

Flying Scroll & Basket

Zechariah 5

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Zech 5:1-4 – Vision of the Flying Scroll

Then I turned and raised my eyes, and saw there a flying scroll.

² *And he said to me, “What do you see?”*

So I answered, “I see a flying scroll. Its length is twenty cubits and its width ten cubits.”

³ *Then he said to me, “This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth: ‘Every thief shall be expelled,’ according to this side of the scroll; and, ‘Every perjurer shall be expelled,’ according to that side of it.”*

⁴ *“I will send out the curse,” says the Lord of hosts;*

“It shall enter the house of the thief

And the house of the one who swears falsely by My name.

It shall remain in the midst of his house

And consume it, with its timber and stones.”

v1-2 – What did Zechariah see in this vision?

A flying scroll: In this vision Zechariah sees a scroll flying through the air, apparently open to read because Zechariah can see how large the scroll is.

- The scroll was approximately 15 by 30 feet. These were the dimensions of the holy place in the tabernacle and of the porch of Solomon's temple.

Is there significance in the size of the scroll being the same as the porch of Solomon's temple?

God's Word and the temple are related... the scroll represents God's revelation to mankind and the temple represents God's presence with mankind.

v3-4 – What did the scroll represent?

Every thief shall be expelled ... Every perjurer shall be expelled: This indicates that the text on the scroll contains the Ten Commandments.

- To steal was to injure your neighbor; to perjure was to dishonor God, because you had sworn in his name.
- These two representative commandments were a synecdoche, a part representing the whole Ten Commandments with also represented the whole of the Law (613 commandments).

What does it say if you break just one of the commandments in the Law?

In God's eyes, you are guilty of breaking the whole Law...

James 2:10 – *whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.*

That is why we are so blessed to have Jesus who fulfilled the requirements of the Law for us...

Matthew 5:17 – *Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.*

How were people saved before Jesus went to the cross?

The same way we are today, by the grace of God through faith in His provision for us. We have the benefit today of knowing the details of God's provision for us. Before the cross, God's faithful knew their salvation would have something to do with the coming of the Messiah but they didn't know what.

How did Jesus simplify the Ten Commandments?

Matthew 22:37-40 – *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.*

The Ten Commandments may all be characterized as either loving God or loving your neighbor.

- The first 4 commandments deal with our vertical relationship with God, the last 6 have to do with our horizontal relationship with others.

Can a person be saved by keeping the Law?

No, that is where the Pharisees got it wrong. The purpose of the Law is to show us our need for a Savior, reveal the mind of God, and thus how we should live.

- The Jews were already redeemed as a nation when God gave them the Law thanks to the Passover Lamb, and passing through the Red Sea.
- The Law was not given to Israel as an instrument of salvation, it was given to them so they would know how to act as God's special redeemed nation.

What is the curse that God will send out?

The two sins, one from each side of the tablets of the Ten Commandments, represent mankind's sin. God will curse the people who commit these sins.

- That is why we need a Savior; we all have this same sin problem.

What is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth?

A time will come when sinners will be expelled from the earth. These two commandments represent God's Law and thus all those who have not appropriated God's provision for our sinfulness.

When will this curse be executed?

At the end of the Tribulation when Jesus returns...

Revelation 19:21 – *And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh*

This directly address the armies gathered to do battle with God at Armageddon but it is clear from the Sheep & Goat Judgment (Matthew 25) that only believers will enter into the Millennial Kingdom.

This purging also applies to Israel during the Tribulation: Zechariah 13:8-9 – *And it shall come to pass in all the land," Says the Lord, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it: I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The Lord is my God.'*

How can God be loving if He allows two-thirds of His people to be killed?

God is loving but He is also holy and sin has serious consequences. God loves us so much that He wanted us to experience the depth of love that is only possible if we are free to choose or reject a relationship with Him.

Why might these two particular sins be highlighted (stealing & taking the Lord's name in vain)?

The timeframe here is a clue... These two sins point to the Tribulation when socialism will institutionalize stealing worldwide and swearing falsely relates to taking the Mark of the Beast (worshipping the Antichrist as god and swearing allegiance to him).

How does this vision encourage Israel to get on with building the temple?

The temple is important because it represents God's presence on earth during the future Millennial Kingdom.

This truth is every bit as important as God's revelation to mankind: His Word.

Zech 5:5-11 – Vision of the Woman in a Basket

⁵ Then the angel who talked with me came out and said to me, "Lift your eyes now, and see what this is that goes forth."

⁶ So I asked, "What is it?" And he said, "It is a basket that is going forth."

He also said, "This is their resemblance throughout the earth: ⁷ Here is a lead disc lifted up, and this is a woman sitting inside the basket"; ⁸ then he said,

"This is Wickedness!" And he thrust her down into the basket, and threw the lead cover over its mouth. ⁹ Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there were two women, coming with the wind in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between earth and heaven.

¹⁰ So I said to the angel who talked with me, "Where are they carrying the basket?"

¹¹ And he said to me, "To build a house for it in the land of Shinar; when it is ready, the basket will be set there on its base."

v5-8 – What did the angel show Zechariah next?

It is a basket that is going forth: The basket and the lead disc measured an ephah, a unit of measurement and thus a symbol of commerce.

This is their resemblance throughout the earth: The NIV translates this, "This is the iniquity of the people throughout the land."

What was declared to be wickedness?

The woman, the basket, and the weight are associated with wickedness. They personify greed, materialism, and dishonesty for profit.

- The Hebrew word for wickedness is feminine so this may be why a woman personifies evil in this vision. But there is even a better reason...

What problem was Zechariah addressing to the former exiles in Babylon?

God's people came back from Babylon with a materialism problem, and this vision speaks to this problem.

Why did the angel thrust her down into the basket, and threw the lead cover over its mouth?

God first demonstrates his authority over evil then removes the wickedness from Jerusalem.

v9-11 – Where is the basket taken?

God will cause this evil, materialistic spirit to be returned to its starting-place: Babylon. There it will eventually be destroyed.

Why is the term Shinar used for Babylon?

It refers to more than just the city of Babylon, it is the land between the Euphrates and Tigris and where religion rebelling against God began, the Tower of Babel.

- The house for the woman representing wickedness is another term for a temple, a religious establishment.
When it is ready, the basket will be set there on its base:
The word for base has the thought of a pedestal for an idol. The storks set the idol of materialism where it belongs.
- The pedestal given to the woman also relates to political power.

What other aspects of the false religion of rebellion against the Creator started in Babel?

Satan is an imitator of God and anticipated the Messiah coming into the world born of a woman...

Genesis 3:15 – *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel*

- The wife of Nimrod, founder of Babel, was Semiramis who became the Akkadian/Assyrian/Sumerian/Babylonian "Queen of Heaven," and her son, Tammuz who was killed by wild beasts and resurrected, became the "divine son of heaven."
- In this false Babylonish system, the "Mother and Child" (Semiramis and Tammuz reborn), became chief objects of worship.
- This worship of "Mother and Child" spread over the world... In Assyria, the mother was Ishtar, and the son was Tammuz. In Phoenicia, the mother was Astarte, and the son was Baal. In Egypt, she was Isis, and her son was Osiris, or Horus. In Greece she was Aphrodite, and her son was Eros. For the Romans, the mother was Venus, and the son was Cupid.

How is this Babylonian mother-child worship manifested in the modern world?

Mary is deified in the Catholic Church as the Queen of Heaven and intercessor between God and mankind.

1 Timothy 2:5 – *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus*

What is with the two women with wings like a stork?

Some regard these women as agents of evil because storks were unclean animals, but here they did do the work of God in sending the wicked woman back to Babylon.

When will the wickedness be removed to Israel only to reside in Babylon?

During the Tribulation Israel will recognize Jesus as their Savior and there will be great wickedness in the government of the Antichrist referred to as Mystery Babylon.

Is this woman in the basket another representation of the Mother of Harlots in Revelation 17?

There certainly are some interesting parallels... Besides a woman representing both...

- Same time-frame
- Sitting is involved: woman rides the beast
- Commercial activity applies (Rev 18)
- False worship is involved
- She is taken to Shinar, another term for Babylon
- Both represent the three-legged stool of End Times Babylon, an economic leg, a political leg, and a religious leg.

What will become of End Times Babylon?

It will be destroyed so completely that no one will ever live that again...

Isaiah 13:20 – *And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It will never be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation; Nor will the Arabian pitch tents there...*

The sudden and complete destruction of End Times Babylon is reinforced in Jeremiah 50-51 & Revelation 18. This prophecy has not been fulfilled in history...

- Herodotus gives Babylon's measurements (450 B.C.)
- Alexander the Great dies in Babylon (323 B.C.)
- Seleucus seizes Babylon (312 B.C.)
- Strabo pronounces Babylon's hanging gardens as one of "seven wonders of the world" (25 B.C.)
- Babylonians present on Pentecost (Acts 2:9)
- Talmud promulgated from Babylon (A.D. 500)
- Haukal mentions Babylonian village (A.D. 917)
- Babylon known as Two Mosques & Hilah (A.D. 1100)

Based on what is revealed here in Zechariah 5, it is beginning to look like Mystery Babylon really will be a city in modern day Iraq... A couple of professors from the Army War College said: "Want Middle East Stability? Move UN to Iraq"

"In order to maintain its fledgling democracy, Iraq needs international commitment, an inducement to stop factional violence, and a stable form of income not subject to the terrorists' reprisals... New York is an expensive city, and representation at the U.N. is currently a costly endeavor... The remaining big spenders should have a positive effect on the Iraqi job market and improve the overall economy of the entire region..."

Cynthia E. Ayers and David W. Cammons, Newsweek, April 9, 2007, posted at:
http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/postglobal/needtoknow/2007/04/want_middle_east_stability_mov.html

Is it discouraging to think that since there currently is no re-built Babylon that the Tribulation and thus the rapture may be far off?

It shouldn't be if you believe the imminent doctrine of the rapture... we are looking for Jesus Christ our *Blessed Hope* (Titus 2:13), not the Antichrist, our blasted curse.

- We don't know how much time there may be between the rapture and Tribulation... some think it could be decades: Josh Peck; beginning of last Jubilee of Age 2025, end of Jubilee & beginning of Millennial Kingdom 2075.
- Note that Jesus first came to pay the penalty for our sins before the beginning of the last Jubilee for the previous Age, AD. 25 with the Age of Grace starting after the temple was destroyed in AD. 70, AD. 75.

What is the significance of the lead cover over the basket in which the woman sits?

The woman is basically trapped inside the basket until God decides to let her out. This represents the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit...

2 Thessalonians 2:6-7 – *And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.*

What causes the Restraint to be removed?

The rapture of the church... the evil-restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit ceases with the removal of the church from the earth. The very presence of believers on earth is holding back the Antichrist coming to power...

Genesis 18:26 – *So the Lord said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes."*

As bad as things are now, it will be much worse when the Restraint is removed. God will not pour out His wrath on the earth until after the Bridegroom comes for His bride.

How does this vision encourage Israel to get on with building the temple?

- God would cause the 3-fold presence of political, economic and religious wickedness to be returned to where it all began and there He would put an end to it as He did before.
- There would be a house/temple for wickedness so God needs a house/temple representing His righteousness.

What applications do we see from our discussion today?

- All salvation has always been by grace through faith, salvation by works is man's religion.
- A time is coming when righteousness will be everywhere on earth, look forward to it
Habakkuk 2:14 – For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, As the waters cover the sea.
- We can see the stage being set for the Tribulation economic/political/religious system of the Antichrist... we're close, so be ready.
- The religion of wicked rebellion against God will return to the land of its origin, don't get caught up in it.