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Zechariah

The Lord Wants His People to Return

1 Zechariah son of Berekiah received a message from the Lord. This was in the eighth month of the second year that Darius was king* in Persia. (Zechariah was the son of Berekiah. Berekiah was the son of Iddo the prophet.) This is that message:

²The Lord became very angry at your ancestors. ³So you must tell the people these things. The Lord says, “Come back to me and I will come back to you.” The Lord All-Powerful said these things.

⁴The Lord said, “Don’t be like your ancestors. In the past, the prophets spoke to them. They said, ‘The Lord All-Powerful wants you to change your bad way of living. Stop doing bad things!’ But your ancestors did not listen to me.” The Lord said those things.

⁵God said, “Your ancestors are gone. And those prophets did not live forever. ⁶The prophets were my servants. I used them to tell your ancestors about my laws and teachings. And your ancestors finally learned their lesson. They said, ‘The Lord All-Powerful did the things he said he would do. He punished us for the way we lived and for all the bad things we did.’ So they came back to God.”

The Four Horses

⁷On the 24th day of the eleventh month (Shebat) of the second year that Darius was king* of Persia, Zechariah received another message from the Lord. (This was Zechariah son of Berekiah, son of Iddo, the prophet.) This is the message:

⁸At night, I saw a man riding a red horse. He was standing among some myrtle bushes in the valley. Behind him, there were red, brown, and white horses. ⁹I said, “Sir, what are these horses for?”

Then the angel speaking to me said, “I will show you what these horses are for.”

¹⁰Then the man standing among the myrtle bushes said, “The Lord sent these horses to go here and there on earth.”

¹¹Then the horses spoke to the Lord’s angel standing among the myrtle bushes. They said, “We have walked here and there on the earth, and everything is calm and quiet.”

¹²Then the Lord’s angel said, “Lord, how long before you comfort Jerusalem and the cities of Judah? You have shown your anger at these cities for 70 years now.”

¹³Then the Lord answered the angel that was talking with me. The Lord spoke good, comforting words. ¹⁴Then the angel told me to tell the people these things:

The Lord All-Powerful says:

“I have a strong love for Jerusalem and Zion.*

¹⁵ And I am very angry at the nations that feel so safe.

I was a little angry,
and I used those nations
to punish my people.

But those nations caused too
much damage.”

¹⁶ So the Lord says,
“I will come back to Jerusalem
and comfort her.”

second year that Darius was king About 520 B.C.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

The Lord All-Powerful says,
 “Jerusalem will be built again.
 And my house will be built there.”

- 17 The angel also said,
 “The Lord All-Powerful says,
 ‘My towns will be rich again.
 I will comfort Zion.
 I will again choose Jerusalem
 to be my special city.’”

The Four Horns and Four Workers

18 Then I looked up and I saw four horns.
 19 Then I asked the angel that was talking with me, “What do these horns mean?”

He said, “These are the horns (*Powerful nations*) that forced the people of Israel, Judah, and Jerusalem to go to foreign countries.”

20 The Lord showed me four workers. 21 I asked him, “What are these four workers coming to do?”

He said, “The horns represent the nations that attacked the people of Judah and forced them to go to foreign countries. The horns ‘threw’ the people of Judah to the foreign countries. Those horns didn’t show mercy to anyone. But these four workers have come to frighten the horns and throw them away!”

Measuring Jerusalem

2 Then I looked up, and I saw a man holding a rope for measuring things. 2 I asked him, “Where are you going?”

He said to me, “I am going to measure Jerusalem, to see how wide and how long it is.”

3 Then the angel that was speaking to me left. And another angel went out to talk to him. 4 He said to him, “Run and tell that young man that [Jerusalem will be too big to measure]. Tell him these things:

- ‘Jerusalem will be a city without walls.
 Why? Because there will be too many
 people and animals living there.’
 5 The Lord says,
 ‘I will be a wall of fire around her,
 protecting her.
 And to bring glory to that city,
 I will live there.’”

God Calls His People Home

- The Lord says,
 6 “Hurry! Leave the land in the North
 in a hurry!
 Yes, it is true that I scattered your people
 in every direction.
 7 You people from Zion now live in
 Babylon.
 Escape! Run away from that city!”
 The Lord All-Powerful said [these things].
 He sent me to the nations
 that stole things from you.
 He sent me to bring [you] honor!
 8 Why? Because hurting you
 is like hurting the pupil of God’s eye.
 9 [The people of Babylon took my people
 and made them slaves.]
 But I will beat them, and they will become
 the slaves of my people.
 And then you will know
 that the Lord All-Powerful sent me.”
 10 The Lord says,
 “Zion, be happy!
 Why? Because I am coming.
 And I will live in your city.
 11 At that time, people from many nations
 will come to me.
 They will become my people.
 And I will live in your city.”
 And then you will know
 that the Lord All-Powerful sent me.
 12 The Lord will again choose Jerusalem
 to be his special city.
 Judah will be his share of the holy land.
 13 Everyone, be quiet!
 The Lord is coming out of his holy house.

The High Priest

3 The angel showed me Joshua the High Priest. Joshua was standing in front of the angel of the Lord and Satan was standing by Joshua’s right side. Satan was there to accuse Joshua of doing bad things. 2 Then [the angel of] the Lord said, “The Lord rebukes you and he will continue to criticize you! The Lord has chosen Jerusalem to be his special city. He saved that city—it was like a burning stick pulled from the fire.”

³Joshua was standing in front of the angel. And Joshua was wearing a dirty robe. ⁴Then the angel said to the other angels standing near him, “Take those dirty clothes off of Joshua.” Then the angel spoke to Joshua. He said, “Now, I have taken away your guilt, and I am giving you a new change of clothes.”

⁵Then I said, “Put a clean turban* on his head.” So they put the clean turban on him. They also put clean clothes on him while the Lord’s angel stood there. ⁶Then the Lord’s angel said these things to Joshua:

- ⁷ The Lord All-Powerful said these things.
 “Live the way I tell you,
 and do all the things I say.
 And you will be in charge of my temple.
 You will take care of its courtyard.
 You will be free to go
 anywhere in my temple
 just like these angels standing here.
⁸ Listen to me High Priest Joshua and
 your fellow priests seated before you.
 These men are examples
 that show what will happen
 when I bring my special servant.
 He is called, THE BRANCH.
⁹ Look, I put a special stone
 in front of Joshua.
 There are seven sides* on that stone.
 I will carve a special message on
 on that special stone.
 That will show that in one day,
 I will remove the guilt from this land.”
¹⁰ The Lord All-Powerful says,
 “At that time, people will sit and talk
 with their friends and neighbors.
 They will invite each other to come sit
 under the fig trees and grape vines.”

The Lampstand and the Two Olive Trees

4 Then the angel that was talking to me came to me and woke me up. I was like a person waking up from sleep. ²Then the angel asked me, “What do you see?”

turban(s) A head covering made by wrapping a long piece of cloth around the head or around a cap worn on the head.

sides Literally, “eyes.”

I said, “I see a solid gold lampstand. There are seven lamps* on the lampstand. And there is a bowl on top of the lampstand. There are seven tubes coming from the bowl. One tube goes to each lamp. [The tubes bring the oil in the bowl to each of the lamps.] ³There are two olive trees by the bowl, one on the right side and one on the left side. [These trees produce the oil for the lamps.]” ⁴Then I asked the angel that was speaking with me, “Sir, what do these things mean?”

⁵The angel speaking with me said, “Don’t you know what these things are?”

“No sir,” I said.

⁶He said, “This is the message from the Lord to Zerubbabel: ‘Your help will not come from your strength and power. No, your help will come from my Spirit.’ The Lord All-Powerful said those things! ⁷That tall mountain will be like a flat place for Zerubbabel. He will build the temple, and when the most important stone is put in place, the people will shout, ‘Beautiful! Beautiful!’”

⁸The Lord’s message to me also said, ⁹“Zerubbabel will lay the foundations for my temple. And Zerubbabel will finish building the temple. Then you will know that the Lord All-Powerful sent me to you people. ¹⁰People will not be ashamed of the small beginnings, and they will be very happy when they see Zerubbabel with the plumbline,* measuring and checking the finished building. Now, the seven sides* of the stone you saw represent the eyes of the Lord looking in every direction. They see everything on earth.”

¹¹Then I (*Zechariah*) said to him, “I saw one olive tree on the right side of the lampstand and one on the left side. What do those two olive trees mean?” ¹²I also said to him, “I saw two olive branches by the gold tubes with gold colored oil flowing from them. What do these things mean?”

lamps These lamps made light by burning olive oil.

plumbline A string with a weight on one end. Workers used plumbines to make sure the walls they were building were straight. The workers often put paint on the string and popped the string. This left a straight line of paint on the wall. Then the workers chipped away the crooked part of the wall.

sides This is a word play. The Hebrew word also means, “eyes”.

¹³Then the angel said to me, “Don’t you know what these things mean?”

I said, “No, sir.”

¹⁴So he said, “They represent the two men chosen* to serve the Lord of the whole world.”

The Flying Scroll

5 I looked up again, and I saw a flying scroll.* ²The angel asked me, “What do you see?”

I said, “I see a flying scroll. The scroll is 30 feet* long and 15 feet* wide.”

³Then the angel told me, “There is a curse written on that scroll. On one side of the scroll, there is a curse about people that steal. On the other side of the scroll is a curse about people that lie when they make promises. ⁴The Lord All-Powerful says: I will send that scroll to the houses of thieves and to houses of people that lie when they use my name to make promises. That scroll will stay there and destroy those houses. Even the stones and wooden posts will be destroyed.”

The Woman and the Bucket

⁵The angel that was talking to me went outside. He said, “Look! What do you see coming?”

⁶I said, “I don’t know—what is it?”

He said, “That is a measuring bucket.” He also said, “That bucket is for measuring the sins* of the people in this country.”

⁷A lid made of lead was lifted off the bucket, and there was a woman in the bucket. ⁸The angel said, “The woman represents evil.” Then the angel pushed the woman down into the bucket and put the lead lid on it. ⁹Then I looked up and saw two women with wings like a stork. They flew out, and with the wind in their wings, they picked up the bucket. They flew through the air carrying the bucket. ¹⁰Then I

men that were chosen Literally, “sons of extra pure olive oil.”

Often a special oil was poured over new kings, priests, and prophets. This showed that these people were chosen by God.

scroll A long roll of leather or papyrus (*paper*) used for writing books, letters, and legal documents.

30 feet Literally, “20 cubits.”

15 feet Literally, “10 cubits.”

sins Hebrew has “their eye,” but with a minor change of one character, “their guilt.”

asked the angel that was speaking with me, “Where are they carrying the bucket?”

¹¹The angel told me, “They are going to build a house for it in Shinar.* After they build that house, they will put the bucket there.”

The Four Chariots

6 Then I turned around. I looked up and saw four chariots* going between four bronze mountains. ²Red horses were pulling the first chariot. Black horses were pulling the second chariot. ³White horses were pulling the third chariot. And horses with red spots were pulling the fourth chariot. ⁴I asked the angel that was talking with me, “Sir, what does this mean?”

⁵The angel said, “These are the four winds.* They have just come from the Master of the whole world. ⁶The black horses will go north, [the red horses will go east,] the white horses will go west, and the horses with red spots will go south.”

⁷The red spotted horses were anxious to go look at their part of the earth, so the angel told them, “Go walk through the earth.” So they went walking through their part of the earth.

⁸Then [the Lord] yelled at me. He said, “Look, those horses that were going north finished their job [in Babylon]. They have calmed my spirit—I am not angry now!”

Joshua the Priest Gets a Crown

⁹Then I received another message from the Lord. He said, ¹⁰“Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah have come from the captives* in Babylon. Get silver and gold from those men and then go to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah. ¹¹Use that silver and gold to make a crown. Put that crown on Joshua’s head. (Joshua was the high priest. He was the son of Jehozadak.) Then tell Joshua these things:

Shinar The flat land that the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:2) and the city of Babylon were built on.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

four winds Or, “four spirits.” Four winds often means “winds that blow from every direction: north, south, east, and west.”

captives People taken away like prisoners. Here this means the Jewish people that were taken to Babylon.

- 12 The Lord All-Powerful says these things:
 ‘There is a man called THE BRANCH.
 He will grow strong,
 and he will build the Lord’s temple.
 13 He will build the Lord’s temple,
 and he will receive the honor.
 He will sit on his throne
 and be the ruler.
 And a priest will stand by his throne.
 These two men will work together in peace.

14“They will put the crown in the temple. This will be a reminder for Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Zephaniah’s son, Josiah. It will help them remember that the king’s power comes from God. 15People living far away will come and build the temple. Then you will know for sure that the Lord sent me to you people. All these things will happen if you do what the Lord says.”

The Lord Wants Kindness and Mercy

7 Zechariah received a message from the Lord in the fourth year that Darius was the king* of Persia. This was on the fourth day of the ninth month (Kislev). ²The people of Bethel sent Sharezer, Regem-Melech, and his men to ask the Lord a question. ³They went to the prophets and to the priests at the temple of the Lord All-Powerful. Those men asked them this question: “For many years we have shown our sadness for the destruction of the temple. In the fifth month of each year we have had a special time of crying and fasting. Should we continue to do this?”

⁴I received this message from the Lord All-Powerful: ⁵“Tell the priests and the other people in this country these things: For seventy years you fasted and showed your sadness in the fifth month and in the seventh month. But was that fasting really for me? No! ⁶And when you ate and drank, was that for me? No! It was for your own good. ⁷God used the earlier prophets to say these same things long ago. He said these things while Jerusalem was still a prosperous city filled with people. God said these things while there were still people living in the towns around

Jerusalem, and in the Negev, and in the western foothills.”

- 8 This is the Lord’s message to Zechariah:
 9 The Lord All-Powerful said these things.
 “You must do what is right and fair.
 You must be kind and merciful to
 each other.
 10 Don’t hurt widows and orphans,*
 strangers, or poor people.
 Don’t even think of doing bad things
 to each other!”
 11 But those people refused to listen.
 They refused to do what he wanted.
 They closed their ears so they
 could not hear what God said.
 12 They were very stubborn.
 They would not obey the law.
 The Lord All-Powerful used his Spirit
 and sent messages to his people
 through the prophets.
 But the people would not listen.
 So the Lord All-Powerful
 became very angry.
 13 So the Lord All-Powerful said,
 “I called to them,
 and they did not answer.
 So now, if they call to me,
 I will not answer.
 14 I will bring the other nations against them
 like a storm.
 They didn’t know those nations,
 but the country will be destroyed
 after those nations pass through.
 This pleasant country will be destroyed.”

The Lord Promises to Bless Jerusalem

8 This is a message from the Lord All-Powerful. ²The Lord All-Powerful says, “I truly love [Mount] Zion. I love her so much that I became angry when she was not faithful to me.” ³The Lord says, “I have come back to Zion. I am living in Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be called FAITHFUL CITY. The Lord All-Powerful’s mountain will be called HOLY MOUNTAIN.”

widows and orphans Widows are women whose husbands have died, and orphans are children whose parents have died. Often these people have no one to care for them.

⁴The Lord All-Powerful says, “Old men and women will again be seen in the public places in Jerusalem. People will live so long that they will need their walking sticks. ⁵And the city will be filled with children playing in the streets. ⁶The survivors* will think it is wonderful. And I will think it is wonderful too!”

⁷The Lord All-Powerful says, “Look, I am rescuing my people from countries in the east and west. ⁸I will bring them back here, and they will live in Jerusalem. They will be my people, and I will be their good and faithful God.”

⁹The Lord All-Powerful says, “Be strong! You people are hearing the same message today that the prophets gave when the Lord All-Powerful first laid the foundations to build his temple again. ¹⁰Before that time, men didn’t have the money to hire workers or to rent animals. And it was not safe for people to come and go. There was no relief from all the troubles. I had turned every man against his neighbor. ¹¹But it is not like that now. It will not be like that for the survivors.*” The Lord All-Powerful said these things.

¹²“These people will plant in peace. Their grapevines will produce grapes. The land will give good crops, and the skies will give rain. I will give all these things to these, my people. ¹³People began using the names Israel and Judah in their curses. But I will save Israel and Judah, and their names will become a blessing. So don’t be afraid. Be strong!”

¹⁴The Lord All-Powerful says, “Your ancestors made me angry. So I decided to destroy them. I decided not to change my mind.” The Lord All-Powerful said these things. ¹⁵“But now I have changed _lmy mind_j. And in the same way, I have decided to be good to Jerusalem and to the people of Judah. So don’t be afraid! ¹⁶But you must do these things: Tell the truth to your neighbors. When you make decisions in your cities, do the things that are true and right and that bring peace. ¹⁷Don’t make secret plans to hurt your neighbors! Don’t make false promises! You must not enjoy doing those things. Why? Because I hate those things!” The Lord said these things.

survivors Jewish people that escaped the destruction of Judah and Israel by its enemy armies.

¹⁸I received this message from the Lord All-Powerful. ¹⁹The Lord All-Powerful says, “You have special days of sadness and fasting in the fourth month, the fifth month, the seventh month, and the tenth month.* Those days of sadness must be changed into days of happiness. Those will be good and happy holidays. And you must love truth and peace!”

²⁰ The Lord All-Powerful says,
“In the future, people from many cities
will come to Jerusalem.

²¹ People from different cities
will greet each other.
Some of them will say,
‘We are going to worship
the Lord All-Powerful.’
_lAnd the other person will say_j,
‘I would like to go with you!’”

²²Many people and many powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to find the Lord All-Powerful and to worship him. ²³The Lord All-Powerful says, “At that time, many foreigners speaking different languages will come to a Jewish person, take hold of the hem of his robe and ask, ‘We heard that God is with you. Can we come with you to worship him?’”

Judgment Against Other Nations

9 A message from God. This is the Lord’s message against Hadrach’s country and his capital city, Damascus. “The family groups of Israel are not the only people that know about God. Everyone looks to him for help.* ²_lAnd this message is against_j Hamath which borders Hadrach’s country. _lAnd this message is against_j Tyre and Sidon, even though those people have been so wise and skillful. ³Tyre is built like a fort. The people there have collected so much silver that it is like dust, and gold is as common as clay. ⁴But the Lord our Master will take it all. He will destroy her powerful navy and that city will be destroyed by fire!

days of sadness and fasting ... month These were days when the people remembered the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. See 2 Kings 25:1–25 and Jer. 41:1–17; 52:1–12.

This ... help This verse is very hard to understand in the Hebrew.

⁵“The people in Ashkelon will see those things and they will be afraid. The people of Gaza will shake with fear. And the people of Ekron will lose all hope when they see those things happen. There will be no king left in Gaza. No person will live in Ashkelon any more. ⁶The people in Ashdod will not even know who their real fathers are. I will completely destroy the proud Philistine people. ⁷They will no longer eat meat with the blood still in it or any other forbidden food. Any Philistine left living will become a part of my people—they will be just one more family group in Judah. The people of Ekron will become a part of my people, just like the Jebusite people did. I will protect my country. ⁸I will not let enemy armies pass through it. I will not let them hurt my people any more. With my own eyes I saw how much my people suffered [in the past].”

The Future King

- ⁹ City of Zion, rejoice!
 People of Jerusalem, shout with joy!
 Look, your king is coming to you!
 He is the good king that won the victory.
 But he is humble.
 He is riding on a donkey,
 on a young donkey
 born from a work animal.
- ¹⁰ The king says,
 “I destroyed the chariots in Ephraim
 and the horse soldiers in Jerusalem.
 I destroyed the bows used in war.”

[That king] will bring news of peace
 to the nations.
 He will rule from sea to sea,
 from the [Euphrates] River
 to all the faraway places on earth.

The Lord Will Save His People

- ¹¹ Jerusalem, we used blood
 to seal your Agreement.
 So I am setting your people free
 from that empty hole in the ground.*

empty hole in the ground People stored water in large holes in the ground. People sometimes used those holes as prisons.

- ¹² Prisoners, go home!
 Now you have something to hope for.
 I am telling you now,
 I am coming back to you!
- ¹³ Judah, I will use you like a bow.
 Ephraim I will use you like arrows.
 Israel, I will use you like a sword
 to fight against the people of Greece.
- ¹⁴ The Lord will appear to them,
 and he will shoot his arrows
 like lightning.
 The Lord my Master will blow the trumpet,
 and the army will rush forward
 like a desert dust storm.
- ¹⁵ The Lord All-Powerful will protect them.
 The soldiers will use rocks and slings*
 to defeat the enemy.
 They will spill the blood of their enemies.
 It will flow like wine.
 It will be like the blood that is thrown
 on the corners of the altar!
- ¹⁶ At that time, the Lord their God
 will save his people
 like a shepherd saves his sheep.
 They will be very precious to him.
 They will be like sparkling jewels
 on his land.
- ¹⁷ Everything will be good and beautiful!
 There will be a wonderful crop,
 but it will not be just the food
 and wine.
 It will be all the young men and women!

The Lord's Promises

10 Pray to the Lord for rain in the springtime. The Lord will send the lightning and the rain will fall. And God will make the plants grow in each person's field.

²People use their little statues and magic to learn the things that will happen in the future—but that is all useless. Those people see visions and tell about their dreams, but it is nothing but worthless lies. So the people are like sheep wandering here and there crying for help—but there is no shepherd to lead them.

³The Lord says, “I am very angry at the shepherds (*leaders*). I made those leaders

sling(s) A strip of leather for throwing rocks.

responsible for what happens to my sheep (*people*).” (The people of Judah are God’s flock. And the Lord All-Powerful really does take care of his flock. He cares for them like a soldier cares for his beautiful war horse.)

⁴“The cornerstone, the tent peg, the war bow, and the advancing soldiers will all come [from Judah] together. ⁵[They will defeat their enemy]—it will be like soldiers marching through mud in the streets. They will fight, and since the Lord is with them, they will defeat even the enemy soldiers riding horses. ⁶I will make Judah’s family strong. I will help Joseph’s family win the war. I will bring them back safe and sound. I will comfort them. It will be like I never left them. I am the Lord their God, and I will help them. ⁷The people of Ephraim* will be as happy as soldiers that have too much to drink. Their children will be rejoicing and they, too, will be happy. They will all have a happy time together with the Lord.

⁸“I will whistle for them and call them all together. I really will save them. There will be many, many people. ⁹Yes, I have been scattering my people throughout the nations. But in those faraway places they will remember me. They and their children will survive. And they will come back. ¹⁰I will bring them back from Egypt and Assyria. I will bring them to the area of Gilead. And since there will not be enough room, I will also let them live in nearby Lebanon.” (¹¹[It will be like it was before, when God brought them out of Egypt.] He hit the sea waves, [the sea split,] and the people walked across that sea of troubles. The Lord will make the river streams become dry. He will destroy Assyria’s pride and Egypt’s power.) ¹²The Lord will make his people strong. And they will live for him and his name. The Lord said these things.

God Will Punish the Other Nations

11 Lebanon, open your gates so the fire
will come and burn your cedar trees.*
² The cypress trees will cry
because the cedar trees have fallen.

Ephraim Another name for the northern kingdom of Israel.

cedar trees In this poem, the trees, bushes, and animals are symbols for the leaders of the countries around Judah.

Those powerful trees will be taken away.
Oak trees in Bashan will cry
for the forest that was cut down.

³ Listen to the crying shepherds.
Their powerful leaders were taken away.
Listen to the roaring of the young lions.
Their thick bushes near the Jordan River
have all been taken away.

⁴The Lord my God says, “Care for the sheep that have been raised to be killed. ⁵[Their leaders are like owners and businessmen.] Owners kill their sheep and are not punished. Businessmen sell the sheep and say, ‘Praise the Lord, I am rich!’ The shepherds don’t feel sorry for their sheep. ⁶And I don’t feel sorry for the people living in this country.” The Lord said these things, “Look, I will let everyone be abused by his neighbor and king. I will let them destroy their country—I will not stop them!”

⁷So I took care of the sheep that had been raised to be killed—those poor sheep. I found two sticks. I called one stick Favor, and I called the other stick Union. Then I began caring for the sheep. ⁸I fired the three shepherds all in one month. I became angry at the sheep, and they began to hate me. ⁹Then I said, “I quit! I will not take care of you! I will let those that want to die, die. I will let those that want to be destroyed, be destroyed. And those that are left will destroy each other.” ¹⁰Then I took the stick named Favor, and I broke it. I did this to show that God’s Agreement* with his people was broken. ¹¹So that day, the Agreement was finished. And those poor sheep watching me knew that this message was from the Lord.

¹²Then I said, “If you want to pay me, then pay me. If not, then don’t!” So they paid me 30 pieces of silver. ¹³Then the Lord told me, “So that’s how much they think I’m worth. Throw that large amount of money* into the temple treasury.” So I took the 30 pieces of silver and threw them into the treasury at the Lord’s

Agreement Literally, “Proof.” The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

large amount of money The Lord was making fun. This was only the amount of money a person paid for a slave.

temple. ¹⁴Then I cut the stick named Union into two pieces. I did this to show that the union between Judah and Israel had been broken.

¹⁵Then the Lord said to me, “Now, get the things a foolish shepherd might use. ¹⁶This will show that I will get a new shepherd for this country. But this young man will not be able to take care of the sheep that are being destroyed. He will not be able to heal the hurt sheep. He will not be able to feed those that are left alive. And the healthy ones will be eaten completely—only their hoofs will be left.”

- ¹⁷ Oh my worthless shepherd.
 You abandoned my sheep.
 Punish him!
 Hit his right arm and right eye
 with a sword.
 His right arm will be useless.
 His right eye will be blind.

Visions About the Nations Around Judah

12 The sad message from the Lord about Israel. The Lord made the sky and the earth. He put man’s spirit in him. And the Lord said these things. ²“Look, I will make Jerusalem like a cup of poison to the nations around her. The nations will come and attack that city. And all of Judah will be caught in the trap. ³But I will make Jerusalem like a heavy rock—anyone that tries to take it will hurt himself. Those people will really be cut and scratched. But all the nations on earth will come together to fight against Jerusalem. ⁴But at that time, I will scare the horse, and the soldier riding it will panic. I will make all the enemy horses blind, but my eyes will be open—and I will be watching over Judah’s family. ⁵The family leaders of Judah will encourage the people. They will say, ‘The Lord All-Powerful is your God. He makes us strong.’ ⁶At that time, I will make the family leaders of Judah like a fire burning in a forest. They will destroy their enemies like fire burning straw. They will destroy the enemy all around them. And the people in Jerusalem will again be able to sit back and relax.”

⁷The Lord will save the people of Judah first, so the people in Jerusalem will not be able

to brag too much. David’s family and the other people living in Jerusalem will not be able to brag that they are better than the other people in Judah. ⁸But the Lord will protect the people in Jerusalem. Even the clumsiest person will be a great soldier like David. And the men from David’s family will be like gods—like the Lord’s own angel leading the people.

⁹The Lord says, “At that time, I will destroy the nations that came to fight against Jerusalem. ¹⁰I will fill David’s family and the people living in Jerusalem with a spirit of kindness and mercy. They will look to me, the One they pierced. And they will be very sad. They will be as sad as a person crying over the death of his only son; as sad as someone crying over the death of his firstborn* son. ¹¹There will be a time of great sadness and crying in Jerusalem. It will be like the time people cried over the death of Hadad Rimmon in Megiddo Valley. ¹²Each and every family will cry by itself. The men in David’s family will cry by themselves. And their wives will cry by themselves. The men in Nathan’s family will cry by themselves. And their wives will cry by themselves. ¹³The men in Levi’s family will cry by themselves. And their wives will cry by themselves. The men in Simeon’s family will cry by themselves. And their wives will cry by themselves. ¹⁴And the same thing will happen in all the other family groups. The men and women will cry by themselves.”

13 But at that time, a new spring of water will be opened for David’s family and for the other people living in Jerusalem. That fountain will be to wash away their sins and to make the people pure.

No More False Prophets

²The Lord All-Powerful says, “At that time, I will remove all the idols from the earth. People will not even remember their names. And I will remove the [false] prophets and unclean* spirits from the earth. ³If a person continues to prophesy, then he will be

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God.

punished. Even his parents, his own mother and father, will say to him, ‘You have spoken lies in the name of the Lord, so you must die!’ His own mother and father will stab him for prophesying. ⁴At that time, the prophets will be ashamed of their visions and prophecies. They will not wear the rough cloth that shows a person is a prophet. They will not wear those clothes to trick people with the lies they call prophecies. ⁵Those people will say, ‘I am not a prophet. I am a farmer. I have worked as a farmer since I was a little child.’ ⁶But other people will say, ‘But what are these wounds in your hands?’ He will say, ‘I was beaten in the house of my friends.’”

⁷The Lord All-Powerful says, “Sword, hit the shepherd! Hit my friend! Hit the shepherd and the sheep will run away. And I will punish those little ones. ⁸Two-thirds of the people in the land will be hurt and die. But one-third of them will survive. ⁹Then I will test those survivors. I will give them many troubles. The troubles will be like the fire a man uses to prove silver is pure. I will test them the way a person tests gold. Then they will call to me for help, and I will answer them. I will say, ‘You are my people.’ And they will say, ‘The Lord is my God.’”

The Day of Judgment

14 Look, the Lord has a special day for judging. And the wealth you have taken will be divided in your city. ²I will bring all the nations together to fight against Jerusalem. They will capture the city and destroy the houses. The women will be raped, and half of the people will be taken away as prisoners. But the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. ³Then the Lord will go to war with those nations. It will be a real battle. ⁴At that time, he will stand on the Mount of Olives, the hill east of Jerusalem. The Mount of Olives will split. Part of the mountain will move to the north, and part to the south. A deep valley will open up, from the east to the west. ⁵You will try to run away as that mountain valley comes closer and closer to you. You will run away like the time you ran from the earthquake during the time of Uzziah, king of Judah. But

the Lord my God will come, and all his holy ones will be with him.

^{6–7}That will be a very special day. There will not be any light, cold, or frost. Only the Lord knows how, but there will not be any day or night. Then, when darkness usually comes, there will still be light. ⁸At that time, water will flow continually from Jerusalem.* That stream will split and part of it will flow east, and part of it will flow west to the Mediterranean Sea. And it will flow all year long, in the summer as well as in the winter. ⁹And the Lord will be the King of the whole world at that time. The Lord is One. His name is One. ¹⁰At that time, the whole area around Jerusalem will become [empty] like the Arabah desert. The country will be like a desert from Geba to Rimmon in the Negev. But the whole city of Jerusalem will be built again—from Benjamin Gate to the First Gate (that is, the Corner Gate) and from the Tower of Hananel to the king’s winepresses. ¹¹People will move there to live. No enemy will come to destroy them any more. Jerusalem will be safe.

¹²But the Lord will punish the nations that fought against Jerusalem. He will send a terrible disease against them. Their skin will begin to rot while the people are still alive. Their eyes will rot in their sockets and their tongues will rot in their mouths. ^{13–15}That terrible disease will be in the enemy camp. And their horses, mules, camels, and donkeys will all catch that terrible disease.

At that time, those people will really be afraid of the Lord. Each man will grab his neighbor’s hand and those neighbors will fight each other. Even Judah will fight against Jerusalem. This will happen even while the wealth* of all the nations has been gathered together around the city. There will be very much gold, silver, and clothing. ¹⁶Some of the people that came to fight Jerusalem will survive. And every year they will come to worship the king, the Lord All-Powerful. And

water ... Jerusalem Literally, “Living water will flow from Jerusalem.” Jerusalem’s main water supply, the Gihon spring, did not flow continuously.

wealth Or, “armies.”

they will come to celebrate the Festival of Shelters.* ¹⁷And if people from any of the families on earth don't go to Jerusalem to worship the king, the Lord All-Powerful, then the Lord will not let them have any rain. ¹⁸If any of the families in Egypt don't come to celebrate the Festival of Shelters, then they will get that terrible disease that the Lord caused the enemy nations to get. ¹⁹That will be the punishment for Egypt, and for any other nation that does not come to celebrate the Festival of Shelters.

²⁰At that time, everything will belong to God. Even the harnesses on the horses will have the label, HOLY TO THE LORD.* And all the pots used in the Lord's temple will be just as important as the bowls used at the altar. ²¹In fact, every dish in Jerusalem and Judah will have the label, HOLY TO THE LORD ALL-POWERFUL. All the people offering sacrifices will come and take those dishes and cook [their special meals] in them.

At that time, there will not be any businessmen buying and selling things* in the temple of the Lord All-Powerful.

Festival of Shelters During this fall holiday, the people traveled to Jerusalem, built temporary shelters, camped out in them for a week, and had a happy time together with the Lord.

HOLY TO THE LORD These words were written on everything that was used in the temple. This showed that these things belonged to the Lord, and they could be used only for special purposes. Dishes with labels could only be used by the priests in a holy place.

businessmen ... selling things Literally, "Canaanites."