

## Zechariah 2

**Read Zechariah 2:1-5:** Zechariah is now looking into the future. In the millennial age, Jesus will be King of Kings in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is God's city.

*for Your city and Your people are called by Your name (Daniel 9:19)*

The construction of a perimeter wall for protection will not be necessary. A young man was making plans to protect God's people. A city without walls is considered normally to be vulnerable to attack. God will be a wall of fire around his people. Our safety is not in our armaments. It is only in God. Perhaps that is one reason that God allows things to fail us. We need to learn that our hope is in the LORD alone. Abraham was a great example of faith. God allowed him to endure famines and family problems and having his wife abducted by a king. He survived those incidents and was blessed. Don't lose your composure when things fall apart.

*After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. **I am your shield**, your exceedingly great reward." (Genesis 15:1)*

God is described as a fire in scripture. Fires destroy combustible things like chaff (God haters) and wooden idols. There are a few things that are only made more pure and valuable by fire. Symbolically we are compared to silver and gold; since they only become more purified by fire. Bad things get removed from our life through life's trials and tribulations.

*Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything which the LORD your God has forbidden you. <sup>24</sup> For **the LORD your God is a consuming fire**, a jealous God. (Deuteronomy 4:23-24)*

*Therefore understand today that **the LORD your God is He who goes over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you; so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the LORD has said to you.** (Deuteronomy 9:2-3)*

*Behold, the name of the LORD comes from afar, Burning with His anger, And His burden is heavy; His lips are full of indignation, And **His tongue like a devouring fire.** (Isaiah 30:27)*

Knowing that God is a consuming fire is a comfort for our protection. It is also important to understand that in his presence; our flesh would be destroyed. That is why it is important to have a spirit life. Our spirit is the only part that goes to heaven.

Fire harms our enemies; but it helps us. We get upset when our plans seem to be burning. This happens to me almost every day. I had a citrus packing shed burn to the ground; with inventory and materials and much hard work as well. The fire was required to free me from my own plans and self-induced obligation to a *sinking ship*. God may have burned my shed and had the water district take my water away to force me to make a course correction. I was actually relieved to know that it burned down.

We forever are rescuing and salvaging our plans for the day. Perhaps we need to re-think what is actually happening. God does not let Satan just run around and set fires in our camp that are not authorized. Any outsider's malevolent gesture allowed by God; is ultimately to bless us. Perhaps our design for the day is not what the Holy Spirit wants to do. Perhaps there is a better way. How many times does the wheel fall off my little red wagon; to my consternation...only to eventually see that things actually worked out o.k. What about all of the days that I pray for spiritual guidance that end up being crazy and frustrating? My prayers seem to have an opposite effect. In reality God sees what confusion is heading towards me; and is prompting me to pray to get through it.

When we ask the Holy Spirit to take control over our life; we need to expect some fires and some changes in our plans. We also need to expect to be offended. Our largest challenger is our mind and our flesh. Our natural desires need to be continually tweaked. It is easier to ask God to lead you in your thinking every morning; instead of just waiting until your plans are on fire; and calling on God to get you through the situation. We need to understand how the Holy Spirit drives. He may offer a vision for direction; or he may constantly surprise us with left-hand turns and U-turns. I hate U-turns; because I am so invested in progress.

The Bible tells us that we are salted with fire; but not destroyed with fire.

*"For everyone will be seasoned with fire,<sup>[s]</sup> and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. <sup>50</sup> Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another." (Mark 9:49)*

**Read Zechariah 2:6-10:** Zechariah preaches and prophesies to the captives of Babylon. Only 10% of the repatriated Jews agreed to come back home. Isn't it ironic how God originally told the Jews to leave to Babylon before the collapse; and they refused? Then when it came time to return; they mostly refused as well. God wants to dwell in our midst; but he will not share space with our idols. All idolatry had to be removed from the land.

***"You shall have no other gods before Me."** <sup>4</sup> "You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; <sup>5</sup> you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, <sup>6</sup> but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. (Exodus 20:3-6)*

A true prophet is never wrong in his prophecies. He predicts in advance that the Jews will be released at some point. God's people are called *the apple of God's eye*. That means his pupil. When somebody touches or harms us, they are touching the ultra-sensitive pupil of his eye. It is impossible for us to be messed with without God being the first to know. God was very aware of how his people were treated by the Babylonians. God raised up Babylon to drag his wayward people out of his land of idolatry, until they had lost their desire for idols. Once that desire dies; they could come back home. God predicted through Jeremiah in advance that process would take 70 years. They were partially kicked out for idolatry; so God sent them to the world headquarters for idols to get their fill. Idolatry among God's people went all the way back to Jacobs's wives.

*Then the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and cry out to the gods to whom they offer incense, but they will not save them at all in the time of their trouble. <sup>13</sup> For according to the number of your cities were your gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem you have set up altars to that shameful thing, altars to burn incense to Baal. (Jeremiah 11:12-13)*

There is an example of a triple-fulfillment prophecy here. The children of Israel will return home to their home land. This is finally completed in the millennium. The Jews also previously returned from Babylonian captivity via the Medes and Persians under the authority of Cyrus the Great. Currently the Jews are also experiencing an Aliyah (returning to their homeland). Aliyah means to ascend or to have joy. You have to ascend anytime you go to Jerusalem; as it is uphill from all directions. It is symbolic of going up to heaven. Currently the population of

Israel is just under 9 million. The Jews make up 75% of the population. Here is where the re-patriated Jews came from last year:

Russia: 27%

Ukraine 25%

France 13%

US 10%

Asia 5%

Africa 4%

**Read Zechariah 2:11-13:** There will be many nationalities worshipping God in Jerusalem in the millennium.

*“Also the sons of **the foreigner** Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants— Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant— <sup>7</sup> Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.” (Isaiah 56:6-7)*

The Jews had not allowed Gentiles into the temple grounds. The entire Temple compound was considered holy, but it was considered increasingly holy as one entered farther in, from east to west. The Temple of Jerusalem contains 4 different courts; the Court of the Priests, the Court of Israel, the Court of the Women and finally the Court of the Gentiles. The Court of the Gentiles was the most outer Court encompassing the Temple. Despite the whole of the Temple being considered holy, this was the least holy court in the Temple. The Court of the Gentiles was paved with marble, was used for business such as selling sacrificial animals and money exchange and was probably the place from which Christ drove those so engaged ([Matt 21:12](#); [John 2:14-17](#)). This part of the Temple was not considered sacred and was open to Gentiles. The walls gave shade from the hot sun and it was a common gathering place. King Herod had enclosed the outer court with colonnades and it was referred to as the Court of the Gentiles because the "gentiles" (non-Jews) were permitted to enter the Temple area. They could walk within in it but they were forbidden to go any further than the outer court. They were excluded from entering into any of the inner courts, and warning signs in

Greek and Latin were placed there that gave warning that the penalty for such trespass was death. The Romans permitted the Jewish authorities to carry out the death penalty for this offence, even if the offender were a Roman citizen. It was for this alleged crime that Paul was attacked and nearly beaten to death by an angry crowd during his last visit to Jerusalem

*...crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place." (Acts 21:28)*

The worshipers in Jesus' day, like many worshipers in every age, had become **religious consumers seeking to be served, as they were completely obsessed with their own agendas and comfort.** Worship is about sacrifice, and many worshipers simply do not understand that fact. Making matters worse and angering Jesus, all of the religious corruption was occurring in a part of the Temple called "the court of the Gentiles." In Mark 11:17, Jesus says, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.' " As people from other nations wanted to learn about or even begin to worship the God of Israel, they would come to the Temple. Since they were not Jewish, they were not allowed into parts of the Temple nearest to God's presence. Instead, they were allowed access that was further away from God in the court of the Gentiles. There, they could learn God's Word and learn to worship God. It was supposed to be something like an ongoing Billy Graham crusade, welcoming lost people into relationship with God. Instead, that was the place of the greatest corruption, collusion, and cons. Curiously, Jesus goes to the outcasts and marginalized, sees how they are being mistreated, and becomes angry that His people were not carrying forth His values and love for lost people. This same religious spirit can overtake any of God's people if we are not vigilant to guard our hearts against thinking that our convenience and comfort is why our church exists – because it is then that we lose our hearts for lost people and the heart of Jesus.

Another prophecy with multiple-fulfillments is regarding God dwelling with his people. A day is coming when God will dwell with his people. A day has already come when Jesus lived among his people, at his first coming.

*So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: <sup>23</sup> "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." (Matthew 1:22-23)*