

Haggai, Zechariah

Ep 182: CFM

Haggai

Overview¹

Though not regarded with the great or well-known prophets such as Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah, Haggai was an important prophet who performed valuable service in the Lord's kingdom. Along with Zechariah, he motivated the former Jewish exiles of Babylon to renew and redouble their efforts to start again building the second temple in Jerusalem after a long period of difficulty. His exhortations prepared the way for the Spirit of the Lord to stir the souls of the people (Hag. 1:13-14). Haggai worked to alleviate discouragement and restore faith in Jehovah, which led to the great accomplishment of 515 B.C.: the completion of a new house of the Lord.

After Cyrus conquered Babylon (539 B.C.) and became virtual master of the Near East, he issued a decree allowing the Jewish captives to return to their homeland.² He also encouraged the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem and offered financial assistance (Ezra 1:1-4). By 520 B.C., however, all construction had ceased, little progress on the temple had been made, and all resolve had disappeared because of harassment by the Samaritans, who felt slighted after their offer to help with the building had been refused (Ezra 4:1-5).

Adding to the discouragement of the returning exiles was the desolate condition of the land of Judah and their own material poverty. This, plus the inescapable conclusion that the new temple would be far inferior to the old one, even when only the foundation of the new had been laid, caused many old leaders of the group (priests, Levites, and chiefs of the fathers) to weep as they remembered the comparative splendor of the first house of the Lord (Ezra 3:12; cf. Hag. 2:3). Continuing opposition from the Samaritans and other adversaries brought the morale of the repatriated exiles to a low ebb, and they began to say that the time to rebuild the temple had not yet come (Hag. 1:2). At this point the prophet Haggai entered onto the stage of post-Exilic history.

We know very little about Haggai. He is mentioned only in this short book that bears his name and in Ezra 5:1 and 6:14. His book is to be read in conjunction with Ezra 5 and 6. ***Haggai and Zechariah are the earliest known prophets of the post-Exilic restoration of Judah. It is generally assumed that Haggai***

¹ Much of this overview comes from Andrew Skinner, "The Book of Haggai," [Studies in Scripture, Vol. 4: 1 Kings to Malachi](#), Deseret Book, (ed. Kent Jackson), 2004

² Cyrus also sent an epistle to the governors that were in Syria, the contents whereof here follow: "***I have given leave to as many of the Jews that dwell in my country as please to return to their own country, and to rebuild their city, and to build the temple of God at Jerusalem on the same place where it was before.*** I have also sent my treasurer Mithridates, and Zorobabel, the governor of the Jews, that they may lay the foundations of the temple, and may build it sixty cubits high, and of the same latitude: making three edifices of polished stones, and one of the wood of the country. And the same order extends to the altar whereon they offer sacrifices to God. I require also that the expenses for these things be given out of my revenues. ***Moreover I have also sent the vessels which King Nebuchadnezzar pillaged out of the temple, and have given them to Mithridates the treasurer; and to Zorobabel the governor of the Jews;*** that they may have them carried to Jerusalem, and may restore them to the temple of God... Now the number of those that came out of captivity to Jerusalem, were forty two thousand, four hundred, sixty two." Josephus, [The Antiquities of the Jews, 11.12](#), emphasis added.

was among the main contingent of returning exiles to come out of captivity after Cyrus issued his edict (538 B.C.). If that is the case, he probably witnessed the initial attempts to rebuild the temple and the subsequent hiatus caused by Samaritan and official Persian opposition.³

Some suggest that Haggai was an old man at the time of his preaching, owing to Haggai 2:3, which may indicate that the prophet had seen the splendor of the first temple. Others believe Haggai was a priest, based on Haggai 2:10-14. Such inferences are hazardous. What is known is that Haggai's recorded activity as a prophet was of short duration. All his messages that we know about were delivered over four months in 520 B.C., the second year of the reign of Darius I of Persia.

The Message

In 520 B.C. on the first day of the sixth month (corresponding to our August-September), Haggai presented the word of the Lord to the two leaders of the Jewish community: Zerubbabel, the governor, who was heir to the throne of David, and Joshua (Jeshua), the high priest.⁴ It was blunt: "Go up to the temple mount and finish construction on the house of the Lord!"

Material concerns and discouragement because of opposition were the two considerations with which the Lord dealt through his servant Haggai. **He exhorted the people to consider their ways.**⁵ Progress and prosperity were tied to the temple. Haggai asked if it was right for the people to be concerned with paneling their own houses ("ceiled houses") while the Lord's house remained in ruins (Hag. 1:4). He pointed out that material well-being was indeed elusive, just as it seemed to be, because the temple had been neglected (Hag. 1:6, 9-10). **Even the occurrence of drought and famine was related to the temple.** The Lord said that he had "called for a drought upon the land" (Hag. 1:11). The Hebrew word for "drought" is (חֶרֶב) *horeb*, whereas the word for "waste" or "ruin," the condition of the temple as

³ In contrast to such other prophets as Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and even Zechariah, the parentage of Haggai is nowhere mentioned. Haggai's name in Hebrew חַגִּי means "Festive," and some postulate that it was given to him because he was born on a feast day. The birth of a child on such a day was considered a good omen that deserved to be preserved in a child's name. (A name of this type is Shabbethai [Ezra 10:15], meaning "born on the sabbath.") See the discussion in D. Winton Thomas, "Haggai: Introduction," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, 12 vols., ed. G. A. Buttrick, et al., Abingdon, 1952-57, 6:1037. Meyers gives this commentary: "Haggai - this prophet is the only biblical personage bearing this name, which is derived from *hag* ('feast, holiday'), although several other names formed from this noun can be cited (e.g., Haggi, son of Gad, Gen 46:16; and Haggith, wife of David, 2 Sam 3:4). Haggai himself also appears in Ezra (5:1; 6:14), in addition to the nine places in which he is mentioned in the book bearing his name. Another possible source of the name 'Haggai' is the root *hgg*, which may underlie an Aramaism (*hāggā*, "reeling") of Isa 19:17... The question as to whether the prophet's name was meant to contain symbolic significance is one which cannot be easily answered, but it arises nonetheless because no patronymic or city or region of origin is given for him. In the case of Malachi, for whom there is a similar lack of such information, the name 'Malachi' is suspected by many to be an appellation meaning 'my messenger.' Can 'Haggai' likewise be an appellation, 'festal,' relating somehow to the celebrations attendant upon the temple work which he has been instrumental in effecting? Carol Meyers and Eric Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8, The Yale Bible Commentaries*, Yale University Press, 1987, p. 8.

⁴ For Zerubbabel's genealogy, see "Zerubbabel," Bible Dictionary, LDS Bible. Joshua (the Hebrew form, because the book of Haggai is written in Hebrew) is called Jeshua (Aramaic) in the book of Ezra (much of which is in Aramaic).

⁵ Haggai 1.5, 7. Verse 7 literally reads *עַל-דַּרְכֵיכֶם לְבַבְכֶם שִׁמּוּ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שִׁמּוּ לְבַבְכֶם* "Thus says the Lord of Armies, put to your heart upon your paths," but a better rendering in English is "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, put your heart to how you have been going thus far." Robert Alter renders it "And now, thus said the Lord of Armies, 'pay mind to your ways.'" Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary*, Vol. 2, W.W. Norton & Co., 2018, p. 1351.

described in Haggai 1:9, is (חָרֵב) *hareb*. **The play on words is intentional and inextricably links the temple to Judah's well-being.** As long as the temple lay in ruins, the drought would continue (Hag. 1:10-11).

The Lord's message began to have its desired effect. Once the fear of the Lord (Hag. 1:12) began to replace the fear of men, the Spirit worked powerfully on the people, and "they came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts, their God" (Hag. 1:14). We learn from the book of Ezra that Haggai's preaching was successful (see Ezra 5:1-6:15). Within five years the Jews finished the construction of what is called the second temple, or Zerubbabel's temple.

Haggai delivered another prophetic message on the twenty-first day of the seventh month (corresponding to our September-October). It began by exhorting the people to continue to be strong, faithful, and hardworking on the temple. He recalled the covenant made with the Lord at the time of the Exodus and concluded with a prophecy of a glorious future temple: "I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. . . . The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts" (Hag. 2:7, 9). As beautiful as Solomon's temple had been—with which the humble, new second temple was compared—neither of them would be as glorious as a yet-future temple that would exist in the day when the Lord would "give peace" to his holy city. In that millennial day, the house of the Lord will be filled with glory, because the Lord himself will be there.

Haggai's final recorded messages were delivered on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month (corresponding to our November-December). He taught the people an important lesson about the holiness of the temple. Under Mosaic law, as the people with whom Haggai spoke acknowledged, something unholy cannot be made holy merely by touching something that is holy (Hag. 2:12). But something ritually unclean would spread that uncleanness by simple contact. So it was with the remnant of Judah in Haggai's day. **Mere contact with or construction of the holy temple would not make the nation holy.** In fact, an unholy or unclean people would defile or desecrate sacred ordinances as well as the Lord's sacred house. Sanctity and purity start with individual lives and individual worthiness; holiness works from the inside out, not from the outside in. Haggai exhorted the people to consider their status and their behavior as though it were the time before the temple foundation had ever been laid, as though it were a brand new era, a new day, or a time of planting—a time before the fruit is already set—so that they could make renewed commitments that would bring them the Lord's blessing from that very day onward (Hag. 2:19).

The book ends, significantly, with a prophecy in which the name Zerubbabel is used in a messianic context (Hag. 2:21-23). **Its fulfillment, to be sure, would not be in Zerubbabel himself but in Jesus Christ, who would descend of his lineage more than five hundred years later (see Matt. 1:12) and who will rule as Israel's king in the Millennium.** Ezekiel (37:21-25) had earlier referred to the millennial king by the name of his ancestor David, whom the Jews considered to be the very model of divinely appointed kingship. **Now Haggai referred to the millennial Messiah by the name of another ancestor, Zerubbabel. Just as Zerubbabel presided over the returned exiles of Judah and their restoration to their promised land, so also—but on a much grander scale—will Christ preside over all the restored house of Israel in the Millennium.**

Though it is true that Haggai is classified as one of the Minor Prophets, his messages were of great value to post-Exilic Judah. With his help the temple was built and became the center of religious life for that remnant of Israel whom we call the Jews.

There is no more timely message for our own day than the one delivered by Haggai. Real progress and prosperity are connected with the house of the Lord. But not only do we need to build and attend temples, we need to live holy lives. As Haggai counseled: "Yet now be strong . . . and work" (Hag. 2:4).⁶

Haggai 1: Build the Temple

Darius the king (Hag. 1.1, 1.15)

Darius the Great was the reigning monarch of the Achaemenid Empire from 29 September 522 – October 486 BCE. He was the third king after Cyrus the Great, the man responsible for the establishment of the empire in 559. Cyrus reigned from 559-530. Following his reign, he was succeeded by Cambyses II (530-522 BCE), who was then succeeded by Bardiya (522 BCE), followed by Darius the Great.



The beginning of Haggai deals with the word of the Lord that is associated with the prophet Haggai. In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month: The year is 520 BCE, and the day is the 1st of 'Elul (= 29 August, 520 BCE). This date refers to the first divine message reported in the book. The month is the last before the seventh month-i.e., Tishri-with all its appointed festivals and sacred occasions (see Leviticus 23, esp. vv. 23-36; Numbers 29), the month associated with the building and dedication of the first Temple (see 1 Kings 8). This date may have connoted a sense of a new beginning to the readers. **The second year of Darius, 520, is the one in which he consolidated his control over the empire, after a difficult civil war.**

Darius was a capable leader who established satrapies, or units, under the direction of crown-appointed officials.

By the time Haggai began to prophesy, Darius I had dealt with the unrest and rebellion that had accompanied his accession to the throne. He had begun the enterprise of organizing his vast empire in a way that his predecessors had not (see Introduction). Although Cyrus had been brilliant in his military conquests, he had not really followed up his dramatic successes on the battlefield with a program of civil administration. As conqueror, he could exact tribute and establish certain policies by the sheer force of his martial reputation. But his successors could not sustain that pattern, and Darius at last set about to establish satrapies, or units, under the unified direction of crown-appointed officials. The results may not have been as systematic as our Western standards may expect, but they nonetheless imposed order and control over the vast territories of the Persian Empire. By the second year of his reign, Darius's imperial reorganization was well under way. A hallmark of Darius's policies was the semiautonomy he granted, wherever possible, to provincial units or subunits. Documentation of such a policy, to establish

⁶ Additional insights on Haggai and his times can be found in W. S. LaSor, D. A. Hubbard, and F. W. Bush, *Old Testament Survey*, Eerdmans, 1982, pp. 480-88, 648-49; and John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 3d ed., Westminster, 1981), pp. 360-72. Andrew Skinner gave his opinion in 2004 that "The most detailed and scholarly of recent commentaries available" is C. L. Meyers and E. M. Meyers, *Haggai; Zechariah 1-8*, Anchor Bible 25B, Yale University Press, 1987.

Persian control of Egypt and various other provinces, exists in imperial records or correspondence. For Israel, or Yehud as the political unit was called by the Persians, documentation appears only in biblical sources. ***The apparently magnanimous gesture of Darius in allowing the ancient Judean temple to be rebuilt was in Persian eyes part of the overarching plan to restore local governance in provincial territories.*** The temple in Jerusalem was, like all temples in the ancient world, an administrative institution.⁷

This year is mentioned as the time of the renewed beginning of the building of the Second Temple in Ezra 4.24; according to Ezra 6.15, the house was completed in the sixth year of Darius. The second year of Darius is also associated with divine messages reported in the book of Zechariah. ***The divine message here is not directed to all the people, but to the two leaders, Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah and the high priest, Joshua.*** Thus the book already conveys and legitimates a model of dual leadership. (This was the model of local government of Yehud during the Persian period. It replaced that of the monarchic period that came to an end when the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar abolished the kingdom of Judah, and in turn it was replaced by one in which the high priest became the local ruler by the early Hellenistic period.) The divine message reported here concerns building the Temple. Building temples is the prerogative and obligation of kings. The construction of a major temple had to be approved and supported by the king. The book recognizes that the king at the time was Darius (see Hag. 1.1, 15; 2.10). Still, the text does not relate the construction of the Temple to Darius, or to any Persian king for that matter (contrast Ezra 1.2; 5.13; 6.14 and see the tone of Ezra 6). ***In Haggai, the dual leadership of a high priest and a governor fulfills the expected role of a king.*** The claim in the text that the Lord encouraged them to build the Temple conveys necessary legitimacy to their leadership and their role as temple builders, as well as to the fruit of their work, the Second Temple. Conversely, ***the building of the Temple certainly conferred some kingly imagery on the two leaders.*** Still, the text here unequivocally refers to one as the high priest (see also 1.12, 14; 2.2, 4) and the other as the governor (see also 1.14; 2.2, 21).⁸

Zerubbabel the Governor (Hag. 1.1, 1.12, 1.14)

His name: Zerubbabel זְרֻבְבָל Zerubbabel = "sown in Babylon." Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon is going to render it thus: זרובבל "scattered to Babylon," or זרוע בבל "born at Babylon."

Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, was the appointed governor of the land at this time. In the biblical narrative, we read that Zerubbabel was a governor of Judah, the [Achaemenid Empire's province Yehud Medinata](#) and the grandson of Jeconiah, the penultimate king of Judah.⁹ Zerubbabel led the first group of Jews, numbering 42,360, who returned from the Babylonian captivity in the first year of Cyrus the

⁷ Meyers and Meyers, p. 37

⁸ *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 1245.

⁹ Jeconiah was king of Judah for a short time, from Dec. 9, 598- Mar. 15, 597. He was then taken into Babylon and is mentioned by the author of 2 Kings as a hope for a future Davidic king to one day take the throne (see 2 Kings 25.27-30). The author of the Gospel of Matthew makes sure to tell his readers that Jesus is a descendant of this king and a rightful heir to the throne of David (see Matthew 1.11).

Great, the king of the Achaemenid Empire.¹⁰ The date is generally thought to have been between 538 and 520 BC.¹¹ Zerubbabel also laid the foundation of the Second Temple in Jerusalem soon after.

In all of the accounts in the Hebrew Bible that mention Zerubbabel, he is always associated with the high priest who returned with him, Joshua (Jeshua) son of Jozadak (Jehozadak). Together, these two men led the first wave of Jewish returnees from exile and began to rebuild the Temple.¹² Old Testament theologian John Kessler describes the region of Judah as a small province that contained land extending 25 km from Jerusalem and was independently ruled prior to the Persian rule.¹³

Consider your ways... Judah has wages in a “bag with holes” (Hag. 1.6-10)

Haggai 1:5-8 reads, “Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord.

The Lord is essentially telling these returning Jews that the time has come to build the temple. There is great parallel to modern church history in this regard. Every time the Saints came to a new location, the prophet living at the time would first locate where the temple was to be built. Even in our extreme poverty, the Lord expected the saints to build a house to Him. It is no different with these post-exilic Jews.¹⁴

The Drought Upon the Land (Hag. 1.11)

The land lay waste, as we read in verse 11 of chapter 1: “I called for a **drought upon the land**, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.” The word for **drought** in verse 11 חֹרֵב is *choreb*. The Lord tells us that the state of the temple in verse 9 is **waste** – the word used here is חֲרָב *chareb*. The connection is not to be lost: the idea that as the temple goes, so goes the land. If the people establish His house and live worthy of the Spirit of the Lord, then the land will produce and the drought will cease. At this point a connection to the lives of the students can be established.

¹⁰ See Ezra 2.

¹¹ Janet E. Tollington, *Tradition and Innovation in Haggai and Zechariah 1–8*, Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993, 132. She writes, “The date of his return has prompted much scholarly discussion; but there is insufficient evidence to allow a more exact conclusion than that it was after 538 BCE but no later than 520 BCE. ***The fact that his name is Babylonian in origin suggests that he was born in exile when the Israelite community had settled down to life there.*** This favours a late rather than an early date. Another reference to Zerubbabel in Neh. 12.47 uses just his name but equates his status with that of Nehemiah, the governor appointed by the Persians in the following century.”

¹² See Ezra 2.

¹³ John Kessler (28 February 2006). Michael Floyd; Robert D. Haak (eds.). *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism*. A&C Black. p. 104.

¹⁴ Day, [Haggai – Put the Lord First](#).

If we want the bag that represents our lives to have the holes sewn up, we need to realize what a gift our lives are. The Lord has given us all that we are or ever can be. It is His very power that is “preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move and do according to your own will..” (Mosiah 2:21) By recognizing this, we are able to put the Lord first in our lives and assure that our efforts do not slip through a bag filled with holes. We will find more purpose, meaning, and substance in our lives and accomplish more with the Lord guiding us than if we try to do everything our own way, walking in the light of our own intellect.

President Ezra Taft Benson said: “When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives. Our love of the Lord will govern the claims for our affection, the demands on our time, the interests we pursue, and the order of our priorities.”¹⁵

He also said: “Men and women who turn their lives over to God will discover that He can make a lot more out of their lives than they can. He will deepen their joys, expand their vision, quicken their minds, strengthen their muscles, lift their spirits, multiply their blessings, increase their opportunities, comfort their souls, raise up friends, and pour out peace.”¹⁶

Haggai 2: I will shake the heavens

The Second Temple pales in comparison to the First Israelite Temple (Hag. 2.3). This seems to be in contradiction with Haggai 2.9. See explanation by Meyer and Meyer below.

Haggai invites all the people of the land to come and build the temple (Hag. 2.4).¹⁷

I will shake the heavens, and shake all nations (Hag. 2.6-7).

The glory of the Second Temple will be greater than the First (Hag. 2.9).¹⁸

“If one bear holy flesh in the skirt... and touch bread... shall it be holy? If one touch a dead body... shall it be unclean?” (Hag. 2.12-13).¹⁹

¹⁵ President Ezra Taft Benson, “[The Great Commandment – Love the Lord](#),” *Ensign*, May 1988, p. 4.

¹⁶ President Ezra Taft Benson, “[Jesus Christ, Gifts and Expectations](#),” *Ensign*, Dec. 1988, 4.

¹⁷ Haggai’s invitation must have included both the Zadokites and the visionaries of this time who heeded the message of Second Isaiah. See Paul Hanson, *The Dawn of the Apocalyptic*, p. 246.

¹⁸ The apparent model for the present comparison is Isa 6:2-4. It is the reflected glory, *kâbôd*, of the temple as perceived by the onlookers that can increase and decrease. **Haggai says clearly here that the new temple will end up more glorious than the previous one. This statement would seem to contradict the fact that the first phase of the rebuilt Second Temple dedicated in 515 B.C.E. was of a very modest nature and lacked the resplendent nature of the Solomonic temple.** However, this is an eschatological prophecy, when Jerusalem becomes the capital of more than Yehud, then the nations’ treasures and “riches” will fill the House, making its glory greater than it ever was. Meyers and Meyers, p. 55, emphasis added.

¹⁹ A plainer translation reads, “If a man carries sacrificial flesh in the skirt of his garment and touches with his skirt bread or stew or wine or oil or any food, is it sanctified? And the priests answered and said, ‘No.’” And Haggai said, “If someone unclean from a corpse touches any of these, does it become unclean?” And the priests answered and said, “It becomes unclean.” Haggai 2.12-13, Robert Alter translation. From the reading of these verses, it becomes clear that the “teaching,” *torah*, that the priests are to provide involves issues of religious law. In this case, however, the teaching becomes an analogy for the condition of the people in its relation to God. Just as one who touches a corpse makes the sacrifice unclean, so too are the people of the land if they make sacrifices to God without having built a temple to their God. Robert Alter gives this explanation: “At first, it may seem puzzling that

Seed in the barn... vine... fig tree... olive tree... I will bless (Hag. 2.19). These images of fertility are all tied to the temple and are right in order in the ancient Near East.²⁰

“I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen” (Hag. 2.22). **וְהִפְכֹתִי כֹסֵא מַמְלָכוֹת וְהִשְׁמַדְתִּי חִזְק מַמְלָכוֹת הַגּוֹיִם**²¹

“O Zerubbabel, my servant... I will make thee as a signet:²² for I have chosen thee” (Hag. 2.23).²³

Zechariah

Overview²⁴

*Haggai should proclaim the uncleanness of the people before God when he has just urged them to devote themselves to the rebuilding of the Temple and has reported that God had roused a spirit within them. The answer to the ostensible contradiction may be in the phrase “what they sacrifice there.” Although “there” is left vague, if the people have been sacrificing— and worship without sacrifice would be difficult for ancient Israelites to imagine—**this would have to take place on improvised altars, for there was as yet no temple. Such unauthorized sacrifices would then be the source of impurity.***” Alter, p. 4462, emphasis added.

²⁰ Meyers and Meyers explain: “The agricultural bounty specified in the two preceding rhetorical questions is the material expression of God’s blessing, just as the covenant blessings of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 are enumerated in terms of agrarian as well as human fertility. **The Israelite belief that the temple was the source of agricultural plenty and fertility as a consequence of God’s presence there is to be found in Canaanite mythology (Cross 1973) as well as in Mesopotamian temple texts (Bewer 1919; Lundquist 1983). Such a belief was an integral part of the ancient Near Eastern worldview in which temple ideology played an essential if not determinative role in the organization of society.** In the context of developing a temple typology which identifies common Near Eastern ideologies surrounding temple building, Lundquist reviews Mesopotamian texts that associate the construction of a temple with “abundance and prosperity” (1982:2,6). Fertility is only one of many items associated with temple building that place the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah within the general ideological framework surrounding temple building in Israel and the ancient Near East. Meyers and Meyers, p. 65.

²¹ It is difficult to pin down which kingdom Haggai is referring to here. Meyers and Meyers (p. 67) see this as a possible reference to the Persian dynasty, and Berlin and Brettler (*The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 1247) leave this matter open, stating that this text encourages multiple readings.

²² A signet (*hôtām*) or seal, usually on a ring or otherwise attached to a chain or thong so that it could be worn on one’s person, was an individual’s official signature in the ancient world. In particular, **royal or official acts were authorized through the use of a monarch’s seal** (so 1 Kgs 21:8; cf. Seybold 1971-72:69-78). Archaeological excavations have produced quantities of seals and seal impressions that can be categorized as signets. Some of them are inscribed with artistic motifs, ranging from mythological scenes to geometric designs, divine emblems, assorted animals and plants, and stylized human figures. Others included a person’s name or feature it alone without an accompanying design. These seals with names, particularly in the Persian period, designated high officials. **The use of such a seal was the way of carrying out the authority of the person to whom the seal belonged.** “My signet” in Haggai means Yahweh’s signet, through which his sovereignty will be exercised. Meyer and Meyer, p. 69.

²³ The characterization of the present governor of Judah as a personage who will become a signet of the Lord at some point in the future evokes the royal imagery of Jer. 22.24; Ezekiel 28.12, suggesting that earlier prophetic books were studied in the Persian period, but it is overtly open-ended. Just as a signet represents the power of an earthly king, the signet here may represent the power of the divine King. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 1248. While neither “king” nor “anointed” appears in the text—might Haggai have feared these could be politically dangerous terms?—the strong implication is that Zerubbabel, as a descendant of the line of David now presiding over the rebuilding of the Temple, is the chosen heir to David’s throne. Robert Alter, p. 4463-4464.

²⁴ Much of this overview comes from Richard Draper, “The Book of Zechariah,” *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 4: 1 Kings to Malachi*, Deseret Book, (ed. Kent Jackson), 2004.

Little is known about Zechariah. His grandfather was presumably the Iddo who was the head of a priestly family that came out of Babylon with Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua (called Jeshua in Ezra 3-5) the high priest about 537 B.C. (Ezra 5:1, 6:14; Neh. 12:4, 16). If that is the case, then Zechariah was both priest and prophet. He was called to declare God's word and assist Haggai around 520 B.C. in motivating the Jews to rebuild the temple. The visions recorded in Zechariah 1 through 8 are contemporary with the events described in Haggai 1 and 2 and Ezra 5 and 6, whereas those of Zechariah 9 through 14 perhaps come afterward.

The prophet's name means "Jehovah remembers," a fitting appellation for the one through whom these prophecies came.²⁵ The content of his writings reveals that Jehovah's word is ever before his eyes and that his purposes cannot be frustrated.

The prophecies of Zechariah have been described as the quintessence of prophetic utterance.²⁶ Though that may be a bit of an overstatement, it still accurately portrays the majesty of Zechariah's visions as well as his excellent acquaintance with the writings of the Israelite prophets since the time of Moses.²⁷ Indeed, *the pure Hebrew, free from any taint of Aramaic, echoes the language of his prophetic ancestors and underscores his direct prophetic succession.*²⁸

Yet of all the Minor Prophets, Zechariah is perhaps the most difficult to read. Following in the footsteps of Ezekiel and Daniel, *he couched much of his teaching in apocalyptic style*, thereby hiding his message in dramatic symbols.²⁹ Out of that style has grown one major question that confronts any careful reader of this book: are the images Zechariah used reflections on his own day, or are they types of later events? When he described the activities of the high priest Joshua, was he referring to his contemporary, or to a latter-day counterpart, or to both? ***History would suggest that Zechariah was using objects and people from his own day as types to represent millennial counterparts.***³⁰ But though

²⁵ Sidney B. Sperry, *The Voice of Israel's Prophets*, Deseret Book, 1952, p. 403.

²⁶ D. Guthrie, *The New Bible Commentary*, Eerdmans, 1970, p. 786. The term quintessence was used by ancient philosophers to denote that divine substance latent in all things. Thus, the idea expressed is that of essential nature in its refined and exact form.

²⁷ Some have suggested that there are allusions to, if not exact borrowings from, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Chronicles, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Amos, and Micah. For an analysis, see Guthrie, p. 786.

²⁸ **Nearly all of the Jewish writings after the Babylonian captivity, including those of the later prophets, contain Aramaic words and idioms.** Zechariah carefully avoided these, and in so doing, tied his prophecies closely to the earlier prophetic traditions.

²⁹ The term apocalypse comes from the Greek word meaning "to disclose or uncover." **The term is applied today to a genre of literature that began in Old Testament times and was especially popular among Jews from 200 B.C. to A.D. 100 and among Christians to around A.D. 300.** That which sets this genre apart from other kinds of writing is the use of striking symbols as the major vehicle through which the message is delivered. I (Mike Day) am of the opinion that this type of writing existed before 200 B.C., and that there were traces of these ideas swirling around in the 7th century B.C., for example, in the writings of Nephi. I would even argue that if the unity of Isaiah can be defended (which is currently not the case with most scholars [with the exception of Gileadi](#)), that 8th century apocalyptic writing existed. Then, if we can grant the belief in an ancient Enoch and the tradition associated with his writings, at least as they come to us in the Pearl of Great Price, apocalyptic ideas can be pushed back even further into antiquity, even to the time of this prophet. So while the evidence and the scholarship does not right now square with some of the ideas contained in the texts of the Restoration, I believe that we may one day have to revisit some of our assumptions about apocalyptic writings as more evidence is brought to light.

³⁰ The perspective that this book presents concerning Joshua, Zerubbabel, and the temple seems to be exaggerated (if not wrong) in light of historical developments. ***Within a generation, Malachi proclaimed the***

there are problems with understanding the writing, the broad outline of his message is plain and the breadth of his vision, clear.

The Eight Visions (Zech. 1-6)

Early in 520 B.C. Zechariah received a series of visions all on the same night. The first three focus on Zion and the glory that the Lord intends to bring to her. The next five focus on the work of the Messiah as the Priest-King and the steps he will take to bring about the promised glory. The most important of these steps are the gathering and purging of Israel from sin, the Savior's mediating her cause with God, and finally Christ's presidency over the final confrontation between the forces of good and evil. Satan will be totally overthrown, God's wrath appeased, and his kingdom established on the earth.

The First Vision: The Outriders (Zech. 1:7-17)

In vision, the prophet saw four riders who had been observing conditions on the earth.³¹ They found all at peace. Therefore, Judah had no excuse for not building the temple, a major step in the establishment of Zion. The Lord promised the Jews protection and abundance if they would begin building the temple, and he commanded them to build the city as well. Zechariah proclaimed the promised blessings which would come from doing the Lord's will.

The Second Vision: The End of Gentile Supremacy (Zech. 1:18-21)

The prophet was shown four horns, symbols of powers that had participated in the scattering of Israel. It is probable that the prophet did not have four actual kingdoms in mind. Rather, he was alluding to those forces that did and would prevail against God's people from every quarter.

Along with these, he saw four craftsmen who had the capacity to terrify the great powers because of their ability to destroy them. The figure of craftsmen may suggest that the conquest over the scattering powers would be by peaceful means, growing out of the efforts of God's people to engage in the work of temple building.³²

The Third Vision: The Foreshadowing of the Future City (Zech. 2:1-13)

In the next vision, the prophet saw a young man who set out to measure the dimensions of the holy city. He was stopped for two reasons: first, because the future Zion, here symbolized by the center city of Jerusalem, was to be contained not in one city but many; and second, because her strength would be beyond measurement, it being the glory of God. Before Zion can come, however, Judah must break free from the spiritual bonds of Babylon (see D&C 45:66-70; 115:6; 133:14). Only then will the nations become one with her and Jehovah dwell in her.

temple and the priesthood corrupt; Zerubbabel's royal line was never heard of again until Christ, more than five hundred years later; Joshua's family only briefly held the office of high priest and was out of power by the time of Ezra, only eighty years later. Most importantly, there was no glorious restoration as predicted by the prophet. In light of these things, it is most certain that these contemporary themes were used as types.

³¹ These likely represent angels of God. The number four was often used in apocalyptic literature to represent geographical scope rather than an actual number. The idea that seems to be stressed here is that the angels have charge over the whole earth.

³² Guthrie, p. 790.

“The apple of his eye” (Zech. 2.8)

For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.

The phrase “the apple of his eye” עֵינֵי הַבַּיִת *behvavat aino* can be read “the pupil of his eyes” or “the gate of his eye.”³³ The Hebrew word *bāḇâ* is a [hapax legomenon](#), meaning that this is a word that appears only once in the entire Hebrew Bible.

A possible pun? T.J. Finley suggests that this could have a pun embedded in this message. Finley explains:

In the context the prophet stresses Babylon in a negative way. Those Judeans who remain there are commanded to “flee.” Yahweh plans to judge those nations that have despoiled his people, and Babylon represents a place that will receive his wrath (cf. vi 8). In the light of this stress it seems significant that the Akkadian cognate to Hebrew *bāḇâ* is used in the folk etymology of the name “Babylon” (babili), written KA.DINGIR.RA.KI in logographic script. Here KA means “gate”, so that Babylon was thought to be “the gate of god.” The book of Zechariah contains numerous allusions to the prophecy of Jeremiah, and the present passage clearly echoes many elements of the oracle against Babylon. Notice how Jeremiah emphasizes the arrogance of Babylon (1 31-2) and the necessity escape before judgement reaches her (1 8; li 6). Also she will become plunder for other nations (1 10). **Is it possible, then, to see in Zechariah's "gate of ironie pun that highlights the pride of Babylon? That city dares to call herself the gateway to god, but if she has laid a finger on Judah she should realize she has poked at the pupil of Yahweh's very own eye.** From another point of view, Yahweh gives strong reassurance to the Judeans of his presence with them. The language also alludes to his care for his people in the wilderness (Deut. xxxii 10). The thief or wild animal cannot hurt those who are in such a protected position. None can touch them except through the eye of the guard. **If the play on words be granted, then the oracle makes reference to traditional themes and terminology, but in a unique way the prophet alludes to both the arrogance of Babylon as well as to Yahweh's abiding presence with his people.**³⁴

The Fourth Vision: The Coming of the Priest-King Mediator (Zech. 3:1-10)

Having seen the power and beauty of the future kingdom, Zechariah turned to the means by which it would come to pass. He saw the high priest, Joshua, standing before an angel of the Lord.³⁵ Joshua was cleansed of sin and given the priestly robe and miter with the promise that the Lord would be with him.

³³ A more literal translation of the Hebrew is actually “little man of his eye,” which probably refers to the reflection of oneself that one sees in the eye of another person. In early English translations of the Bible, however, the phrase appears as “apple of his eye.” This probably developed from the Anglo-Saxon word “arpel,” meaning both “apple” and “pupil.” Thus the phrase developed into “apple of one's eye” and retained the meaning of something treasured. [Deseret News, 12.19.1999](#). Accessed 11.1.22.

³⁴ T.J. Finley, “The Apple of His Eye (bābat ‘ênô) in Zechariah II 12, [Vetus Testamentum, Vol. 38, Fasc. 3, July 1988](#), p. 337-338.

³⁵ The name Joshua יְהוֹשֻׁעַ (Jeshua in Aramaic) is based on the Hebrew verb for “save” and means “Jehovah is salvation.” The Greek equivalent Ἰησοῦς is transliterated as “Jesus.” See: [Yeshua](#), accessed 11.1.22.

His ordination became a type of that of a future high priest called the Branch.³⁶ The term was sometimes used in a technical sense by the prophets to designate Christ in his role as the millennial Davidic King (Isa. 4:2-6; Jer. 23:3-6; 33:14-26).³⁷ To the Branch would rightly belong not only the keys of kingship, but also the keys of priesthood, as associated with the temple.³⁸ This description make it clear that the Priest-King referred to is none other than the Savior himself (see Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15-16).³⁹ At the time of this Priest-King, the kingdom of God, symbolized by a stone being watched over with care, would have all iniquity removed from it.⁴⁰

The Fifth Vision: The Lamp-Stand and the Olive Trees (Zech. 4:1-14)

In the next vision, the prophet saw a lamp-stand positioned between two olive trees. The trees supplied the oil, which the lamp burned. It seems likely that the lamp symbolizes Israel, the oil the Holy Spirit, and the light the Savior, which Israel is to hold up to all the world. Though the text seems to be imperfectly preserved and is, therefore, difficult to read, it appears that the imagery of the olive trees was picked up by John in his revelation and interpreted as the two prophets raised up in the last days to prophesy to Judah (see Rev. 11:3-4; D&C 77:15).⁴¹

Just as with Joshua in the previous vision (Zech. 3:5-8), now Zerubbabel, the Davidic ruler, becomes a type of Christ, the true King of Israel (Zech. 4:6-10).

The Sixth and Seventh Visions: The Flying Scroll and the Barrel (Zech. 5:1-11)

These visions are closely related. In the sixth vision, Zechariah saw a flying scroll, which seems to represent the **judgment of the Lord upon those who break his law** (Zech. 5:3). The idea expressed by the vision is that Israel must be purged from sin. Only through judgment upon that house would this be possible (D&C 112:24-26). Next, the prophet saw a barrel⁴² with a heavy, leaden lid. **Inside the barrel was a woman of filthiness.** She was taken away to Shinar, Babylon, the symbolic seat of apostasy. In this way, the prophet illustrated that Judah must and would become rid of the evil of apostasy forevermore.

The Eighth Vision: The Universal Sovereignty of the Lord (Zech. 6:1-15)

In this vision the prophet saw symbolic representations of the servants of the Lord subduing the nations in all corners of the earth (Zech. 6:1-8). Then came the command to crown Joshua in similitude of the future crowning of the Branch, the millennial High Priest, the great temple builder, the Savior who

³⁶ Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH. (Zech. 3.8).

³⁷ Guthrie, p. 791.

³⁸ Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 vols., 2d ed. rev., edited by B. H. Roberts, Deseret Book, 1973, 6:253. See also Isa. 11:10; D&C 113:5-6.

³⁹ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that **I will raise unto David a righteous Branch**, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. **In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely:** and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness. (Jer. 23.5-6. Jer. 33.15-16 is almost identical to this verse).

⁴⁰ The stone reminds us of Dan. 2:34 and D&C 65:2; the seven eyes upon the stone (Israel) suggest the idea that all heaven is concerned and watching over it. The angels shall assist in the work of cleansing her. See Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith, Deseret Book, 1938, p. 159.

⁴¹ Sperry, pp. 414-15; Richard D. Draper, *Opening the Seven Seals: The Visions of John the Revelator*, Deseret Book, 1991, p. 119-21.

⁴² An ephah is a unit of measure, equivalent to one-half bushel or twenty-two liters.

would establish Zion and then come in his glory. With this act, the first series of visions is brought to a dramatic close.

Zechariah's visions use images and individuals from his own time to point to the latter days. They teach us that the earth must be cleansed of all unrighteousness (Zech. 1:18-21; 5:1-11; 6:1-8), that Zion will be established and its temple built (Zech. 1:7-17; 2:1-13), and that Christ will rule as both Priest (symbolized by the high priest, Joshua; Zech. 3:6-8; 6:11-13) and King (symbolized by the Davidic heir, Zerubbabel; Zech. 4:6-8). He shall "rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zech. 6:13).

Mercy, Truth, Justice in Zion (Zech. 7-8)

In response to a question about fasting, the Lord instructed Zechariah to teach the Jews the true principles that underlie a righteous fast: "Execute true judgment [i.e., justice⁴³, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother" (Zech. 7:9). "Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment [justice] of truth and peace in your gates. And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour" (Zech. 8:16-17). The Lord, through earlier prophets, had taught these things clearly to Israel (Zech. 7:7), "but they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear" (Zech. 7:11). Thus they were scattered, and their land was made desolate (Zech. 7:14).

As with many other Old Testament passages, a prophecy of hope follows the discussion of God's punishment against his rebellious children. God would not forsake his people forever. There would be a restoration to the promised land and a reconstruction of the holy city. Its streets would again be filled with old men, old women, and boys and girls (Zech. 8:1-8). God would be in their midst (Zech. 8:3), which would prompt people from other nations to seek them out and worship the Lord among them (Zech. 8:22-23). In that day, said the Lord, "they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness" (Zech. 8:8).

Zechariah lived in a day in which exiled Jews were returning to reestablish their city and their community. But the restoration of Israel that he saw was that of the latter days, and the holy city that he envisioned was that of the Millennium, in which the Lord himself, the "king over all the earth" (Zech. 4:9), "will be the glory in the midst of her" (Zech. 2:5).

The Worldwide Rule of Zion's King (Zech. 9-14)

The visions discussed above were not the last of those seen by Zechariah. The second portion of his book records further details concerning the coming of the Messiah. Looking to a future day, the prophet saw judgment poured out against those who would fight against the Lord's chosen people (Zech. 9:1-8), and he witnessed the coming of Zion's king (Zech. 9:9-17).

Note the Messianic passage in Zechariah 9:9:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

⁴³ The Hebrew word *mispāt*, translated as "judgment" in the KJV, is more accurately rendered "justice."

Many see this as a passage prophetic of Jesus' triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem. Joseph Fielding Smith had this to say about the idea of humility and powerful leaders: "Men are only instruments in the Lord's hands, and the honor and glory for all that his servants accomplish is and should be ascribed unto him forever."⁴⁴

Before that day, however, he saw that Israel must be gathered. Using the symbols of shepherding, he envisioned the summons of scattered Israel (Zech. 10:1-12) and the wail of the shepherds, Israel's leaders, as they realize that they were greatly responsible for her loss (Zech. 11:1-3). Finally would come the purification of Jerusalem (Zech. 12:1-14), the cleansing of her lands of false prophecy (Zech. 13:1-6), and the separation of the wicked from the righteous (Zech. 13:7-9). Zechariah concluded his prophecy with the glorious vision of the coming of the Lord, who will rout his foes and dwell in glory within the holy city (Zech. 14:1-21). "In that day," he wrote, even the bells on the horses and the mundane pots and pans of Jerusalem would be consecrated to the Lord's service (Zech. 14:20-21). And all of God's children will be invited to the millennial feast (Zech. 14:16, 21).

Some Specific Prophecies of the Coming Messiah

In the breadth of his vision, the prophet alluded to events associated with both the first and the second comings of the Messiah. It seems well to conclude this discussion with specific mention of two of the former and one of the latter.

In chapter 9 Zechariah taught of the coming of the great king, not in glory with armies, but meek and humble, riding on a donkey colt, a symbol of royalty but expressing the Lord's essential peaceableness.⁴⁵ This prophecy clearly describes the first coming of the Lord as a man of peace and blessing and foreshadows his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, which many of his followers saw as a fulfillment of this prophecy (see Matt. 21:4-5; John 12:14-16).⁴⁶ But the fulfillment was not complete with that event alone, because the larger context of the passage is millennial (see Zech. 9:10). Like many messianic prophecies in the Old Testament, this one foresees both Christ's first and second comings.

In chapter 11 Zechariah presented the allegory of the good shepherd who tries to save the sheep but because of opposition cannot do it. Finally, he quits in anger, breaks his two staves, and demands his wages. He is paid the sum of thirty pieces of silver. These he throws down before the potter inside the Lord's house, in testimony before Jehovah of his wrongs and rejection. This allegory reflects the rejection of the true shepherd who was sold for thirty pieces of silver and delivered over to false brethren. This betrayer's ransom later bought a potter's field (Matt. 27:7-10).⁴⁷

Looking to the Second Coming, the prophet described the participation of the great King in a battle for the holy city (Zech. 12:1-4; 14:1-5). As nations mount against the covenant people, the Lord himself will intervene. He shall stand upon the Mount of Olives, which shall be split in two. His people shall rush to

⁴⁴ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Improvement Era*, Jun. 1970, 26.

⁴⁵ *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 5 vols., ed. G. A. Buttrick, et al., Abingdon, 1962-76, 1:260.

⁴⁶ Joseph F. McConkie, "Triumphal Entry and a Day of Debate," in Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet, eds., *Studies in Scripture, Volume Five: The Gospels*, Deseret Book, 1986, p. 374-75.

⁴⁷ Richard Draper, "The Book of Zechariah," *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 4: 1 Kings to Malachi*, Deseret Book, (ed. Kent Jackson), 2004.

him in the newly formed valley and there learn his true identity. Amid tears of sorrow and rejoicing, they will acknowledge him as their Lord and King (cf. D&C 45:48-53; 133:20, 35). At that time he will subdue all enemies, and the earth shall rest under his divine power. Little wonder Zechariah rejoiced in the testimony of his King and worked so diligently to bring his people to him.

Apocalyptic Visions of the Great War in and around Jerusalem: Zechariah 12-14

Jerusalem becomes a “cup of trembling” and “a burdensome stone for all people” (Zech. 12.2-3).⁴⁸

In that day will I make **the governors of Judah like an hearth**⁴⁹ of fire (פְּכִיזֹר אֵשׁ) among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem. (Zech. 12.6). This passage could be directly related to the kind of power shown by Nephi and Lehi in Helaman 5: “And it came to pass that Nephi and Lehi were **encircled about as if by fire**, even insomuch that they durst not lay their hands upon them for fear lest they should be burned. Nevertheless, Nephi and Lehi were not burned; and **they were as standing in the midst of fire and were not burned**. And when they saw that they were encircled about with **a pillar of fire**, and that **it burned them not**, their hearts did take courage. For they saw that the Lamanites durst not lay their hands upon them; neither durst they come near unto them, but stood as if they were struck dumb with amazement” ([Helaman 5.23-25](#)).

This reading, if it is correct, could lend itself to a mighty power that God has granted unto the leaders of Jerusalem at this point of the conflict. This lends itself to the idea that God will fight for them, as we read as we proceed through the rest of these chapters (Zechariah 12-14).

The Lord defends the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Zech. 12.8)

The Lord destroys those that seek to come against Jerusalem (Zech. 12.9).

“A great mourning in Jerusalem, as in the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon” (Zech. 12.11).⁵⁰

“In that day there shall **be a fountain opened to the house of David** and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness” (Zech. 13.1). This fountain could be the spring that mythically rises up from the deep under the foundation stone in the temple of Jerusalem, the same spring that will heal the nations as described in Ezekiel 47. I see this image connected to Zech. 14.8.

⁴⁸ The besiegers will imagine that they are about to overwhelm Jerusalem, but instead they themselves will be destroyed. Alter, p. 4515.

⁴⁹ Another translation of this could be: “In that day, I will make the clans of Judah like a flaming brazier (פְּכִיזֹר אֵשׁ) among sticks and like a flaming torch among sheaves. They shall devour all the besieging peoples right and left; and Jerusalem shall continue on its site, in Jerusalem” (The Jewish Study Bible, p. 1263). A [brazier](#) is a container used to burn charcoal or other solid fuel for cooking, heating or cultural rituals. It often takes the form of a metal box or bowl with feet. Its elevation helps circulate air, feeding oxygen to the fire. Braziers have been used since ancient times; the Nimrud brazier dates to at least 824 BC.

⁵⁰ These are two Canaanite gods, here conflated, as they may have been in popular religion. The mourning indicates that Hadad-Rimmon was a dying god, like Tammuz and like the Greek Adonis, whose annual descent into the underworld was marked by rites of grief. Alter, p. 4516. Hadad = a storm god in Canaan and Mesopotamia, Rimmon = a cult image in Syria, also a representation of Baal. In Assyria he is “Ramanu” or “The Thunderer.” See: Karel van der Toorn (ed.), [Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible](#), Eerdmans, 1999.

An edict against certain prophets (Zech 13.3-5). I see this possibly connected to the idea that false prophets are working behind the scenes during this vision that Zechariah is happening. We see this in other places throughout the Old Testament.

“And one shall say unto him, **What are these wounds in thine hands?** Then he shall answer, Those with which **I was wounded** in the house of my friends” (Zech. 13.6).

The Hebrew reads: **וְאָמַר אֵלָיו מַה הַמַּכּוֹת הָאֵלֶּה בֵּין יָדָיו וְאָמַר אֶשֶׁר הִכִּיתִי בְּבֵית מֵאֲהָבָי**

I (Mike Day) translate it thus: And he shall say to him, “**What are these wounds in your hands?**” And he will respond, “Those with which **I was wounded** in the house of **those I love!**”

Smite the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered (Zech. 13.7).⁵¹

The Lord’s people are tried “as gold” and “a third part” make it through the fire (Zech. 13.9).

“All nations” gather to Jerusalem to battle and the city is taken (Zech. 14.1-2).

The Lord’s feet stand on the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14.3-4).⁵²

“Ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains... unto Azal” (Zech. 14.5).⁵³

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that **the light shall not be clear, nor dark: But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night:** but it shall come to pass, that **at evening time it shall be light**” (Zech. 14.6-7).⁵⁴

“And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be” (Zech. 14.8).⁵⁵

⁵¹ Could this be a reference to the multiple scatterings of God’s people? I see this has having multiple fulfillments throughout history.

⁵² And they will commence their work of destruction, and they will succeed so far as to take one half the city, and while they are in the very act of destroying Jerusalem, behold the heavens are rent, and the Son of God with all the heavenly hosts appears, and he descends and rests upon the summit of the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east. And so great will be the power of God that will then be made manifest, that the mountain will divide asunder, half going towards the south, and half towards the north, producing a great valley going east and west, from the walls of Jerusalem eastward.” Orson Pratt, Resurrection of the Saints, *Journal of Discourses*, Volume 18, p. 57.

⁵³ “Unto Azal,” this is a difficult part of this passage. Azal, is an unknown location in the area. Some scholars take the position that the original text read " 'etzel," i.e., "side" and, accordingly, that the text read: "the valley between the hills reached to each side (of the now split Mount of Olives)." *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 1265.

⁵⁴ This can be translated “In that day, there shall be neither sunlight nor cold moonlight, but there shall be a continuous day-only the Lord knows when-of neither day nor night, and there shall be light at eventide.” *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 1266.

⁵⁵ This can be read as the living water that heals the Dead Sea in Ezekiel 47 and as the fountain in Zech. 13.1.