns against the land of Y'hudah to scatter it."* Note again that Stern follows the Jewish tradition of numbering.

This scene continues the theme of reversal (v. 15). Whereas **God** had used the nations to judge **Isra'el**, he now turns against those nations (Havakuk 2). The imagery of **four horns** that **scattered** the people so that *no one could even raise his head* suggests the terrifying power and merciless ruin enacted by **Isra'el's** enemies. The *four artisans* designated as skilled artisans (blacksmiths, if the horns were iron) could cut or carve horns for various purposes. With the horns in the vision removed, the chosen people could return to the promised land.

In the third vision for **Z'kharyah**, there is an assurance that **God** will be among His returning people.

### Man With A Measuring Line

*5<sup>(1)</sup> I looked up and saw a man with a measuring line in his hand. 6<sup>(2)</sup> I asked, "Where are you going?" He said to me, "To measure Yerushalayim, to determine its width and length." 7<sup>(3)</sup> Here the angel who was speaking to me went forward, and another angel went out, met him 8<sup>(4)</sup> and said to him, "Run and tell this young man, 'Yerushalayim will be inhabited without walls, because there will be so many people and animals; 9<sup>(5)</sup> "for," says Adonai, "I will be for her a wall of fire surrounding her; and I will be the glory within her. 10<sup>(6)</sup> Up!" says Adonai, "Move! Flee the land of the north! For I scattered you like the four winds of the sky," says Adonai.*

With *measuring line* is a common tool of the building trade but regarding sacred sites signifying divine commissioning - in hand a surveyor set out to determine its *width and length*, apparently intending to measure from wall to wall (probably an allusion to Ezekiel 40:3–42:20). But an angelic messenger spoke with urgency: *Tell this young man* that the city could not be measured because there were no walls (for an opposite image, see note at Isaiah 60:10). A wall-less city symbolized three ideas. (1) The city would be so vast that walls could not contain it *because there will be so many people and animals*. An ingathering of people in **Yerushalayim** was a common motif in the prophets' language of blessing (Isa 2:2–5). (2) The city would be at peace, and the only protection needed would be provided by **God Himself**. (3) Adonai will be *her wall of fire around it*, recalling **God's** fiery appearances associated with the miracle of deliverance from Egyptian captivity (Exodus 3:2; 13:21–22; 19:18; Deuteronomy 4:24), making it clear that a physical wall would be unnecessary. His glory within it need not be an eschatological reference but is more likely a reference to God's glory returning to the tabernacle or temple (Exodus 40:34–35; Leviticus 9:23–24).

In the fourth vision for **Z'kharyah**, there is an assurance that the sins of the people will be removed by Him who is called the Branch.

*3<sup>1</sup> He showed me Y'hoshua the Cohen HaGadol standing before the angel of Adonai, with the Accuser [Hebrew: Satan] standing at his right to accuse him. 2 Adonai said to the Accuser, "May*

*Adonai rebuke you, Accuser! Indeed, may Adonai, who has made Yerushalayim his choice, rebuke you! Isn't this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?"*

Joshua is the name of four different people mentioned in the OT (in the NT, the equivalent name was "Jesus"). Joshua was the first high priest after the exile. He is mentioned numerous times in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Haggai. As in Job 1:6–12; 2:1–6, Satan (or "the adversary") had access to God's courtroom and functioned as prosecutor. A burning stick snatched from the fire is the first clue that Joshua symbolizes the chosen people, as the prophet Amos uses this same image for Israel (Amos 4:11).

*<sup>3</sup> Y'hoshua was clothed in garments covered with dung; and he was standing before the angel, <sup>4</sup> who said to those standing in front of him, "Take those filthy garments off of him." Then to him he said, "See, I am taking your guilt away. I will clothe you in fine robes."<sup>5</sup> I said, "They should put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and gave him fine robes to wear, while the angel of Adonai stood by.*

Patterned after the consecration of a high priest (Exodus 29:1–9; cp. Leviticus 16:3–5), the forgiveness of sin is vividly portrayed by a change of apparel. The *filthy garments* (lit "defiled by excrement") underscore the gruesome guilt of the people, which had resulted in the severity of **God's** judgment. In an unexpected reversal, which could only happen by divine decree, **Joshua** is vindicated and given clean clothes.

*<sup>6</sup> Then the angel of Adonai gave Y'hoshua this warning: <sup>7</sup> "Adonai-Tzva'ot says this: 'If you will walk in my ways, obey my commission, judge my house and guard my courtyards; then I will give you free access among these who are standing here.*

Lest the people become presumptuous on God's gift of forgiveness, *the angel of the Adonai gave* (or "admonished solemnly") **Joshua** that obedience was a prerequisite if he were to enjoy **God's** favor and perform his duties as high priest, including having access to **God's** presence.

*<sup>8</sup> Listen, cohen gadol Y'hoshua, both you and your colleagues seated here before you, because these men are a sign that I am going to bring my servant Tzemach [Sprout]. <sup>9</sup> For look at the stone I have put in front of Y'hoshua: on one stone are seven eyes; I will engrave what is to be written on it,' says Adonai-Tzva'ot; 'and I will remove the guilt of this land in one day. <sup>10</sup> When that time comes,' says Adonai-Tzva'ot, 'you will all invite each other to join you under your vines and fig trees.'<sup>1</sup>*

Not only was the priesthood restored and forgiveness granted, but a descendant of David would become their ruler, as indicated by *my servant Tzemach [Sprout]*, probably a reference to **Zerubbabel** (Hagai 2:23). The same is true for the *stone* of Zechariah 3:9 (see Isaiah 8:14; 8:16). *Seven eyes* probably evoked an image of a foundation stone for a sacred site.

Living in a society filled with uncertainty and chaos, as seen in **Z'kharyah's** time, can lead you to feel disheartened in public settings. When you find yourself in these situations, remember God's assurance in **Z'kharyah's** 2:10 to rejoice because He is coming to dwell among us.

In our next post, we will pick up where we left off by exploring **Z'kharyah** in the previous post.

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<sup>1</sup> Z'kharyah 1:18-3:10