

THE FIRST FOUR VISIONS OF ZECHARIAH

(The discourse below is by Edward G. Lorenz. Several brethren requested Brother Lorenz to contribute this discourse to Discourse Service for distribution to all the brethren on the mailing list.)

Dear Brethren as we begin this interesting, and we hope spiritually profitable study, on the visions of the Prophet Zechariah, we hope that you will permit your minds to encompass the whole of the Divine Plan of the Ages, as is so completely given to us by “that wise and faithful servant,” Bro. Russell.

The time setting of the prophecies and visions of Zechariah is faithfully provided for us by the Pastor on Reprint page 2521. I will quote his statements: “Zechariah the Prophet was a priest as well, and was a young man at the time of his return under governor Zerubbabel from the Babylonian captivity. As a prophet he was a successor of Haggai, who was now old, and his career as such began in the second year of Darius Hystaspes, and continued about two years. It was part of his mission to encourage Zerubbabel and all who labored in the construction of the Temple, and who were beset by innumerable oppositions, difficulties, etc.” Then these texts are given for study: Neh. 12:4-7; Zech. 1:1; Ezra 1:1, 6-14; 7:1.

We are told that the restoration of the Temple became a matter of great concern to the 50,000 of Israel who returned from Babylon when Cyrus granted the decree permitting the return in 436 B.C. They immediately began the gathering of materials and workmen for the actual reconstruction of the Temple, and soon laid the foundation. But according to Ezra 4:4 we read: “Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building.” Then Ezra adds, “and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose.” So brethren, we can already apply a lesson to us. The time came in 1874 for the Lord to complete the Temple class, but great opposition has been mounted by Satan and his hired agents to frustrate this work from that date to the present. So as we will find, the actual visions of Zechariah were given for us who are living during the days of the harvest.

We learn that opposition against the work of rebuilding the Temple was so great that the foundation lay idle with all work stopped for a period of 14 years. The building, when resumed took seven years, so in the year 515 B.C. the temple was completed.

From Reprint page 2521, Bro. Russell states that there were seven visions by the Prophet Zechariah. We seem to find eight visions, so it is possible that Bro. Russell combined two as somewhat related whereas in our lesson we will consider the first four and at another time the remaining four.

We are indebted to the faithful services of Bro. John Meggison for his research on this subject, and many thoughts have been gleaned from his study on these visions.

The book of Zechariah begins with a strong message to the returned Jews from their long captivity of 70 years. In verses 2, 3 and 4 of the first chapter we read: “The Lord hath been sore displeased with your fathers, therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of Hosts: Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of Hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of Hosts. Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of Hosts; turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings; but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD.” Then the prophet was caused by the LORD to have special visions and to record them. These visions went beyond the welfare of Israel at the time of rebuilding the typical temple, but reached to the time of the Lord’s return and the work of completing the greater temple of the Lord’s spiritual body members. These visions cover many details of the Divine Plan and in point of time include aspects of both the Gospel and the Millennial ages. They seem to be recorded in a manner to suggest that all eight of them came to the Prophet during one night time; not as a dream but as a vision which permits the matter to have greater significance and that it was from the Lord to the mind of the Prophet.

We begin with the first vision of chapter one, verses 8 through 17. These visions are highly symbolic much like those of John the Revelator. We will read the first portion of this vision: “I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom and behind him were there red horses, speckled and white.” This vision like a reality to us by faith is a scene at the time of the Lord’s return, reaching forward to the work of the returned faithful prophets in their kingdom duties. “I saw by night.” This thought suggests that Zechariah needed to be awakened to behold something of great value. This reminds us of the prophetic vision of Isaiah 21, verses 5 through 12. Here the vision pertains, I believe, to the appointment of the Seventh Messenger, Brother Russell, and his resultant view of the Harvest Work. He saw from his watch tower great Babylon and her false denominational teachings as pictured by various animals drawing their respective chariot. Then the messenger responds to the harvest call as the wheat or corn of the threshing floor. This all occurs during a night time for the world but a time of Dawn for the messenger and the faithful brethren.

So in the vision of Zechariah it is given during the same period of night but the fulfillment will be in the Millennial morning. What is the vision? Our Lord here is riding upon a red horse, not white as in Rev. 19:11. He is bringing the doctrine of the ransom into a reality and his workmen are shown as myrtle trees—the faithful Ancient Worthies. This thought seems to be Scripturally correct as outlined in Isa. 41:14-20. In this prophecy is the glorious return and restoration of Israel under the hand of the Lord and in verses 19 and 20 we read, “I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree

and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert [*arabah* which is the same Hebrew word for desert in Isa. 35:1 which means the valley in Israel along the Dead Sea and down to the gulf of the Red Sea], the fir tree, and the pine and the box tree together. That they may see, and know and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.”

We believe the trees in this prophecy are more than the natural replanting of Israel. They suggest the various agencies the Lord will use to re-establish the kingdom. Myrtle trees are a picture of everlasting life; and we read that in times of old the dried myrtle leaves were used for the beds of children as they would promote health and ward off vermin. Hence the work of the Ancient Worthies in the Kingdom. Notice in our prophecy that the myrtle trees are shown in a valley. The kingdom begins in a valley and finally reaches a mountain top by the end of the 1,000 years. The teaching, doctrine or horses are sin, like red now, in mankind and will gradually change from speckled or not clear unto full white or righteousness. Then in verse 9 of our vision we notice that man upon the red horse—our Lord as King, knows the answer as to the meaning of these myrtle trees and of the three horses. So our returned Lord has given to us in the light of the Harvest Truth, meat in due season—the meaning to this and many other visions. In verse 10 our Lord states that He stands among the myrtle trees and directs them to walk to and fro through the earth. The Ancient Worthies will be the direct earthly ambassadors of the Heavenly Throne and by the close of the Millennial age they will report their work with these marvelous words, “We have walked to and fro through the earth, and behold all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.” What a glorious work completed!

Then continuing with verses 12 through 17 of chapter one, we seem to find an interlude of kingdom work that necessarily must precede the full establishment of the kingdom. We find in verses 12 to 14 these words, “Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, ‘O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had threescore and ten years?’ And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me with good words and comfortable words, so the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy. And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease; for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction. Therefore saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies; my house shall be built in it saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem, Cry yet saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; my cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort ZION and shall yet choose Jerusalem.”

My what wonderful promises are for both Zion and Jerusalem in this prophecy, which has its fulfillment during the early hours of the Messiah’s return in 1874. We are to notice some outstanding facts from this text. The 70 years of captivity was pictured as a short

period of God's displeasure toward Israel, but that as the 70 years came to an end so also would the longer period of 1845 years also end. As verse 14 states, "I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy." We believe God is here prophesying that His mercies would return in a special sense at the same time or in or at 1878. Not that the Lord has not always been close to His Heavenly Zion class but at that time God performed the great miracle toward the Zion class by the resurrection of the faithful saints from Pentecost to that time. Then God's hand returned to Jerusalem or Israel in the most direct manner in 1878 by favoring Benjamin Disraeli, Prime Minister of England during the years of 1874 to 1880. He was the lone Jewish statesman among ten Gentile powers in settling the Russian-Turkish war in 1878 at the Berlin Congress of Nations. Through his diplomacy the door was opened for the return of the Jews to Palestine after the long period from the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in and about 69 A.D. Then, brethren, notice the warning God has given to all nations that fail to assist Israel during her days of rebirth or restoration, particularly since 1918 when the Balfour Declaration of November, 1917 was signed, agreeing to a National Home for the Jews under England's 30 year protectorate which ended in disgrace for England in 1948.

It is very possible that God's displeasure over the ill treatment of the Jews by England during the days of her exodus from Europe during the reign of Hitler has been reflected in the financial, social and weather crisis of England. With no doubt more severe conditions yet future. Notice the prophecy states that God is displeased with any nation that fails to support and assist Israel. We will recall that one of the laws of the Kingdom when fully established is set forth in the closing verses of the 14th chapter of this book of Zechariah. The prophecy reads in connection with the requirement that all nations worship the Lord of hosts at Jerusalem and those that fail to do this shall receive no rain, or kindness or favor from God. So perhaps we are already being made aware of this principle beforehand. The day will soon come when the great bear of Russia will come under severe judgments from God; but for now, Russia is being moved by our returned King to perform a needed work among the nations. This concludes our first vision of Zechariah.

Now may we consider verses 18 through 21 of this same first chapter. Zechariah was caused to again lift his head and his eyes to behold what the angel was to tell him. So with us. We need from time to time to be reawakened, or stirred into action by fresh spiritual awareness from the Lord through some special lessons. So this second vision reads, "Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What be these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem. And the Lord showed me four carpenters. Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake saying, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head; but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it."

It appears very plain from this vision that God is picturing the Gentile rule over the nation of Israel and in the end, God punishes the Gentile horns or powers and even casts them out. This all goes back to the promise God had made to Abraham with these words, as set forth in Genesis, twelfth chapter, verses 2 and 3. They read, “And I will make of thee [Abraham] a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curseth thee.” Although God’s justice seems slow, it will be very definite and accurate in all matters. No wonder our Lord stated in Luke 21:24 that “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles [horns] until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” Since 1914 or the end of the 2520 years of Gentile lease of power, God’s hand has been over Israel and the nations of the earth have come into judgment. Thus in our vision we have noted that the four universal empires—from Babylon to Medo-Persia, then to Greece and to Rome. These are the four horns of this prophecy or vision. Not one of these horns was kind to Israel but all helped to scatter them and place heavy burdens upon them. Now, God’s attributes all come into focus and into action toward Israel.

These are the four carpenters or action crew of God. His love will direct and His justice demands, then His wisdom plans so that His power may execute. These four carpenters or attributes are the builders of Israel today. My what powerful language is used by our loving God in His pictures and in these prophecies! Just as God has four righteous attributes, we can also recognize that Satan has his four sinful attributes. They are shown in the four Gentile horns. Babylon represents Satan’s power; then Media-Persia is justice; and Greece was a figure of wisdom; and finally Satan’s love was shown in Rome. Strange as you think about these four universal powers of the past—their actions did depict these evil attributes of Satan. The final destiny of these four horns of Gentile power seems to be shown as one great mountain in the words of Jeremiah 51:25, 26. We read, “Behold I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the Lord, which destroyeth all the earth, and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain. And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundation; but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the LORD.” Thus the four horns prior to 1914 are now gone and only small fragments are found. But none of these fragment stones will be used by God to establish His Kingdom—mountain. This concludes our thoughts on the second vision.

In chapter two we find our third vision. Again the prophet needed to be reminded to “look up” and “lift up his eyes.” During this night of the time of the harvest, the Lord has had to reawaken many of the Lord’s people from time to time. Thus we do not count it amiss to remind ourselves that spiritual lethargy can come upon us and the Lord furnishes means to keep us awake and bright with our lamps trimmed and burning. This vision begins by beholding a man with a measuring line in his hand. We believe this man represents our Lord at His return in 1874. Our Lord returned to first deal with the two Israels—fleshly and spiritual. He, in this vision, has come to survey the size of

Jerusalem. We quote, “Behold a man with a measuring line in his hand [power]. Then said I, whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof.”

Now let us pause here to consider what is pictured. It is apparent that time has come to again deal with Israel as is found in the name Jerusalem. For 1845 years Israel was a land that was not within the providences of the Lord. Israel was unmeasured. God seemingly had passed her by. But now, like a surveyor who precedes the construction crew by going ahead and measures the land and places his markers so our Lord is shown as getting Israel or Palestine ready for a vast reconstruction job. Notice, brethren, this is the second time that Jerusalem is measured. In Zechariah, chapter 1, verse 16, we read, “Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies; my house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.” We believe this thought expressed in the second chapter is the same time feature: the work upon Israel following 1878 to the present time. God has measured Israel to widen its length and its breadth. It must be large enough to include all the nations of the earth—in symbol. We read in Jer. 3:17 these wondrous words, “At that time [full kingdom time] they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it.” Thus we see Jerusalem must be large enough to be representative or the capital over all the nations of the earth, as the Ancient Worthies on the earth direct the policies of the heavenly courts from Jerusalem.

But we may find another interesting case where God has done some measuring. In the prophecy of Habakkuk 3:6 we find a most outstanding use of Bible symbology to aid our minds in framing lessons and thoughts. We read, “He [that is Jehovah God through our Lord as King] stood and measured the earth: He beheld and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered; the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting.” This is a prior 1914 scene. God with His perfect standard of justice and righteousness measured all the nations of the earth to see if they fit his standard measurements. He found that they all came far short of his demands and so His decree was that they should be removed. So the wrecking crews began working in 1914 and some still continue. His crew is named in scripture as the “Lord’s great army.” But in our text under consideration in Zechariah we find that Israel has all the potentials that God might require, so when they are measured it will remain.

But notice brethren, Israel is an earthly nation so all the measurements are surface—length and breadth. However, when the Apostle Paul spoke of our measurements as brethren in Christ, as stated in Romans 8:39 he stated, “nor height, nor depth... shall separate us from the love of God.” Thus we have heavenly or higher hopes, but Israel will all be earthly or surface. Then in verse 3 and 4 we read, “Behold, the angel of the Lord that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him.” This may suggest the divine agencies the Lord uses to accomplish His work in setting up His

kingdom and removing all things that are an offence to Him. In verse 4 the vision refers to a young man which is considered to refer to young Zechariah who was sent of the Lord to inspire the rebuilding of the temple. Just as young Bro. Russell was surely sent of the Lord to inspire the completing of the greater temple.

Now going on with the prophecy we quote, “Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls, for the multitude of men and cattle therein.” You see the reason why Jerusalem needs to be measured is that the old walls confined the city to a small area. But the Lord’s kingdom will expand to include all the earth—all the nations or peoples, so the city must be built without walls or confinements. Too, it may represent that God will become its wall and defense and no longer will natural walls of stone be its protection. The fact that we read, “for the multitude of men and cattle therein” suggests that great expansion is necessary. Of course since 1948 the actual city of Jerusalem has been expanded far beyond its original walls. Then we find in verse 5 the assuring words, “For I, saith the LORD will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.” In times past we will recall that God showed His protective care by a wall of fire when He delivered the children of Israel from Egypt. This no doubt refers to the final phase of Jacob’s trouble. You might like to consider in your personal study Isaiah 32:14-18 and Zechariah 12:1-3.

In verse 6 of this vision we find a counterpart to Rev. 18:4 wherein God’s people have been asked to flee out of Babylon. To remain they would endanger their spiritual hopes and die. Strangely the time setting for both natural and spiritual Israel is the same. Right after our Lord’s return. Our text reads: “Ho, ho, come forth and flee from the land of the north, saith the LORD; for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of heaven.” Then the next verse, “Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon.” The hope of the Jews after 1878 was the Kingdom of the Lord and their return to Palestine was promised. Few, however, in those early days went back to Zion so the suffering in Europe was their punishment during the days after 1914. As stated both natural and spiritual Israel were asked of the LORD to flee from Babylon. And in both Israels few responded until the plagues or punishments would be upon them.

Now brethren, may we consider verses 8 and 9 of chapter 2. We read, “For thus saith the LORD of hosts; after the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you; for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. For behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants; and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me.” We will find a better translation of these verses by using Moffat. Let me read them to you. “As for the nations who have plundered you, the LORD of hosts declares (for he who touches you touches the apple of the Eternal’s eye). I will swing my hand over them, and they shall be plundered by their victims. (So shall you know the Lord of hosts has sent me to proclaim his glory.)”

How much better it is to proclaim the message of the glory of the Lord who does all these things rather than to consider the glory of the Lord will first be known and then He spoils the nations. Then the suggestion that the apple of the eye, as it is one of the most sensitive organs of the body, is the expression of God's care and concern over Israel. This should be of vast importance to us for our faith structure.

Recall the thought of the text that God will "shake His hand over the nations." This expression of God's might and power is shown in His hand was vividly portrayed as recorded in Isa. 11:15. We read, "And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod." Now this outstanding vision, which today is current history for us, continues. We read "and many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord; for he is raised up out of his holy habitation." Now we see this vision takes us to consider that finally the Lord's incoming kingdom not only deals with Israel as its protection but finally all nations shall be joined to the Lord, and in that day. This is while the Lord will again choose Israel as His inheritance. Since we today see God's hand over Israel and have seen the end of the ten toes of Daniel's prophecy with the 1914-1918 war in Europe and the conclusion of the ten ruling houses of Europe we must know we are moving very close to the time for the full establishment of the Kingdom and to the end of the church militant.

Your study will be blessed as you study in depth Jer. 12:14-17. I will quote only a small portion of this passage. "And it shall come to pass, if they [all of Israel's evil neighbors] will diligently learn the ways of my people to swear by my name... then shall they be built in the midst of my people." How gracious are the ways of the Lord. Rather than destroy the nations that now fight Israel, God will eventually cause the people of those nations to come and worship and settle in peace with Israel. We do know that the nations, as powers, will cease, but the peoples of the nations will continue and will join unto the Lord if they hope to have life under the terms of the New Covenant when it is effective in the land under the administration of earth's new government.

Now may we turn to the 3rd chapter of Zechariah and consider the vision—which is the 4th vision. It begins, "He, that is God, shewed the prophet, Joshua the high priest." Joshua in this vision no doubt represents Christ as was typified by Aaron. So now we have a much different vision than the previous three. The angel represented Jehovah God as the high priest stood before this angel. But Joshua was not alone with the angel, as Satan was standing at his right hand to resist him. This is so true to the facts. As soon as our Lord was begotten and anointed as a high priest, he went into the mountain to seek and to know fully the will of His Father. But, He was not alone. Satan came along and

stood as it were at his right hand to resist him. We might mention that our Lord's anointing at Jordan was not after the order of Aaron but after the order of Melchisedec, a kingly-priestly order, which order was a type of the Heavenly glory and office of the world's High Priest—our Lord and finally with His body members who also are to be kings and priests unto God and to reign for the thousand years.

Then through the angel God speaks to Satan and states, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee, is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" In this text we see that finally Satan will be rebuked by our Lord as the High Priest. He is rebuked twice. This work of the first rebuke, we believe, has already begun when our Lord returned and entered into the strong man's house and began to destroy Satan's goods. The second rebuke will be final. But in the portion of the text of Zech. 3:2 is a most remarkable statement and bears some consideration. Recall, it states, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Now to appreciate this thought in its fullness we must enlarge upon the significance of Joshua the High Priest. Just as Aaron, in consideration of the setting of Leviticus, chapter 16, also represented the complete High Priest of our Lord and His body members, so we will soon learn that Joshua in our text is finally the representative of the world's complete High Priest—our glorified Lord and His faithful body members. So, when our Heavenly Father pointed to this Joshua, stated, "is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" we can understand that this faithful priesthood, by reason of all the fiery trials, and bloody persecutions, directed by Satan through the past 1900 years and Satan's efforts to destroy this class of brethren, but they still live as a class, surely this is a "brand saved out of the fire." Not only this, but when we consider the tiny nation of Israel, as we see it today, in the midst of a circle of evil enemies, who have vowed to destroy her; and reviewing the past 1800 years of Israel's history, we must admit that even Israel is a brand plucked out of the fire. Satan has tried, but failed, to destroy both the seeds of Abraham. Even the world of mankind at the end, of the 1000 year reign of Christ will have been rescued by the mercies of God—almost like a brand plucked out of the fire.

Now as we look at verse 3 we notice that the view of Joshua changes. We read, "Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel." Garments are to cover the body and not the head, so these filthy garments no doubt represent the fallen flesh of the body members of this High Priest. They did have filthy garments obtained from the house of Adam. The Head of this Priest does not wear anything filthy, or needing to be cleansed. No, our Lord was without blemish and only His body members, his brethren needed to be washed, feet and all. Then we read in the next verses that the angel was commanded to take away these filthy garments and in doing so the iniquity of the body members of Christ are made clean and to evidence this the text tells us that a change of garment was furnished. Let us read the text, "Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with a change of garment."

But then, the account about the head of this Joshua: “Let them set a fair mitre upon His head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments.” Just like Aaron in the type, our Lord as the head of this Joshua, receives a crown of Holiness unto the Lord. He is fully consecrated to do the will of His God and thus His body is brought under the same manner of consecration. Dear brethren, can we not reflect upon this grand vision. Here we find ourselves, if running faithfully to the best of our ability, in this great high priest, Joshua. We have received a change of garment. The old ragged clothing of Adam is cast aside, never to be worn again. Now we have new, fresh, clean clothing, selected BY A LOVING FATHER for a Son of His own choice. Then we find ourselves under a very capable Head to direct our path, our walk. And more than this, as stated in verse 5, the “angel of the Lord stands by.” This no doubt suggests the communication line between us and our Father and His guiding providences on our behalf. So frequently we find in scripture that the angel of the Lord encamps or stands by the heirs of salvation. Consider Luke 1:19 and others.

But this world’s High Priest cannot obtain His office by just standing and wearing clothing. No, there is work to be done. So, our next text in verse 7, gives some of our duties. “Thus saith the LORD of hosts; if thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also keep my courts.” Here we find very simple words, but they are words of action: “If thou.” Our Lord declared that His walk was to be a narrow way, a narrow walk. Few there have been that have found it. Recall our Lord asked, “Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?” Again, “are ye able to be baptized with the baptism with which I am being baptized?” We may recall our Lord as our Master asked that we learn of Him. He was to establish the pattern. One characteristic of our Lord that must become ours, was His complete willingness to be obedient to His Father’s will for Him. Recall, our Lord never held personal views of His Father’s plan but what the Father revealed to Him. He stated, “the words which I speak are the words of my Father.” Then in Isaiah 50:4-7 we find a remarkable prophecy which our Lord observed in close detail. We read in part, that His Father gave Him the “knowledge of the learned.” He was awakened each morning to the instructions of His Father. He did not lean upon His own personal wisdom, but as He received of His Father. Our Lord did not seek to improve upon His Father’s plan of the ages. Neither have we license to do so.

If we believe the Heavenly Father through His Son appointed the Seventh Messenger—Bro. Russell, and that the Truth for the Church at the end of the age came through our Lord and His mouthpiece, then we do very well to also observe Isa. 50:5. Notice the text then suggests that our Lord was not rebellious to His Father’s directions or teachings. To openly disagree with a clearly taught principle of Truth provided by that Servant, I consider as an act of rebellion. So the additional “way of the Lord” would be the path of humility, loyalty—full loyalty and a love for those things the Lord loves, and to hate

those things the Lord hates. What did our Lord love you ask? And what did our Lord hate? We can do no better than to use the prophetic lesson of Psalm 45:7. The text we will quote follows the description of our Lord in His glory as a King in full display of His regal power, as we read: “Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty, and in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness.” Then the prophecy informs us as to why our Lord obtained this high honor and kingdom glory. This is stated in verse 7. We quote, “Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.”

Now there can be no question that if we are to follow in the path of the Lord, and to do the will of our Father, we must also love righteousness which is truth; and in like degree we must hate evil and untruth or false doctrine. Thus we may examine ourselves on this point. Openly we may confess complete harmony with the doctrines of present truth as set forth by the Lord’s servant, but we may also privately condone, approve or knowingly permit or endorse false teachers to speak to us or to others. We can find no evidence that our Lord permitted false teachers to influence His disciples. Nor can you find such among the writings of the Apostles, but the very opposite. Thus if we love the Truth we will love it all the way and will hate with equal force all things that are contrary. This is following in the path of the Lord.

Then the text in Zechariah gives the second qualification for remaining a member of this great High Priest—“If thou wilt keep my charge.” What charge? The golden truths given to us have been a very special charge. We are required to keep them. Notice the lovely passage of Prov. 22:19-21. “That thy trust may be in the Lord, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee. Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, that I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?” Then the Apostle Paul adds his thoughts on our charge as set forth in 1 Cor. 4:1, 2. We read, “Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.” Then the Master adds to this matter in Luke 16:9-12. In part we read, “He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much.”

Now back to our text in Zechariah, verse 7. The remaining portion of that text reads, “Then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts.” We recall that part of the work of a priest is to maintain order among the people. Thus the principle of judging is shown. “Thou shalt judge my house.” This sounds like the work suggested by Paul in 1 Cor. 6:2, “Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?”

In your private study, brethren, you might enjoy also noting Rev. 2:26; Psalm 149 and Matt. 19:28-30. Then how will we keep God’s courts? This sounds like full

administrative responsibility in the courts of heaven and the affairs of the earth. Surely those that share the Divine Nature and the glory of the office of King, Priest, Judge and Mediator will direct the arrangements of the Kingdom.

Now as we draw this lesson to a close, dear brethren, think with me on the wonderful work that the faithful High Priest or Bridegroom and Bride, or the glorified church will share when the 1,000 year day of our reign draws to a close, and the world of mankind have returned to full righteousness. Then the work of the “ages to come” will begin. What will that be? you ask. This is suggested in the last portion of our text. It reads, “and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.” And what are these? Well you recall that on this planet we read that God created it not in vain but created it to be inhabited—inhabited with intelligent beings possessing the likeness in character to God. When this planet earth has been fully returned to this divine decree then it is suggested that God’s attention will be directed to the vast universe about us. Planets and suns of greater size than in our universe, but all empty of living beings—of intelligent beings with moral likeness of God. These have been quietly standing by—day by day, century by century—waiting, waiting to be occupied. We suggest this will be the wonderful work of the faithful saints of the Gospel age—to bring life, guidance and perfection on other planets or creations of God. “These that stand by.” My, what a hope to consider: to walk, as it were, among the distant planets, to create life and maintain perfection.

Now, brethren, may these visions of that faithful Zechariah, as God directed his mind to write, and in the light of our knowledge of God’s Plan of the ages inspire each of us to greater faithfulness!