

Zechariah Chapter 5

Verses 1-4: The sixth vision, of the “flying roll” (or scroll), is to show that those who sin openly will not hinder God’s work, because God’s judgment is upon them and they will not escape. For the Israel of the future the vision indicates that at the coming of the Messiah God is going to pour out His judgment on all the world and will remove every sinner from the land.

It calls for God’s righteous judgment of the sinner according to His standard clearly set forth in His Word.

Zechariah 5:1 "Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a flying roll."

"Then I turned, and lift up mine eyes, and looked": The prophet turned himself from looking upon the candlestick and olive branches, having had a full and clear understanding of them, and looked another way, and saw another vision.

"And behold a flying roll, a volume or book flying in the air": It being usual for books, which were written on parchment, to be rolled up in the form of a cylinder; whence they were called rolls or volumes.

In the previous vision, we saw God and His church. In this it seems, there is a somber message to those who are still actively sinning. This is a vision, possibly seen in the heavens. This flying roll was like a scroll. Whatever is written upon it is from heaven and God.

Zechariah 5:2 "And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof [is] twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits."

This flying scroll, unfurled for all to read both sides, exactly the size of the Holy Place in the tabernacle. The scroll represents a divine standard by which man is to be measured.

This scroll was 30 feet long and 15 feet wide. This is the very same dimension of the porch of Solomon's temple. This is the angel speaking to Zechariah.

Rev. 18:5 "For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."

Zechariah 5:3 "Then said he unto me, This [is] the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off [as] on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off [as] on that side according to it."

“Curse”: The scroll, symbolizing the law of God, is a figure for a curse or punishment on all who disobeyed it and for blessing on all who obeyed it (Deut. 27:26; 28:15-68). A similar picture is presented (in Rev. 5:1-9; 10:1-11).

“Every one that stealeth ... every one that sweareth”: Written on both sides, the scroll probably contained the Ten Commandments, not just two. The two singled out, the third and eighth, are most likely representative of all commands of God’s law, for which Israel was guilty of violations (James 2:10).

It has an immediate message to those of Zechariah’s time that God will root out and destroy the sinners who reject His Word. But it also has a future message for Israel and the world prior to Messiah’s kingdom (Ezek. 20:33-38; Matt. 25:31-46).

This is very much like the handwriting on the wall (of Daniel chapter 5). This speaks of the sins being written down in heaven. The curse for stealing was written on one side of the scroll. The curse for swearing was written on the other side. Swearing a lie was a very serious offence in the sight of God. In a court of law today, it is called perjury, and can carry a sentence of imprisonment.

To swear, you violate God's reverence. Stealing was and is, another very serious offence. Stealing violates your neighbor’s rights. These two sins were possibly, very active with the Jews that returned from captivity, and that may be why they are separated out from the other Ten Commandments.

This judgment was not just against those returned from captivity, but everyone everywhere who commits these sins.

Zechariah 5:4 "I will bring it forth, saith the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof."

There is no escape from the judgment of God. His Word will enter the place of sinners and remain there until it has accomplished its purpose (Isa. 55:10-11), which will be particularly true in the kingdom. The promise of the land (in Deut. 30:1-10), will be fulfilled in the future day, as will consuming judgment (Rev. chapters 6 to 19).

The curse will not just automatically go away. They must repent and change their ways, for the curse to be removed. This is very similar to the plague of leprosy that comes into the house. "Leprosy" symbolizes sin.

Verses 5-11: The seventh vision is of the “woman” in the “ephah.” The significance of the vision for the Israel of Zechariah’s day is that wickedness must be removed entirely from the land. This is an impossible task from man’s viewpoint, but from Gods viewpoint it is simply and efficiently accomplished.

So the people should not let any form of wickedness deter them from their task of bringing the temple to completion. For the future Israel, the vision looks toward the seventieth week of

Daniel, when God will remove every system and form of wickedness that manifests itself against Him.

The previous vision dealt with the purging of sinners from the land. This seventh vision of a woman in a basket continues the theme, focusing on the removal of the whole sinful system from Israel, which will happen before the kingdom comes (Ezek. 20:38).

Zechariah 5:5 "Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what [is] this that goeth forth."

"Then the angel that talked with me went forth": From the place where he was, and had been interpreting the vision of the flying roll, unto another more convenient for showing and explaining the following one. And, as it should seem, took the prophet along with him.

"And said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth": Either out of the temple or out of heaven, into some open place, where it might be seen.

This is the seventh vision.

Zechariah 5:6 "And I said, What [is] it? And he said, This [is] an ephah that goeth forth. He said moreover, This [is] their resemblance through all the earth."

"And I said, What is it?" After he had lifted up his eyes and seen it, he desires to know both what it was, and what was the meaning of it.

"And he said, This is an ephah that goeth forth": Which was a measure much in use with the Jews (Exodus 16:36). It is the same with the "bath", and held above seven wine gallons.

It designs the measure of iniquity filling up, either in Judea, particularly in the times of Christ (Matt. 23:32), or in the whole world, and especially in the antichristian states (Rev. 18:5).

"He said moreover, this is their resemblance through all the earth": Or "this is their eye"; what they are looking at, and intent upon, namely, this ephah. That is, to fill up the measure of their iniquity. Or, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it, this ephah, which thou seest, shows that there is an eye upon them which sees their works.

And this is the eye of the Lord, which sees and takes notice of all the evil actions of men, not as approving them, but as observing them, and avenging them.

Zechariah did not understand what he saw. He asks the angel to tell him what it is. An "ephah" is a dry measurement of about 6 or 7 gallons. They have been measured and found wanting. This symbolizes the sin of the world.

Verses 7-8: Inside the basket was sitting a woman, personifying this final wickedness (Revelation 17:3-5), which is not dormant, since the lead cover is required to restrain it in the basket (2 Thess. 2:6-8).

Zechariah 5:7 "And, behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead: and this [is] a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah."

The woman in the ephah is supposed to represent Judea, which shall be visited for its sins. The talent of lead on the ephah, within which the woman was enclosed, the wrath of God, bending down this culprit nation, in the measure of its sins. For the angel said, "This is wickedness;" that is, the woman represents the mass of iniquity of this nation.

The woman sitting in the midst of the ephah represents the sinful church and nation of the Jews, in their latter and corrupt age.

Guilt is upon the sinner as a weight of lead, to sink him to the lowest hell. This seems to mean the condemnation of the Jews, after they filled the measure of their iniquities by crucifying Christ and rejecting his gospel. Zechariah sees the ephah, with the woman thus pressed in it, carried away to some far country.

This intimates that the Jews should be hurried out of their own land, and forced to dwell in far countries, as they had been in Babylon. There the ephah shall be firmly placed, and their sufferings shall continue far longer than in their late captivity.

Blindness is happened unto Israel, and they are settled upon their own unbelief. Let sinners fear to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath; for the more they multiply crimes, the faster the measure fills.

Speaking of the lead here, might indicate the sin was heavy as lead. Lead is a deceiving metal, it is sometimes mistaken for silver. Lead is poison, as well. The woman, in this case, probably, symbolizes the Israelites who are caught up in sin. This woman actually symbolizes all sinners and all sin. It is not speaking of women, but of a woman.

It seems as if there is some kind of container and this talent of lead is the lid. The woman is down in the container. This is speaking of the combined sins of the world.

Zechariah 5:8 "And he said, This [is] wickedness. And he cast it into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof."

“And he cast it into the midst of the Ephah”: As yet then, the measure was not full.

Ribera: "She had the lower part within the Ephah, but the upper, especially the head, without.

Though the Jews had slain the prophets and done many grievous things, the greatest sin of all remained to be done. But when they had crucified Christ and persecuted the Apostles and the

Gospel, the measure was full. She was wholly within the Ephah, no part remained without, so that the measure was filled.

“And he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof”: That is, doubtless of the Ephah. As in Genesis, "a great stone was on the mouth of the well" (Genesis 29:2), so that there should be no access to it.

The woman in this is not a woman at all, but the personification of evil, like mystery Babylon in Revelation. When the sin tried to leave the ephah, it appears there was a seal of lead put on the lid to keep it down.

Zechariah 5:9-10 "Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came out two women, and the wind [was] in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork: and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven." "Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah?"

“Two women ... wind was in their wings”: Since storks are unclean birds (Lev. 11:19; Deut. 14:18), these must be agents of evil. Demonic forces, protective of the wicked secularism, who set up the final system of evil. God allows them to set up the world system that the Lord destroys when He returns (Rev. 19:11-16).

This is a carrying away of this sin. The two women mentioned here, are strong because of the wind under their wings, and because of the comparison to a stork which is very strong. This is most assuredly a departure of sin from Zion and Jerusalem. Women generally symbolize a country or a city, as the two did in the following Scripture.

Ezek. 23:2 "Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of one mother:"

In this case, they symbolized Samaria and Jerusalem. These two women could symbolize the apostate church and mystery Babylon.

“There came out two women”. As the one woman represented the lack of reverence of the Jewish nation; so these two women who were to carry the ephah. In which the woman, iniquity was shut up. Under the weight of a talent of lead, may mean the desperate unbelief of the Jews in rejecting the Messiah.

And that lack of reverence, or universal corruption of manners, which was the consequence of their unbelief, and brought down the wrath of God upon them.

The strong wings, like those of a stork, may point out the power and swiftness with which Judea was carried on to fill up the measure of her iniquity, and to meet the punishment which she deserved.

“Between the earth and the heaven”. Sins against God and Man. Sins which heaven and earth contemplated with horror.

Or the Babylonians and Romans may be intended by the two women who carried the Jewish ephah to its final punishment. The Chaldeans ruined Judea before the advent of our Lord. The Romans, shortly after.

I believe they were carried away to some evil city.

Zechariah 5:11 “And he said unto me, To build it an house in the land of Shinar: and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base.”

The destination of the women bearing the basket was Shinar, an older word designating Babylon (Gen. 10:10). The older word is used possibly to recall the Tower of Babel as a symbol of opposition against God (Gen. 11:2).

There it will be placed in a “temple” and set on a base or pedestal as an idol. Again, the vision is unmistakably looking forward to the final Babylon (of Rev. chapters 17 and 18), at the second coming of Christ (Mal. 4:1-3).

This Shinar was an idolatrous land. Shinar and Babylon are the same area.

Gen. 10:10 "And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar."

This seems to be speaking of carrying this ephah to Babylon, and setting up some place to worship a sensual false god there. The sins of Zion are gone, and gathered in this evil place, where the enemies of God dwell.

This could be a warning for all of God's people to get out of physical Babylon then, and a warning to all believers in Christ to get out of spiritual Babylon now. Christians are supposed to be a separated people. We are in the world, but we must not be of the world. We must walk holy before our God. Babel (Babylon), is a symbol of the evil world.

Zechariah Chapter 5 Questions

1. When Zechariah looked up, what did he see?
2. What kind of message does God have Hezekiah bring in this vision?
3. What was the flying roll like?
4. How big was the roll?
5. What else had these very same dimensions?
6. This is the _____ that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth.

7. What two specific sins were mentioned?
8. In a court of law today, swearing a lie is called _____.
9. To swear a lie, you violate God's _____.
10. Stealing violates your _____ rights.
11. How can they get rid of the curse?
12. This is very similar to the plague of _____.
13. The second time he looked up, in this lesson, what did he see?
14. What is an "ephah"?
15. What does this ephah symbolize?
16. What are some things we know about lead?
17. Who does the woman, in this lesson, symbolize?
18. This woman is not a woman at all, but the _____ of evil.
19. How was the sin kept in the ephah?
20. How do we know the symbolic two women were strong?
21. This is most assuredly a departure of _____ from Jerusalem.
22. Who do the 2 women symbolize?
23. Shinar and _____ are the same.
24. What does this lesson warn all of God's people to do, when they are caught in a sinful place?
25. We are in the world, not _____ the world.
26. Babel (Babylon) is a symbol of what?