

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH 2

This chapter contains a prophecy of the church under the Gospel dispensation; of the largeness and numbers of it; and of its protection and glory, through the presence of God in it. In this vision a man is seen with a measuring line in his hand, to measure Jerusalem with, (~~301B~~ Zechariah 2:1,2) upon which an angel bids the angel that talked with the prophet to declare to him the largeness, populousness, and safety of Jerusalem, (~~301B~~ Zechariah 2:3-5) then follows an exhortation to the people of God to come out of Babylon, (~~301B~~ Zechariah 2:6,7) and then a promise of the calling of the Gentiles, and of God's gracious inhabitation in his church, which would be matter of joy to Zion; and of his inheriting Judah, and choosing Jerusalem (~~301B~~ Zechariah 2:8-12) and the chapter is concluded with an address to all mankind, to be silent before the Lord, since he was raised up out of his habitation, (~~301B~~ Zechariah 2:13).

Ver. 1. *I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked*, etc.] And saw a third vision; which, as Kimchi owns, refers to the times of the Messiah; though it might be of use to the Jews then present, to encourage them to expect the rebuilding of Jerusalem, in a literal sense:

and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand: by whom is meant, not Nehemiah, nor Zerubbabel; (see ~~304D~~ Zechariah 4:10) who were concerned in the building of Jerusalem; nor any mere man, nor even a created angel; for, though he may be the same with the other angel, that did not talk with the prophet, (~~301B~~ Zechariah 2:3) as Kimchi observes; seeing he seems to be superior to him that did; yet not a ministering spirit, but the Messiah, who in this book is often spoken of as a man; (see Gill on "~~301B~~ Zechariah 1:8") and by "the measuring line in his hand" may be meant eternal predestination, the Lamb's book of life, which is in his keeping; and is the measure and rule by which he proceeds in the calling, justification, and glorification of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven; or the Scriptures of truth, the measure and rule of doctrine, discipline, worship, and conversation; and according to which Christ forms, constitutes, and regulates Gospel churches; (see ~~301B~~ Ezekiel 40:3 ~~610B~~ Revelation 11:1).

Ver. 2. *Then said I, Whither goest thou?* etc.] As it showed great freedom and boldness in the prophet to put such a question to the man with the measuring reed, it was great condescension in him to return him an answer, as follows:

and he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem; not literally understood, which was not yet thoroughly built; but the Gospel church, often so called; (see ^{<3822>}Hebrews 12:22) and this measuring of it denotes the conformity of it to the rule of God's word; a profession of the true doctrines of it, and an observance of the ordinances of it, as delivered in it; and an agreement of the walk, life, and conversation of its members with it:

to see what [is] the breadth thereof, and what [is] the length thereof; the length of the New Jerusalem is as large as the breadth; its length, breadth, and height, are equal, (^{<6216>}Revelation 21:16).

Ver. 3. *And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth,* etc.] (see ^{<3009>}Zechariah 1:9,13,14,19) and he "went forth" from the place where the prophet was, with whom he had been conversing:

and another angel went out to meet him: the same that was seen among the myrtle trees, (^{<3008>}Zechariah 1:8) and here, with a measuring line in his hand, (^{<3007>}Zechariah 2:1).

Ver. 4. *And said unto him,* etc.] That is, the other angel said to the angel that had been talking with the prophet,

Run, speak to this young man: meaning Zechariah, who was either young in years, as Samuel and Jeremiah were when they prophesied; or he was a servant of a prophet older than he, and therefore so called, as Joshua, Moses's minister, was, (^{<04128>}Numbers 11:28) as Kimchi observes:

saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited [as] towns without walls; this shows that this is not to be understood of Jerusalem in a literal sense, for that was not inhabited as a town without a wall; its wall was built in Nehemiah's time, and remained until the city was destroyed by Vespasian; yea, it had a treble wall, as Josephus says^{f26}; but of the church of Christ in Gospel times; and denotes both the safety and security of it; (see ^{<3811>}Ezekiel 38:11) and the populousness of it; and especially as it will be in the latter day, when both Jews and Gentiles are called, and brought into it; which sense is confirmed by what follows:

for the multitude of men and cattle therein; the Jews being meant by “men”; (see ^{<336>}Ezekiel 34:31) and the Gentiles by “cattle”, to which they used to be compared by the former: this will be fulfilled when the nation of the Jews will be born at once, and all Israel will be saved, and the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in; for the number of the spiritual Israel, the sons of the living God, both Jews and Gentiles, shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured, (^{<3010>}Hosea 1:10 ^{<4926>}Romans 9:26) and when there will be such a large increase of converts; and such flockings to Zion, to the spiritual Jerusalem, the church of God, that the place will be too small for them, (^{<2309>}Isaiah 49:19,20) whereas, when Jerusalem in a literal sense was rebuilt, after the Babylonian captivity, there was a want of persons to inhabit it, and lots were cast for one out of ten to dwell in it; and they were glad of others that offered themselves willingly to be inhabitants of it, (^{<1610>}Nehemiah 11:1,2) for there was but a small number that returned from Babylon to repeople the city of Jerusalem, and the whole country of Judea; no more came from thence but forty two thousand, three hundred, and threescore, besides men and maid servants, which amounted to seven or eight thousand more, (^{<1504>}Ezra 2:64,65) (^{<1676>}Nehemiah 7:66,67) which were but a few to fill such a country, and so many cities and towns that were in it, besides Jerusalem; and yet Josephus^{f27} affirms, that the number of those of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, that came up from thence, and were above twelve years of age, were four millions, six hundred, and twenty eight thousand; in which he is followed by Zonaras^{f28}, and it is admitted and approved of by Sanctius on the place; which is not only contrary to the accounts of Ezra and Nehemiah, but is incredible; that such a number that went into captivity, which was not very large, should, under all the distresses and oppressions they laboured, in seventy years time so multiply, and that two tribes only, as to be almost eight times more than all the twelve tribes were at their coming out of Egypt; a number large enough to have overrun the Babylonian monarchy; and too many to be supported in so small a country as the land of Canaan: wherefore, upon the whole, it must be best to interpret this of spiritual and mystical Jerusalem, and of the populousness of the church of Christ in the latter day.

Ver. 5. *For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about,* etc.]. So that she needs no other wall to secure her, the power of God encompassing her about as the mountains did Jerusalem, (^{<1950>}Psalms 125:2) and he being as a wall of fire to terrify and destroy her enemies; for our

God is a consuming fire, (⁸⁰²⁹Hebrews 12:29). Drusius thinks it is a metaphor taken from travellers in some countries, who kindle fires about their tents, to keep off lions, and other beasts of prey; and observes of lions particularly, that they are exceedingly terrified by fire; for which he refers to John Leo in his description of Africa; and Pliny makes^{f29} mention of several things that are terrifying to them, but especially fires, he says; and so Dr. Shaw^{f30}, of late, speaking of the lions in Barbary, remarks, fire is what they are the most afraid of; yet, notwithstanding all the precautions of the Arabs in this respect, with others he takes notice of, it frequently happens that these ravenous beasts, outbraving all those terrors, will leap into the midst of an enclosure or fold, and drag from thence a sheep, or a goat; and Tavernier^{f31} tells a story, by which he thinks it appears to be a vulgar error that lions will not come near the fire; though the relation itself shows it to be not only a received opinion, but a common custom to light fires in the night, to preserve from lions: his story is,

“a party of Dutch soldiers, under the command of a serjeant, far advanced in the country (about the Cape of Good Hope), and night coming on, they made a great fire, as well to keep themselves from the lions, as to warm themselves, and so lay down to sleep round about it; being asleep, a lion seized one of the soldier’s arms, which with difficulty was got out, after the lion was shot;”

but this seems to be the case, when these creatures are dreadfully hunger bitten; however, be it as it will, God is the sure and safe protection of his people; who went before the people of Israel in a pillar of a cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night, when they passed through a terrible wilderness, in which were beasts of prey; and surrounded Elisha with horses and chariots of fire, when the king of Syria sent a large host to take him; so that he could say, to encourage his servant, “they that be for us are more than they that be with them”, (¹²⁶⁵2 Kings 6:15-17) who seem to be angels; and the Jews^{f32} here interpret it of the family of God, his angels, made a wall to Jerusalem to preserve it; the cherubim and a flaming sword, set to keep the garden of Eden, were, according to Lactantius^{f33}, a wall of fire about it; for (he says), when God cast man out of paradise, he walled it about with fire: but that was that man might not enter in; but here he himself is a wall of fire, that his people may be safe; hence they have no reason to fear the wrath of their enemies, the most fierce and furious, savage and cruel, comparable to lions, bears, etc.; for, if God is for them,

on their side, and on all sides of them, who can be against them to any purpose? The Targum paraphrases it,

“my Word shall be unto her, saith the Lord, as a wall of fire encompassing her round about:”

and will be the glory in the midst of her: appear glorious in her, be glorified in her, and by her, and be her glory, and make her glorious; as the Lord does by granting his gracious presence with his church and people, in his word and ordinances; (see ²³⁰¹Isaiah 4:1-6) (²³⁰³Isaiah 60:13).

Ver. 6. *Ho, ho*, etc.] This word expresses a call and proclamation; and is doubled, as Kimchi observes, to confirm it; and so the Targum paraphrases it,

“proclaim to the dispersed:”

[come forth], and flee from the land of the north, saith the Lord; that is, from Babylon, which lay north of Judea; (see ²⁴⁰³Jeremiah 1:13,14) (²⁴⁰²Jeremiah 3:12 6:22 16:15) where many of the Jews continued, and did not return with the rest when they came up out of the captivity; and are therefore called to come forth from thence in haste; and figuratively designs, either the people of God that are among the men of the world, and are called to separate from them, and have no fellowship with there; or such as will be in mystical Babylon, a little before its destruction; and will be called out of it, lest they partake of her plagues; (see ²⁶⁸⁰⁴Revelation 18:4):

for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the Lord; meaning either the dispersion of the Jews in Babylon, and other countries; or of the people of God, being scattered up and down in the jurisdiction of Rome Papal; or the sense is, that it was his will and purpose, when they were come out of Babylon, that they should be spread in the several parts of the world, to support the cause of Christ, and strengthen his interest.

Ver. 7. *Deliver thyself, O Zion*, etc.] Or make thy escape, you that belong to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, and ought to have your abode there, and not in Babylon: flee from thence,

that dwelleth [with] the daughter of Babylon; in any of the antichristian states, who are the daughters of Babylon, the mother of harlots,

(^{<617B>}Revelation 17:5) so it may be rendered, “that inhabits the daughter of Babylon”^{f34}; dwells in any of the cities, towns, and villages, belonging to it.

Ver. 8. *For thus saith the Lord of hosts*, etc.] Christ, who is the true Jehovah, and Lord of armies, as appears from his being sent in the next clause:

After the glory; which is promised, (^{<301B>}Zechariah 2:5) so the Targum and Kimchi; or, “afterwards” shall be “the glory”^{f35}; or a glorious time and state; that is, after God’s people are brought out of mystical Babylon, when the Jews shall be converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in, then will be the latter day glory; and at the same time will be the fall and destruction of antichrist, and of the antichristian states, as follows:

hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you; the Chaldeans and Babylonians, who spoiled and carried captive the Jews; or the antichristian nations, which persecuted and wasted the people of God, the followers of the Lamb; but now Christ will be sent, and will come in a spiritual manner, and take vengeance on them; he will destroy antichrist with the breath of his mouth, and with the brightness of his coming; with the sharp sword going out of his mouth, (^{<695>}Revelation 19:15):

for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye; either his own eye, he hurts himself; or the eye of the Lord of hosts; “of mine eye”, as some read it^{f36}, as the Vulgate Latin version; which shows how near and dear the Lord’s people are to him. The pupil or apple of the eye is a little aperture or perforation in the middle of the tunic or coat of the eye, called the uvea and iris, about which the iris forms a ring; and through this little opening the rays of light pass to the crystalline humour, to be formed on the retina or net, at the bottom of the eye. It is a very weak and tender part, and easily hurt with the least thing; and fitly describes the feeble state of Christ’s people; and how soon and easily they may be disturbed, distressed, and hurt by their enemies: and as this is a principal part of the eye, and a part of a man’s self, dear and valuable to him; so are the Lord’s people parts, as it were, of himself; they are members of his body, closely united to him; and whatever injury is done to them he reckons as done to himself: “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” (^{<495>}Acts 9:5) and being highly esteemed by him, and having the strongest affection for them, he resents every affront given them, and will punish all that hurt them; and exceeding careful is he of them, to keep and preserve them from being hurt: “he kept him as the apple of his eye”, (^{<620>}Deuteronomy 32:10), which, being such

an useful and tender part as it is, it is wonderfully provided for by nature against all events; besides the orbit in which it is placed; and the eyebrows, which prevent many nuisances; and the eyelids, which cover and defend it in sleep; and the fringes of hair on them, which break the too violent impressions of light, and keep off motes and flies; there are no less, than six tunics or coats about it^{f37}, as so many preservatives of it: now, as the God of nature has taken so much care of this useful member of the human body, how much more careful and tender must we suppose the God of grace, and our merciful Redeemer and High Priest, to be over his dear people, parts of himself, redeemed by his blood, and designed and prepared for eternal glory and happiness; and how daring must such be who offer the least violence unto them; nor must they expect to escape his wrath and vengeance, that seek their hurt, and give them disturbance; (see ^{497B}Psalm 17:8) and as this may respect the Jews called out of Babylon in the two preceding verses (³⁰⁶Zechariah 2:6,7), it may be concluded that they were obedient to the divine call, though it is not recorded; it being not likely that God, who had so great a regard for them, would suffer them to continue there to their destruction; for it was about two years after this prophecy, in the fourth year of Darius, or the beginning of the fifth, that Babylon revolted from him, and was besieged twenty months by him, before he took it; and which he did at last by the stratagem of Zopyrus, one of his generals, when he beat down its walls and gates, and put to death three thousand of the inhabitants that were most guilty^{f38}; but, before this, it is reasonable to suppose that the people of God, so dear unto him as is expressed, were called out from hence; as those of his people, equally dear to him, will be called out of mystical Babylon before its destruction; (see ⁶⁸⁰⁴Revelation 18:4).

Ver. 9. *For, behold, I will shake mine hand upon them,* etc.] The nations; either the Babylonian, or the antichristian states; meaning, that he would exert his power, and inflict punishment on them, and utterly destroy them; which would be done by the bare shaking of his hand:

and they shall be a spoil to their servants; as the Babylonians were to the Persians; not through Cyrus, which had been done; but through Darius, who took Babylon, after a siege of twenty months, and put great numbers to death; and all became a spoil to the Persians, who had been their servants: or the ten kings, that gave their kingdoms to the beast, and were subject to him; but now shall hate the whore, and eat her flesh; and all her

riches and revenues shall be a spoil unto them, and be divided among them, (^{<6672>}Revelation 17:12,16):

and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me; either the Prophet Zechariah, that he was a true prophet, and had his mission from the Lord of hosts, as will appear by the accomplishment of these prophecies; or rather Christ, sent by God the Father; and who will be known and owned by the Jews, as well as by the Gentiles, to be the sent of God, when they shall be converted, and antichrist shall be destroyed. Kimchi refers this, and the following verse (^{<3210>}Zechariah 2:10), to the times of the Messiah.

Ver. 10. *Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion*, etc.] Or, “congregation of Zion”, as the Targum paraphrases it; the Jewish church, great numbers of that people being converted, and in a church state; or the whole Christian church at this time, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, who are called upon to rejoice and sing at the destruction of antichrist; see (^{<6683>}Revelation 18:20 19:1,2) and because of the presence of God in the midst of them, as follows:

for, lo, I come; not in the flesh: this is not to be understood of the incarnation of Christ; or of his coming in human nature to dwell in the land of Judea; but of his spiritual coming in the latter day, to set up his kingdom in the world, in a more visible and glorious manner:

and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord; the presence of Christ in his churches, and with his people, in attendance on his word and ordinances, will be very manifest and constant in the latter day.

Ver. 11. *And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day*, etc.] The Gospel will be preached in all nations, and multitudes will be converted, and embrace and profess the Christian religion, and join themselves to the churches of Christ, which, in the New Testament, is expressed by being joined to the Lord, (^{<4453>}Acts 5:13,14) (see ^{<2515>}Jeremiah 50:5 ^{<2513>}Isaiah 56:3,6):

and shall be my people; shall appear to be so, who before were not the people of God; did not profess themselves, and were not known to be, the people of God, though they secretly were in the counsel and covenant of God; but now, being called by grace, they become openly and manifestly his people, (^{<4120>}1 Peter 2:10):

and I will dwell in the midst of thee; in the church, consisting of people of many nations, as well as of Jews:

and thou shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee; to the Jews, as well as to the Gentiles; (see Gill on “^{<38B>}Zechariah 2:9”).

Ver. 12. *And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land*, etc.] The Lord’s people is his portion, and the lot of his inheritance; whom he has chosen, and calls as such, whether they be Jews or Gentiles; but here it seems to mean the believing Jews; who, it is very likely, upon their conversion, will be returned to their own land, here called “the holy land”; because formerly here the Lord’s holy people dwelt, his holy sanctuary was, and his holy worship and ordinances were attended on; and where now he will possess and enjoy his people, and favour them with communion with himself:

and shall choose Jerusalem again; after long trodden down of the Gentiles; as it formerly was a place of divine worship, so it shall be again; and which will be performed in it in a more spiritual and evangelical manner than ever; or it may respect the people of the Jews, who, being called by grace, this will be a kind of a renovation of their election, and an evidence of it; (see ^{<51B>}Romans 11:26-28).

Ver. 13. *Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord*, etc.] Be filled with fear, awe, and astonishment, at the wonderful work of God; the destruction of antichrist; the conversion of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles: let them not open their mouths, or dare to say one word against it. The Targum interprets the words of the wicked, and paraphrases them thus,

“let all the wicked be consumed before the Lord;”

(see ^{<94B>}Psalm 104:35) and it seems to design the rest of the people, who will not be converted; called flesh, being not only frail and mortal, but corrupt and sinful; and so not able to contend with God, who is mighty in strength, and glorious in holiness, and a God doing wonders. A like phrase is in (^{<31D>}Habakkuk 2:20):

for he is raised up out of his holy habitation: which is heaven, (^{<26B>}Isaiah 63:15) where he seemed to have been as it were asleep for many hundreds of years, even during the reign of antichrist; but now he will be as a man awaked out of his sleep, and will arise to take vengeance on his and his church’s enemies, and to help them, and make them happy and glorious.