

## Book of Zechariah

### Chapter 5:1-11

*<sup>1</sup> Then I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold, there was a flying scroll. <sup>2</sup> And he said to me, "What do you see?" And I answered, "I see a flying scroll; its length is twenty cubits and its width ten cubits."*

The Eight Visions of Zechariah			
Vision	Passage	Description	Meaning
1	1:7-17	Man among the Myrtle Trees	God Promises Prosperity to Israel
2	1:18-21	Four Horns and Four Craftsmen	God Judges the Nations that attacked Israel
3	2:1-13	Man with a Measuring Line	God Rebuilds Jerusalem
4	3:1-10	Cleansing of the High Priest	God Purifies both High Priest and People
5	4:1-14	Golden Lampstand and Two Olive Trees	God Rebuilds the Temple
6	5:1-4	Flying Scroll	God Removes Impaired Sin/dolatry
7	5:5-11	Woman in a Basket	God Removes the System of False Religion
8	6:1-8	Four Chariots	God Brings Peace and Rest to Israel
Appendix	6:9-15	Coronation of the High Priest	Messiah assumes of the office of both King and Priest

**The MacArthur Bible Commentary**  
by John MacArthur

**Constable** > The priests and the kings in Israel were responsible for justice in the nation (cf. Deuteronomy 17:9; 2 Samuel 15:2-3), though neither group could prevent wickedness from proliferating. *The sixth and seventh visions deal with the removal of wickedness. This sixth one deals with the elimination of lawbreakers, and the next one with the removal of wickedness from the land.* What God promised in the preceding two visions\* required the purging predicted in these two visions.

(\*The Lord purifying the High Priest and the People ... and the Lord building the Temple.)

**Feinburg** > Before the blessing of the first five visions will be actualized, there will intervene in the life of the nation a period of moral declension and apostasy. God must and will purge out all iniquity, though He has promised untold glory for the godly in Israel.

**Scroll** > (Baruch Korman) indicates that the word *scroll* (Strong's > roll) comes from a source word meaning *to reveal*. As the scroll is *unrolled* it *reveals* that which is in it. The scroll seen by Zechariah was already unrolled

**Twenty cubits and its width ten cubits** > (Wiersbe) 15-feet x 30-feet

**Korman** > This is the same size as the entrance to the Holy of Holiness ... the location of the Ark of the Covenant ... containing the 10 Commandments.

**Barnes** > It cannot be without meaning, that the dimensions of the roll should be those of the tabernacle , as the last vision was that of the candlestick, after the likeness of the candlestick therein. The explanations of this correspondence do not exclude each other. It may be that "judgment shall begin at the house of God"

**Kliefoth** > The fact that the writing, which brings the curse upon all the sinners of the earth, has the same dimensions as the tabernacle, signifies that the measure will be meted out according to the measure of the holy place ... the measure by which this curse upon sinners will be meted out, will be the measure of the holy place.

<sup>3</sup> *Then he said to me, “This is the curse that is going forth over the face of the whole land; surely everyone who steals will be purged away according to the writing on one side, and everyone who swears will be purged away according to the writing on the other side.*

**This** > (Korman) The Hebrew used here is used two ways in the scriptures. Whenever it stands alone it is used to say something of great significance. In its use here it is referring to the *curse*. A strong, eternal curse. (He indicates this word is used in this manner multiple times in this chapter)

**Curse** > (Strong's) an oath > the Hebrew word is used as follows in the NASB > adjuration (1), curse (12), curses (6), oath (13)

**Boda** > The word translated *curse* here is employed in two ways in the OT.

First, it refers to the oath which was taken when covenants were initiated between two parties. In these contexts, it signifies the consequences which will befall one or both of the parties if they violate the agreement.

Second, the word is used in legal contexts where someone is accused of violating a legal norm to signify the oath taken by the accused when declaring innocence. It was inappropriate to turn a deaf ear to untrue statements made under oath in court.

**Steals ... swears** > (Korman) Two types of sin mentioned here ... one of "action" ... and that of "thought"

**Purged away** > (Barnes) Literally, "cleansed away", as something defiled and defiling, which has to be cleared away as offensive

**According to the writing on one side ... other side** > Let's look at some of the verses found in Exodus 20 and Exodus 32

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## **Exodus 20**

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image."

**"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."**

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy."

"Honour thy father and thy mother."

"Thou shalt not kill."

"Thou shalt not commit adultery."

**"Thou shalt not steal."**

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

"Thou shalt not covet."

## **Exodus 32**

<sup>15</sup> Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets which were **written on both sides\***; **they were written on one side\*\* and the other.**

(\* literally > *their sides*) (\*\* Added word in the NASB)

**Constable** > These two commandments, from the first part of the Decalogue and the second part, which Zechariah's contemporaries were apparently breaking frequently, probably represent by synecdoche the whole Law (cf. James 2:10). Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which the writer uses a part or parts to represent the whole or the whole to represent a part.

<sup>4</sup> *I will make it go forth," declares the LORD of hosts, "and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name; and it will spend the night within that house and consume it with its timber and stones."*

**It** > The Hebrew word is feminine and, therefore, should be translated as *her*. It is referring to the curse spoken of in verse 3 above.

**Spend the night** > (Strong's) to lodge, pass the night, abide

**Korman** > It is root used for the word *hotel* in Hebrew ... therefore *dwelling, but not permanently*

**Consume** > (Strong's) to finish, complete

**Constable** > In spite of the glorious promises of the future just revealed in the previous visions, the Israelites needed to realize that sin would still bring inevitable divine punishment on them. They needed to remain pure so they could avoid the Lord's curses and enjoy His promised blessings (cf. 2 Corinthians 7:1). They were still under the Mosaic Law, including the Decalogue.

<sup>5</sup> *Then the angel who was speaking with me went out and said to me, "Lift up now your eyes and see what this is going forth."* <sup>6</sup> I said, "What is it?" And he said, "This is the ephah going forth." Again he said, "This is their appearance in all the land

**Constable** > The preceding vision described the future removal of individual sinners from the land through divine judgment, and this one pictures the eventual removal of all wickedness from the future "holy land"

**This** > Again (five times in these few verses in the Hebrew) a reference to the Curse

**It** > The Hebrew word is feminine and, therefore, should be translated as *her*. It is referring, again, to the curse.

**Ephah** > (Constable) Either the ephah was oversized, like the flying scroll, or the woman was a miniature in Zechariah's vision. Perhaps God used an ephah in the vision simply because it was a standard container that people used to carry things in, similar to a barrel.

**Measure** > The word translated as *ephah* in verses 6-8 (NASB) is translated as *measure* in the Septuagint.

**Appearance** > (Strong's) eye ... **OR** ... (below)

**Iniquity** > (Steven Cole) A slight extension of a single Hebrew letter (*yodh* changed into *vav*) on the word translated "appearance" changes it to "iniquity," a reading that one Hebrew manuscript and the Greek Septuagint version adopted (and the NIV). Either way, the idea seems to be that the ephah pictures the wicked of the land, filling up the measure of their sins.

<sup>7</sup> *(and behold, a lead cover was lifted up); and this is a woman sitting inside the ephah.* <sup>8</sup> Then he said, "This is Wickedness!" And he threw her down into the middle of the ephah and cast the lead weight on its opening.

**Cover** > (Strong's) a round > a round district, a round loaf, a round weight, a talent (a measure of weight or money)

**Is a woman** > (Barnes) Literally, "one woman," all sin being concentrated and personified in one, as he goes on to speak of her as the, personified, wickedness.

**Wickedness** > (Constable) because the word "wickedness" in Hebrew is feminine it was not uncommon to represent wickedness as a woman

**Weight** > (Strong's) a stone

<sup>9</sup> *Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and there two women were coming out with the wind in their wings; and they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heavens.*

**Benson** > Great difficulties attend the interpretation of this part of the vision, and commentators are much divided upon it

**Stork** > (Constable) Storks are strong, motherly birds that are capable of carrying loads a long distance in flight. They were common in Palestine in the spring months when they migrated to Europe. Storks were unclean birds for the Israelites (Leviticus 11:19; Deuteronomy 14:18), so these stork-like women were appropriate carriers of the contaminated basket.

**Baldwin** > The removal of Wickedness, like the removal of Joshua's filthy garments (Zechariah 3:4), was an act of free grace on the part of the covenant-keeping (*hasid*) God."

<sup>10</sup> *I said to the angel who was speaking with me, "Where are they taking the ephah?" <sup>11</sup> Then he said to me, "To build a temple for her in the land of Shinar; and when it is prepared, she will be set there on her own pedestal."*

**Shinar** > Babylon > Two messages here ... one for the people of Israel at the time of Zechariah ... and a second found in Revelation 17.

**Ellis** > Thus where Judah had been exiled was a fitting place for wickedness to be worshipped, but not in the land where God had placed *his* name. The idolatry of Babylon must once and for all be separated from the worship of the God of Israel.

**C. von Orelli** > The two cleansing acts of this chapter are complementary, like the two goats on the Day of Atonement, Leviticus 16 , of which the first must give its blood as an expiation before the Lord, while the second carries away the guilt of the people, and the impurity springing from it, to the region of the impure desert-demon. The cleansing judgment, despite the terror, is a benefit to the land, which is thus purified and fitted to receive the blessing pictured in the former visions.