

## Z'kharyah ~ Part 4

**Idolatry** was characteristic of **Isra'el's** disobedience, with memorable acts of idol worship recorded throughout their history (Exodus 32:1–8; 1 Kings 11:1–11). Yet **God** sent the **Isra'eli** into captivity in a land known for pagan deities. The seventh vision, with "**Evil**" being transported in a basket back to **Babylon**, signifies that idolatry belonged there, not in the promised land. But the basket held a woman, which may allude to the **Isra'eli**. Hence, the imagery may also suggest that if the chosen people succumbed again to idolatry, they would be sent back into the captivity they had just escaped (see the same consequences announced for those who had come out of the captivity in Egypt; Deuteronomy 28:68).

### Women in a Basket

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

*<sup>5</sup> Then the angel speaking with me went forward and said to me, "Now raise your eyes, and see what this thing is, passing by."<sup>6</sup> I asked, "What is it?" He said, "This is the eifah-measure [a one-bushel dry-measure] passing by." Then he added, "This is their eye in all the land."<sup>7</sup> Next, I saw a lead disc lifted up to reveal a woman sitting in the eifah. <sup>8</sup> He said, "This is Evil." He threw her down into the eifah and pressed the lead weight over its opening.*

**God's** chosen people are represented by a bride, or else by a prostitute when behaving in an idolatrous fashion (Ezekiel 16:8–19; Hosea 1:2–3; 2:2–13). This is "**Evil**", referring to the woman in a basket, was a shocking image, not intended to demean women but to symbolize anyone who was impure. The **Hebrew** word for "**Evil**" is feminine and may be connected to the **Canaanite** goddess **Asherah**.

*<sup>9</sup> I raised my eyes and saw two women coming with the wind in their wings; for they had wings like those of a stork. They lifted the eifah up between the earth and the sky. <sup>10</sup> I asked the angel speaking with me, "Where are they taking the eifah?" <sup>11</sup> He answered me, "To build it a shrine in the land of Shin'ar. When it's ready, [the eifah] will be set down there on its base."*

**Shin'ar** is an older word for **Babylon** (Genesis 11:1–2). If the chosen people were going to be idolatrous, they might as well do it in style back in **Babylon**, with a shrine in their honor.

In the eighth vision for **Z'kharyah**, there is an assurance that **Four Chariots**.

### Four Chariots

The first and eighth visions functioned as bookends to the intervening visions and conveyed the same message: **God** is sovereign and in control of the whole earth. However, there is a change of outcome between the two visions. While both picture four horses patrolling the earth, when the report came in, the first vision that there was peace on earth, the angel asked a troubling question about the lack of peace in **Yerushalayim**. Visions two through seven address this question. This eighth vision (vv. 1–8) provides the final resolution. **God's Spirit** is pacified.

*<sup>6</sup> <sup>1</sup> Again I raised my eyes, and I saw in front of me four chariots coming out from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of bronze. <sup>2</sup> The first chariot had red horses; the second chariot, black horses; <sup>3</sup> the third chariot, white horses; and the fourth chariot, spotted gray horses.*

The *mountains ... made of bronze* may represent heaven or its gates since the *chariots* seem to originate there (v. 5) may represent heaven or its gates since the **chariots** seem to originate there as four winds.

*<sup>4</sup> I asked the angel speaking with me, "What are these, my Lord?"<sup>5</sup> The angel answered me, "These are the four winds of the sky that go out, after presenting themselves before the Lord of all the land. <sup>6</sup> The one with the black horses is going out toward the land in the north, the white [horses] have gone out after them, and the spotted have gone out toward the land in the south."<sup>7</sup> Then the gray ones went out and were seeking to go and wander throughout the whole earth, when he said, "Wander throughout the whole earth"; and they did wander throughout the whole earth. <sup>8</sup> Then he called out to me and said, "Look! The ones going to the land in the north have given my Spirit rest in the north country."<sup>1</sup>*

The *black horses are going out toward the land in the north*, designating the nations that had destroyed **Isra'el**. The other direction in and out of Palestine was to the south. Thus, the whole earth was patrolled. "*My Spirit at rest*" may be an allusion to the seventh day of creation.

Reflecting on Zechariah 5:5-6:8, you might recognize that conflict within the home often arises from unconfessed sin. If you and your spouse have been holding on to grudges, this week set aside an evening for an open, honest conversation about past grievances. Acknowledge the hurt, but encourage forgiveness rather than blame. Prayerfully seek God's guidance in your discussion, allowing His Spirit to soften hearts. This can be a powerful step towards healing and restoration in your relationship, embodying the grace that God extends to 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 5:5-6-8.