

INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH

This book is in the Hebrew copies called “the Book of Zechariah”; in the Vulgate Latin version, “the Prophecy of Zechariah”; and, in the Syriac and Arabic versions, the Prophecy of the Prophet Zechariah. His name, according to Jerom, signifies “the memory of the Lord”: but, according to Hillerus^{f1}, “the Lord remembers”: either us, or his covenant; his promises of grace, and concerning the Messiah, of which there are many in this book. The writer of this prophecy could not be, as some have imagined, Zacharias the father of John the Baptist; since there must be some hundreds of years difference between them; nor the Zacharias, the son of Barachias, slain between the temple and the altar, our Lord speaks of in ([4135](#) Matthew 23:35) for though their names agree, yet it does not appear that this prophet was slain by the Jews; indeed the Jewish Targumist, on ([2520](#) Lamentations 2:20), speaks of a Zechariah, the son of Iddo, a high priest, slain in the temple; but it could not be this Zechariah, since he was no high priest; Joshua was high priest in his time; nor could he be slain in such a place, seeing the temple and altar were not yet built; nor was this prophet Zechariah the son of Jehoiada, slain in the court of the Lord’s house, ([1420](#) 2 Chronicles 24:20,21) for, as their names do not agree, so neither their office, he being a high priest, this a prophet; nor the times in which they lived, Zechariah the son of Jehoiada lived in the times of Joash king of Judah, two or three hundred years before this; but this was one of the captivity of Babylon, and who came up from thence with Zerubbabel, ([1426](#) Nehemiah 12:16) and was contemporary with the Prophet Haggai; so that the time of his prophecy was after the Babylonish captivity, and was delivered to the Jews that were returned from thence; and the design of it is to stir them up to build the temple, and restore the pure worship of God; and to encourage their faith and hope in the expectation of the Messiah; for the book consists of various visions and prophecies relating to him, and to the times of the Gospel; and the visions are, as some Jewish writers^{f2} observe, very obscure, and like the visions of Daniel, and difficult of interpretation. There are several passages cited out of this book in the New Testament, as ([3886](#) Zechariah 8:16) in ([4005](#) Ephesians 4:25) ([3809](#) Zechariah 9:9) in ([4216](#) Matthew 21:5) ([624](#) John 12:14,15) ([3812](#) Zechariah 11:12,13) in ([4279](#) Matthew 27:9) ([3820](#) Zechariah 12:10) in ([685](#) John 19:37) ([610](#) Revelation 1:7) ([3837](#) Zechariah 13:7) in ([4158](#) Matthew 26:31) ([4147](#) Mark 14:27)

which abundantly confirm the authenticity of it. This prophet seems to have lived and died in Jerusalem; and, according to Pseudo-Epiphanius^{f3}, was buried near Haggai the prophet; and with which agree the Cippi Hebraici^{f4}, which inform us that Haggai was buried in a cave in the downward slope of the mount of Olives; and at the bottom of that mount was a large statue called the hand of Absalom, near to which was the grave of Zechariah the prophet, in a cave shut up, and over it a beautiful monument of one stone: and Monsieur Thevenot^{f5} tells us, that now is shown, near the sepulchres of Absalom and Jehoshaphat, on the descent of the mount of Olives, the sepulchre of the Prophet Zacharias.---It is cut in a diamond point upon the rock, with many pillars about it. Sozomen^{f6} the historian, indeed, makes mention of Caphar Zechariah, a village on the borders of Eleutheropolis, a city in Palestine, where it is pretended the body of this prophet was found in the times of Theodosius, to which no credit is to be given; nor is there any dependence to be had on the former accounts.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH 1

In this chapter, after the account of the prophet, and the time of the prophecy by him, are an exhortation of the people of the Jews to repentance; the vision of a rider upon a red horse, and the intercession of the angel of the Lord for Jerusalem; and another vision of the enemies of the Jews, and of their deliverers. In (~~3001~~Zechariah 1:1) is the general inscription of the book; in which an account is given of the time of its writing, and of the writer of it: then follows the exhortation to repentance, enforced from the wrath of God, which came upon their fathers for not hearkening to the Lord, and turning from their evil ways; and from the advantage that would be received thereby, the Lord would return to them; and from the certain accomplishment of the divine word; for, though both their fathers and prophets died, the word of the Lord had its sure effect, (~~3002~~Zechariah 1:2-6) and next the vision of the rider on the red horse is presented; the year, month, day, and night, in which it was seen, are mentioned, (~~3003~~Zechariah 1:7) and the rider is described by his form, a man; by the horse he rode upon, a red one; by the place he stood in among the myrtle trees in the bottom; and by his attendants behind, red horses, speckled and white, (~~3003~~Zechariah 1:8). The interpretation of which last is given to the prophet by the angel, by the man among the myrtle trees, and by the answer of them to the angel of the Lord themselves, (~~3009~~Zechariah 1:9-11). After which the angel is represented as making intercession for Jerusalem, who is answered by good and comfortable words, (~~3012~~Zechariah 1:12,13) upon which the prophet is bid to publish the jealousy of the Lord for Jerusalem; his displeasure at the heathens for afflicting them; his promise to return to the Jews, that the temple and city of Jerusalem should be rebuilt, and other cities of Judea, which should enjoy great prosperity, (~~3014~~Zechariah 1:14-17) and the chapter is concluded with a vision of four horns, signifying the enemies of Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem; and of four carpenters that should destroy them, (~~3018~~Zechariah 1:18-21).

Ver. 1. *In the eighth month*, etc.] The month Marchesvan, called the month Bul, in (^{<1068>}1 Kings 6:38) which answers to part of our October, and part of November: this was but two months from the first prophecy of Haggai, (^{<3000>}Haggai 1:1) and but a few days after his second, (^{<3000>}Haggai 2:1) so near were the prophecies of these two prophets together:

in the second year of Darius: king of Persia; not Darius the Mede, but Darius the son of Hystaspes:

came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah; that is, “the word of prophecy from before the Lord”, as the Targum paraphrases it; which came to him, either in a dream, or in a vision, or by an impulse on his mind; who is described by his descent, the son of Barachias; mention is made of this name in (^{<4035>}Matthew 23:35). It signifies “the blessed of the Lord”, and is the same with Eulogius or Benedictus:

the son of Iddo the prophet: the word “prophet”, as Kimchi observes, belongs to Zechariah; not but that his grandfather Iddo might be a prophet too; and the same writer takes notice, that in the Midrash mention is made of Iddo the prophet; and so there is an Iddo that is called the seer and the prophet in (^{<4409>}2 Chronicles 9:29 12:15 13:22) but whether the same with this is not certain. The name is by some thought to be the same with Firmicus, Staius, Robertus:

saying; as follows:

Ver. 2. *The Lord hath been sore displeased with your fathers*.] Who lived before and at the time of the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, and which was manifest by their captivity; all which were occasioned by their sins, with which they provoked the Lord to sore displeasure against them; and this is mentioned as a caution to their children, that they might not follow their example, and incur the like displeasure.

Ver. 3. *Therefore say thou unto them*, etc.] This is an order from the Lord to Zechariah, to say unto them, in the name of the Lord:

thus saith the Lord of hosts; of the hosts above and below, of angels and of men, of heaven and earth, and all that is therein: this is said, that the greater regard might be had to his words:

turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hosts; by repentance, and acknowledgment of former sins; by reformation for the future; by attending

to the worship and service of God, and seeking to glorify him. So the Targum, “return to my worship”: this is not the condition of what follows, but what follows is the motive and encouragement to this:

and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of hosts; to dwell among them, manifest himself unto and protect them. Three times the phrase, “the Lord of hosts”, is used in this verse: it may be with respect to the three Persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit; who manifest themselves unto, and take up their abode with, such as love the Lord, and keep his commandments; (see ^{<3142>}John 14:21).

Ver. 4. *Be ye not as your fathers*, etc.] Who lived before the captivity, and misused the prophets and messengers of the Lord, and despised his word, and fell into gross idolatry; the evil examples of parents and ancestors are not to be followed:

unto whom the former prophets have cried: such as Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others:

saying, thus saith the Lord of hosts, Turn now from your evil ways, and [from] your evil doings; by their “evil ways” may be meant their idolatrous worship; and by their “evil doings” their immoralities; or, by both, their wicked lives and conversations, both before God and men; from whence they were exhorted by the former prophets to turn, and to reform; even “now”, at that present time they prophesied to them, immediately, lest destruction come upon them:

but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the Lord; speaking by his prophets, who were sent by him, and came and spoke in his name; so that not hearing them was not hearing him who sent them, and whom they represented.

Ver. 5. *Your fathers, where [are] they?* etc.] They are not in the land of the living; they perished by the sword of the Chaldeans, or died in captivity:

and the prophets, do they live for ever? meaning either the false prophets, as Hananiah and Shemaiah, (^{<3287>}Jeremiah 28:17 29:32) or the true prophets of the Lord; and the words may be considered as a prevention of an objection the people might make, taken from their prophets dying in common with their fathers; and so the Targum paraphrases them, “and if you should say, the prophets, do they live for ever?” which is followed by

Jarchi, and embraced by many interpreters: the answer is, it is true they died; but then their words live, and have had their full accomplishment.

Ver. 6. *But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets*, etc.] That is, the predictions which he ordered his prophets to declare in his name, that their fathers should die by the sword, or famine, or pestilence, or be carried captive, which he purposed in himself, and threatened them with:

did they not take hold of your fathers? overtake them, seize upon them, and have their accomplishment in them? not one thing has failed, or come short of being fulfilled, of all that was determined, or said should be done:

and they returned and said; that is, as many of them as perished not, but were carried captive; at least many of them, who either were thoroughly converted, and turned from their evil, or however in appearance: and who were obliged to own,

Like as the Lord of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doing, so hath he dealt with us: as he purposed, so he performed, and that with great justice and equity, being what their evil ways and doings righteously deserved; (see ^{<1000>}Isaiah 14:24).

Ver. 7. *Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Sebat*, etc.] Called Sabat in the Septuagint version, and in the Apocrypha: "Now Simon was visiting the cities that were in the country, and taking care for the good ordering of them; at which time he came down himself to Jericho with his sons, Mattathias and Judas, in the hundred threescore and seventeenth year, in the eleventh month, called Sabat:" (1 Maccabees 16:14)

It is said by the Jews^{f7} to be the beginning of the months of the year for trees, of which they bring the first fruits. It answers to part of our January, and part of February. This is the first time that the name of a month is mentioned by any of the prophets; this prophet prophesying after the captivity in Babylon; from whence the Jews^{f8} say the names of months came along with the returning captives, as well as the names of angels; and we nowhere meet with them but in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, all wrote after that time; for before they used only to say, the first, second, or third month, etc.; for, as for Abib, Zif, Bul, and Ethanira, mentioned in (^{<1000>}Exodus 13:4 ^{<1000>}1 Kings 6:1, 37,38 8:2), they are thought to be appellatives, and not proper names; though it may be observed that

the books of Kings are said by the Jews^{f9} to be written by Jeremiah; more likely by several prophets, and at last brought into the order in which they now stand by Ezra, according to Huetius^{f10}; and which may be thought probable enough; and, if so, the above names may be reckoned proper names of months; and the original of them may be accounted for as before. There were two fasts appointed by the Jews in this month; one on the tenth day of it, for the death of the elders which succeeded Joshua, (~~<000>~~Judges 2:7) and another on the twenty third, on account of the Israelites making war with the Benjaminites, in revenge of what was done to the wife of the Levite, (~~<000>~~Judges 19:1-20:48)^{f11}. This prophecy, and the visions following to the end of the sixth chapter, were three months after the former prophecy, or more, if that was on the first day of the eighth month; and just two months after the foundation of the temple was laid, (~~<3018>~~Haggai 2:18): “in the second year of Darius”, etc. (see Gill on ~~<3000>~~Zechariah 1:1”).

Ver. 8. *I saw by night*, etc.] Or, “that night”^{f12}; the night of the twenty fourth of Sebat; a proper and usual time for visions; and it may denote the obscurity of the vision, as it was in some respects to the prophet; and the state of the church at this time, it being a night season with it, and in a low estate; and the care that the Lord, who is Israel’s Keeper, has of them in such seasons, being in the midst of them:

and behold! this is prefixed to the vision, to denote the wonderfulness of it, and to excite attention to it; there being something in it not only amazing, but of moment and importance:

a man riding upon a red horse; not any mere “man”, as Alexander on his Bucephalus, as Abarbinel interprets it; and so Arias Montanus, as Sanctius on the place observes; though the time this vision refers to, and the state of the Jews then, will not admit of such an interpretation; for at this time all the earth was still and at rest, there were no wars in it, (~~<3011>~~Zechariah 1:11) which agrees not with the times of Alexander, and of his reign, which was wholly spent in war; and the whole world in a manner was involved in it by him; but best agrees with the times of Cyrus and Darius, after they had subdued the Babylonian monarchy: besides, the Jews were now in a very low estate, like a grove of myrtle trees in a bottom, plain, or valley; and not only surrounded and overtopped by other states and kingdoms, which were greatly superior to them; but oppressed by their enemies, who hindered them in the rebuilding of their city and temple; whereas this was not their case in the times of Alexander, when they were in better circumstances,

and which were two hundred years after this; nor was he so very beneficial and serviceable to the Jews, as to be represented, in such a vision, as in the midst of them, for their relief and protection; but an angel of the Lord is here meant, as this man is expressly called, (^{<3011>}Zechariah 1:11) and not a created angel; for he is distinguished from the angel that talked with the prophet, (^{<3010>}Zechariah 1:9,13,14). The Jews, as Jerom relates, think that the Angel Michael is meant, by whom they understand a created angel; for otherwise, if they took him to be, as he is, the Son of God, the Archangel, the Head of principalities, who is, as his name signifies, like unto God, and equal to him, it would not be amiss: and it is usual for a divine Person to be called the Angel of the Lord, as was he that called to Abraham when sacrificing his son, and to Moses out of the bush; and who went before the Israelites in the wilderness, and who is called the Angel of God's presence, and the messenger and Angel of the covenant; and the ancient Jews themselves own that a divine Person is here meant; for, on quoting these words, "I saw a man", etc. they say^{f13}, there is no man but the holy blessed God; as it is said, "the Lord is a man of war, the Lord is his name"; and though he is distinguished from the Lord of hosts, (^{<3012>}Zechariah 1:12), the reason of this (or otherwise it is the title of this angel also, (see ^{<3014>}Hosea 12:4,5),) is because he here appears in the form of a man; and because of his office as an intercessor and advocate for his people, (^{<3012>}Zechariah 1:12) a character which well agrees with Christ, who is the advocate with the Father for his saints, and whoever lives to make intercession for them, and is always heard and answered with good and comfortable words: and he is called a "man"; not that he is a mere man, or was really man when this vision was seen; but he then appeared in a human form, because he should become man, and quickly would be, as it was purposed, prophesied, and agreed he should be: and he is represented as "riding", to denote his majesty and glory as a king, or as a general of an army, in which he rode prosperously; (see ^{<3014>}Psalm 45:4 ^{<3012>}Revelation 6:2 19:11,14) as also his readiness, swiftness, and haste he made to help and save his people; as the people of the Jews, in this their present time of distress, being opposed and hindered in building their city, in particular; so, in general, all his people, in whatsoever case or circumstances they may be: thus riding, when ascribed to a divine Person, is an emblem of haste and quick dispatch, to assist and relieve the distressed; (see ^{<3013>}Deuteronomy 33:26) (^{<3014>}Psalm 68:4,5,32,33) so Christ, who here appears as a man, was ready and forward, in the council and covenant of grace, to agree to become man, and be the surety of his people, and die in their place and stead, in order to

save them: his frequent appearances in a human form, before his incarnation, show how willing and ready he was really to assume the human nature; and as soon as the time appointed for it was up, he tarried not; when the fulness of time was come, God sent him, and he came at once, and immediately; and as soon as possible he went about the business he came upon, took delight and pleasure in it, was constant at it till he had finished it; and even his sufferings and death, which were disagreeable to nature, considered in themselves, were wished and longed for, and cheerfully submitted to by him: and he is quick in all his motions to help his people in all their times of need; nor can any difficulties prevent him giving an early and speedy relief; he comes to them leaping on the mountains, and skipping on the hills; and at the last day he will come quickly to put them into the possession of salvation he has wrought out for them; and will be a swift witness for them, and against wicked men that hate them, and oppose them: and he is upon a “red horse”, signifying either his incarnation, and his bloody sufferings and death; and his taking peace from the earth when on it, not intentionally, but eventually, through the wickedness of men; (see ^{<300>}Revelation 6:4) or his indignation against his enemies, and his wrath and vengeance upon them, and the destruction of them; and may have a particular reference to those who opposed the building of the temple; (see ^{<301>}Isaiah 63:1,2):

and he stood among the myrtle trees which [were] in the bottom: by the “myrtle trees” may be meant the Israelites, as Kimchi interprets it; and that either as in Babylon, which he supposes is designed by “the bottom”; agreeably to the Targum, which paraphrases the words, “and he stood among the myrtle trees which are in Babylon”; or rather, as now returned to their own land; and so may denote the low estate and condition in which they were when they began to rebuild the temple, being feeble, and opposed by their enemies, mightier than they; but yet, inasmuch as the Lord was in the midst of them, they had encouragement to go on in the work, as is suggested in (^{<302>}Haggai 2:3-5), though the saints and people of God in general may be here meant by the “myrtle trees”; and the ancient Jews^{f14} interpret them of the righteous, saying, there are no myrtle trees but the righteous; and give this as a reason why Esther was called Hadassah, (^{<303>}Esther 2:7) which signifies a myrtle tree, because this is the name of the righteous^{f15}; and these may fitly be compared to such trees for their goodness and beauty to look at, for their sweet and fragrant smell, for their verdure and greenness, and for their flourishing in valleys and watery

places^{f16}, signified here by “the bottom”; all which is true of the saints, who are pleasant plants, comely through Christ’s comeliness; whose graces, when in exercise, send forth a sweet smell; whose prayers are odours, and whose good works are acceptable, being done in faith; whose leaves never wither, and who flourish much, being planted by the river of divine love; and in whom the grace of God ever remains, and they persevere in grace to the end: these may be said to be “in the bottom”; or in a low estate; not only before conversion, but after; when corruptions prevail, temptations are strong, grace is weak; God hides his face, Christ is absent, and the Spirit withdraws his influences; and so it is true of the church in general, when under persecution, or pestered with false teachers, and when the life and power of religion are almost gone; and yet even then Christ stands in the midst of them, to sympathize with them, and as ready to help and assist them, to deliver them out of their troubles, to protect them from their enemies, and to restore them to their former state and condition. A grove of myrtle trees in a plain, in which they delight, being dark and shady, is thought by some to be an emblem of this world, in which there is a mixture of good and bad men; and of the care of Providence over human affairs, consulting the good of man, especially the raising up of the church of God out of a low estate by Christ, and his apostles, and other ministers of the word, performing their offices, according to the different abilities and gifts God has bestowed upon them^{f17}:

and behind him [were there] red horses, speckled and white; that is, with riders on them. Some^{f18} Jewish writers interpret this vision of the four kingdoms; and understand by the red horse with the man upon it, in the former clause, the Babylonian monarchy, of which Nebuchadnezzar was the head; and, by these three sorts here, the Medes, Greeks, and Romans, by inverting the order of them; they interpreting the white horses with the riders on them of the Medes and Persians; who were kind to the Jews, and under whom they were dismissed from their captivity, and their temple rebuilt: the speckled, or those of different colours, the Macedonians or Grecians; some of which were friends, and kind and benevolent to the Jews; and others cruel persecutors of them; and the red, the Romans, who were bloody, and slew multitudes of them, and destroyed their city and temple: but others, as Jerom observes, who relates the above sense, keep the order of the text, and explain the particulars of it thus; the red horse on which the man rode, and the red horses behind him, of the Assyrians and Chaldeans, who were sanguine; the one carried away the ten tribes under

Shalmaneser; and the other the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, burning the city of Jerusalem, and laying waste the temple; the speckled, or those of various colours, the Medes and Persians; some of whom were mild and gentle, as Cyrus, and Darius the son of Hystaspes, and Ahasuerus, whom the Greeks call Artaxerxes, under whom was the history of Esther; and others were cruel, as Cambyses, etc.: those who think that Alexander the great is meant on the red horse suppose that those that succeeded him are meant by the other horses of various colours; namely, the Lagidae and the Seleucidae, or the kings of Egypt and Syria, who were sometimes very fierce and furious, and sometimes very friendly to the Jews; at least different kings, and at different times: but it seems better to interpret them of saints, the godly and faithful followers of Christ; not only the godly among the Jews, who were made as his goodly horse in the battle, (~~310B~~ Zechariah 10:3) but the church and people of God in general, who are compared to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariot, (~~210D~~ Song of Solomon 1:9), for their strength, courage, serviceableness, and the value Christ has them: thus, as he is elsewhere represented as riding on a white horse, under the Gospel dispensation, as the general of an army, and mighty conqueror; so the armies of heaven that follow him on white horses, and clothed in white, are the called, and faithful, and chosen, (~~674~~ Revelation 17:14 19:14) and some of these being described by red horses, with riders on them, may signify, such who have been called to shed their blood, and lay down their lives, for Christ and his Gospel, and their profession of it, even the martyrs of Jesus; and others by speckled horses, or of various colours, may intend such professors of religion, who, though not called to die for Christ, yet suffer persecution in various ways, both by reproach and affliction; and whose lives may be a chequered work of comforts and troubles, of prosperity and adversity: and others by white horses may point at such who are not only clothed with fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of the saints; and who are more than conquerors through Christ, who has loved them, which are characters common to all saints; but who enjoy a great deal of liberty, peace, and prosperity, all their days. Some^{f19} restrain this to the apostles of Christ, and succeeding ministers of the word; and observe, that as horses carry men and other things into the various parts of the world, so the ministers of the Gospel bear the name of Christ, and carry his Gospel into the whole world; and as horses do not go into any part of it of themselves, but as they are directed by their masters, so the Gospel ministers are sent under the direction of Christ, some here, and some there; and as horses going

through towns and villages are mostly annoyed by the barking of dogs, which yet they regard not, so as to stop their speed; thus likewise faithful preachers are followed with the calumnies of wicked men, with their scoffs and jeers, reproaches and persecutions; but none of these things move them, or cause them to desist from their work; and as Christ the Son of God stood among these horses, so he is, and has promised to be, with his ministering servants unto the end of the world; and as they are like horses, docile and laborious, so the various colours of these may have respect to them; some of whom are called to resist even unto blood; and others to various trials; as well as they have different gifts, and are of different usefulness, and all of them at last victorious over their enemies; and are under Christ their Head, and are ready to do his will in whatsoever he directs them; though the more commonly received opinion is, that angels are designed, and as it seems from (~~3010~~ Zechariah 1:10,11) compared with (~~3010~~ Zechariah 6:1-7) see also (~~1221~~ 2 Kings 2:11 6:17) signified by horses, for their strength, courage, swiftness, serviceableness, and disposition for war; and these different colours may represent the different state and condition of the nations with whom they were concerned, and to whom they were sent, as cruel or kind, to the people of God; and their different employments and services, both to help the saints, and render vengeance to their enemies; and the various offices they perform, with respect to Christ and his people, in things temporal and spiritual; and the place and situation of these horses being “behind” Christ may denote his superiority over them: he is superior to all monarchs and monarchies, kingdoms and states; he is King of kings, and Lord of lords; the kingdoms of this world are his, and he is the Governor among the nations; they are all behind and under him, and disposed of by him at his pleasure; and he can restrain them, when he thinks fit, from doing any harm to his people: he is superior to all men, even the best and greatest; he is the Head of the church, and King of saints; and it is their business, and even their honour and privilege, to follow him whithersoever he goes: and he is superior to angels, has a more excellent name and nature than they, is the Creator and Maker of them, and is worshipped by them; and even, as Mediator, is in a greater office, and in a higher place, at the right hand of God, than they are; they are at his beck and command, and at hand to be sent forth on all occasions to do his business, to minister for him, and to his people; they are his servants, and devoted to his service, and are ready to do his pleasure.

Ver. 9. *Then said I, O my Lord,* etc.] These are the words of the Prophet Zechariah to the angel that showed him this vision:

what are these? what is the meaning of this vision? particularly who are meant by the horses, red, speckled, and white, and those upon them?

And the angel that talked with me; who seems to be different from the Angel of the Lord, the man among the myrtle trees, (^{<3008>}Zechariah 1:8,10,11) he was one of the ministering spirits; (see ^{<670>}Revelation 17:1 21:9):

said unto me, I will show thee what these [be]; that is, give an interpretation of the vision, and point out the persons intended by the horses.

Ver. 10. *And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said,* etc.] And so prevented the angel from giving the account he was about to give; and who was more capable of it, and which to do was great condescension in him, and was doing the prophet a singular honour:

these [are they] whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth; which is a description of the angels, the ministering spirits sent forth by God to take their tour throughout the earth; not to do mischief, as Satan does; but to do good to kingdoms, nations, and men in general, and to the heirs of salvation in particular; for which they are commissioned and empowered of God; (see ^{<3014>}Hebrews 1:14).

Ver. 11. *And they answered the Angel of the Lord, that stood among the myrtle trees, and said,* etc.] That is, the ministering angels, signified by the red horses, speckled, and white, replied to what the Angel of the Lord had said concerning them; or rather agreed to and confirmed his account of them; or else gave up the account of their tour through the earth, with their observations upon the state of it:

We have walked to and fro through the earth; according to their mission and commission:

and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest; was free from wars, as it was in the reign of Darius; though the people of the Jews were infested with enemies, who gave them trouble, and hindered all they could the rebuilding of the temple; wherefore it follows:

Ver. 12. *Then the Angel of the Lord answered and said,* etc.] The same that was among the myrtle trees in the bottom, (^{<300>}Zechariah 1:8,10,11):

O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah; which were fallen to ruin, and had lain waste for many years. These words are expressive of the intercession of Christ on the behalf of the people of the Jews, his professing people, both with respect to their temporal and spiritual good:

against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years? the time of the Babylonish captivity, which lasted such a term of time, and which was a token of the divine displeasure with them; but to be reckoned, not from Jeconiah's captivity, to the deliverance from it by Cyrus, as it is reckoned, (^{<200>}Jeremiah 25:1,11) (^{<200>}Daniel 9:2) but from the taking of Jerusalem, and the destruction of the temple under Zedekiah, to the rebuilding of the temple under Darius Hystaspis, in whose second year Zechariah now prophesied, (^{<300>}Zechariah 1:7), which was a space of seventy years.

Ver. 13. *And the Lord answered the angel that talked with me,* etc.] (see ^{<300>}Zechariah 1:9) what was the effect of Christ's intercession for the people of the Jews, was communicated to a ministering angel, and by him to the Prophet Zechariah:

[with] good words, and comfortable words; such as would be for the good and comfort of God's people, as follows; (see ^{<200>}Isaiah 40:1,2).

Ver. 14. *So the angel that communed with me,* etc.] Having an order from the other Angel, or the Lord of hosts:

said unto me, Cry thou; proclaim, publish, declare in the hearing of the people, for their comfort and encouragement. The Targum renders it, "prophesy":

saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Zion, with a great jealousy; which is expressive of his conjugal affection for his church and people, his zeal for their good, and his indignation at their enemies, and of the vengeance he would execute on them.

Ver. 15. *And I am very sore displeased with the heathen [that are] at ease,* etc.] The Chaldeans and Persians, and other nations, enemies of the

Jews, who were now free from war, and enjoyed great prosperity, when the state and condition of the Jews was very low and discouraging:

for I was but a little displeased: that is, with his people the Jews, for their ingratitude, idolatry, and immorality; and which displeasure he showed by suffering them to be carried into captivity; (see ^{<2548>}Isaiah 54:8):

and they helped forward the affliction; that is, the heathens, among whom the Jews were carried captive; they added to their affliction; they oppressed them more than they ought to have done, and more than was agreeable to the will of God and right in his sight; and they insulted them in their misery, and rejoiced over them. The word רז[, in the Arabic language, signifies to “abound”^{<20>}; and the meaning is, that they abounded in bringing evil upon the people of the Jews; they multiplied their afflictions and distresses.

Ver. 16. *Therefore thus saith the Lord, I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies*, etc.] Having returned the people of the Jews from their captivity to Jerusalem, in which he had shown abundant mercy to them:

my house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of hosts; meaning the temple where he dwelt and was worshipped; the foundation of which had been laid two months before this prophecy was delivered, (^{<3028>}Haggai 2:18) and which should be raised up and finished, notwithstanding all the opposition of the enemy, and the discouragements of the people:

and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem; to measure with it, and build by it, the wall, streets, and houses of Jerusalem. The meaning is, that not only the temple should be built, but the city likewise, and that in great order, and with great exactness and symmetry; (see ^{<3011>}Zechariah 2:1-4). The Targum paraphrases it, “upon the building of the walls of Jerusalem”.

Ver. 17. *Cry yet, saying*, etc.] That is, “prophecy again”, as the Targum paraphrases it; publish and declare openly before all:

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; or, according to the Targum, “the cities of my people shall be yet filled with good”; and so the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, “my cities shall yet flow with good things”; with all temporal prosperity and happiness; which was fulfilled in the times of Nehemiah, Zerubbabel, and the Maccabees; and especially in the times of the Messiah, when, in a spiritual sense, they were filled with good; with him who is goodness itself, and with all blessings of grace in him; and with the good news and glad

tidings of the everlasting Gospel preached by him and his apostles; or, the meaning is, through the increase of men, and the affluence of all temporal mercies, not only the city of Jerusalem, but other cities of Judea, called the Lord's, because of his peculiar regard unto them, should be enlarged, and be spread here and there; or rather, abound with plenty of all good things, as the word in the Arabic^{f21} language signifies:

and the Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem; for his habitation, building again the city and temple in it: according to Capellus, though the temple was finished in the sixth year of Darius, (^{<1565>}Ezra 6:15) yet the rebuilding of Jerusalem was not till seventy years after; namely, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, in which Nehemiah was sent to rebuild it, (^{<1000>}Nehemiah 2:1) for Darius reigned thirty six years; Xerxes, who succeeded him, reigned twenty years; and in the twentieth of Artaxerxes the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt by Nehemiah; so that from the finishing of the temple are to be reckoned thirty years of the remainder of the reign of Darius, twenty years of Xerxes, and as many of Artaxerxes; and he observes that the seventieth number thrice occurs in the restoration of the Jews, not without mystery, as it should seem: from the Babylonish captivity under Jeconiah, to the putting an end to it by Cyrus, were seventy years; from the taking of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple under Zedekiah, to the rebuilding of it under Darius Hystaspis, were also seventy years; then from the rebuilding of the temple to the rebuilding of Jerusalem under Artaxerxes Longimanus were likewise seventy years; so that the walls of Jerusalem lay in ruins twice seventy years, that is, one hundred and forty years; and it may be further observed, that from the decree granted to Nehemiah in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, seven weeks, or forty nine years, are allowed in Daniel's prophecy for the finishing that event; namely, the building again the walls and streets of Jerusalem in troublesome times, (^{<2005>}Daniel 9:25) which carries the completion of this affair so many years further; which, when effected, would be a comfort to Zion, the inhabitants of it, and all that wished well unto it; and be a proof and evidence of God's choice of it for his worship and service; and, especially, this was fulfilled by bringing into Jerusalem, and the temple there, the messenger of the covenant, the Messiah, the Consolation of Israel; and this may have a further reference to the latter day, when the people of the Jews shall be converted, and all Israel shall be saved; which will be the consolation of them, and show that God has chosen them, and not cast them off.

Ver. 18. *Then I lifted up mine eyes*, etc.] To behold another vision which follows:

and saw, and behold four horns; either iron ones, such as Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made to push the Syrians with, (^{<1221>}1 Kings 22:11) or horns of beasts, as the horns of unicorns, to which the horns of Joseph are compared, (^{<6317>}Deuteronomy 33:17) and signify kingdoms or kings, and these very powerful and mighty; and so the Targum interprets them of “four kingdoms”; and which Kimchi and Abarbinel understand of the four monarchies, Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman; so ten horns, in (^{<2024>}Daniel 7:24 ^{<6672>}Revelation 17:12) design ten kings or kingdoms; unless rather, seeing these horns were such who had already distressed and scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem; and two of the above monarchies were not yet in being, the Grecian and Roman, when this vision was seen; and one of those that were, were friends to the Jews, as the Persians; they may in general signify all the enemies of the Jews that were round about them, on the four corners of them; as the Syrians, Assyrians, and Babylonians, on the north; the Ammonites and Moabites on the east; the Edomites and Egyptians on the south; and the Philistines on the west; as Junius thinks. Cocceius interprets them of four kings, Shalmaneser, Nebuchadnezzar, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes the first, called Longimanus; and may be applied to the antichristian states, Pagan and Papal, in the various parts of the world, called horns, (^{<2024>}Daniel 7:24 ^{<6613>}Revelation 12:3 13:1).

Ver. 19. *And I said unto the angel that talked with me*, etc.] (^{<3009>}Zechariah 1:9,13,14):

What [be] these? that is, who do these horns signify? and what or whom do they represent?

and he answered me, These [are] the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem; which may design the distresses, vexations, and captivities of the people of Israel by their enemies, as by the Moabites, Ammonites, etc. in the times of the judges; and the captivity of the ten tribes of Israel by Shalmaneser; and of the two tribes of Benjamin and Judah, and of the destruction of Jerusalem, by Nebuchadnezzar; when they were ventilated or fanned, as the word ^{f22} signifies, and so scattered abroad; (see ^{<2161>}Jeremiah 6:11 15:7) and also their troubles in the times of the Medes and Persians, under Cambyses, until this second year of Darius; and may likewise have reference prophetically to their after troubles and captivity by the Romans; and to Rome Pagan, which persecuted and

scattered the churches of Christ and people of God in the several parts of the world; and the antichristian states, the persecutors of the same.

Ver. 20. *And the Lord showed me four carpenters.*] To saw and cut in pieces the four horns; or rather “four blacksmiths”^{f23}; these horns were horns of iron; so the word is rendered a “smith” in (^{<0939>}1 Samuel 13:19) and indeed it signifies both a worker in wood and a worker in iron; and who are sometimes distinguished by what they work in, whether wood or iron; (see ^{<2342>}Isaiah 44:12,13). The Jews say^{f24} these four carpenters are Messiah ben David, Messiah ben Ephraim, Elijah, and the priest of righteousness; or, as elsewhere^{f25}, Elijah, the King Messiah, Melchizedek, and he that was anointed for war; though Kimchi much better interprets them of the kings, the princes above, who preside over kingdoms, that is, the angels; and so Jerom and Theodoret; who have been sometimes employed in the destruction of the enemies of God’s people, or in preventing them doing the mischief they otherwise would; and even the several monarchies themselves have been the means of destroying each other; so the Babylonians were destroyed by the Medes and Persians; the Persians by the Grecians; the Grecians by the Romans; and the Romans by the Goths, Hunns, Vandals, etc. in the western part of the empire; and by the Saracens and Turks in the eastern part of it: and they may be applied to the apostles of Christ, who were chiefly mechanics, mean and illiterate persons, yet workmen in the Gospel, that need not to be ashamed; and who were sent by Christ into the four parts of the world, to spread his Gospel, set up his interest, and pull down the kingdom of Satan: and since the Jews make the Messiah himself one of these carpenters, they have no reason to upbraid or be offended at Jesus our Messiah being a carpenter, and a carpenter’s son, as in (^{<0155>}Matthew 13:55 ^{<4018>}Mark 6:3) and Kimchi owns that their ancient Rabbins explain this verse of the days of the Messiah.

Ver. 21. *Then said I, What come these to do?* etc.] That is, these four carpenters; for, being artificers or workmen, as the Targum renders the word, the prophet concluded there was some work for them to do:

And he spake, saying; meaning the angel that talked with him, and interpreted the visions to him:

These [are] the horns which have scattered Judah; not that the carpenters were the horns, for these two are distinct from, and opposite to, one another. The words should rather be rendered, “these horns which have scattered Judah”, as before said, (^{<3019>}Zechariah 1:19):

so that no man did lift up his head; or, as the Targum paraphrases it, “did not suffer” (a man) “to go with an erect stature”; but, through oppression, sorrow, and misery, was obliged to stoop, and bow, and hang down his head:

but these are come to fray them; these carpenters are come to frighten the horns, to put terror into those kings and kingdoms;

to cast out the horns of the Gentiles; to destroy their kingdoms, and take away their power from them:

which lifted up [their] horns over the land of Judah to scatter it: who make use of their power, and do harm to the people of Israel, and triumph and insult over them; (see ¹⁵⁷³⁴Psalm 75:4,5) all which may be applied to the ministers of the Gospel, who are workmen; and whose business it is to fight or terrify the horns, wicked men, even men in power, the enemies of Christ’s church and people; by their preaching, which has made a Felix to tremble; by their prayers, which they have been more afraid of than an army of men, as Mary queen of Scots said of the prayers of John Knox; and by their good lives and conversations, which made Herod stand in fear of John the Baptist; nay, even they have been a terror to the devil himself, and have been the means of casting him, and his principalities and powers, out of the Gentile world, and out of both the bodies and souls of men; and of casting down the strong holds of sin, and of breaking in pieces the kingdom and interest of Satan, and of building up the churches of Christ; the work of these spiritual carpenters is to cut down men, comparable to strong, sturdy, and lofty trees, for the pride and haughtiness of their hearts, the stiffness and stubbornness of their wills, and for their show of goodness and beauty: this is done by the ministry of the word, the cutting doctrines of it, accompanied with the Spirit and power of God; as it is said, “I have hewed them by the prophets, I have slain them by, the words of my mouth”, (²⁰¹⁵Hosea 6:5) whereas, when before, they grew up and stood on their own bottom, their morality, civility, and works of righteousness; now they are cut down, and die to all these things, as to any hope of salvation by them; and then, as the carpenter smooths and planes a timber he has hewed, and fitly frames it together, and joints it in, and lays it on a good foundation; so do Gospel ministers, as instruments in the hands of God, after hewing and cutting work through the ministration of the law, the killing letter, and which works wrath; speak comfortably to such souls, by directing them to the blood and righteousness of Christ for pardon of sin

and justification of life; and ministerially lay them in the spiritual building, the church; or advise and exhort them to submit to the ordinances of Christ, and join themselves to Gospel churches; and, above all things, instruct them to build on Christ, the sure foundation in Zion; and ministerially lay him as the alone foundation to build upon for life and salvation, and not upon any works of righteousness done by them; and put them upon walking according to the line and rule of the divine word, in matters of worship, discipline, and conversation: and as there were in the first times of the Gospel many such builders, and have been more or less since; so there will be many more in the latter day, who will be very successfully employed in building, repairing, and beautifying the church of God; (see ~~28812~~ Isaiah 58:12 60:10 61:4 ~~3815~~ Zechariah 6:15). Some by the four carpenters understand Zerubbabel, Joshua, Ezra, and Nehemiah; and so, by the four horns, those that opposed them in building the city and temple, as Rehum, Shimshai, Sanballat, and Tobiah; but these seem too inferior governors to be signified by horns; nor did they do what is here ascribed to them; rather their nations, Samaritans, Arabians, Ammonites, and Philistines, are meant.