

ZECHARIAH

The Apocalypse of the Old Testament

Chapter 2, Part 1

Zechariah Chapter 2

¹Then I raised my eyes and looked, and behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand. ²So I said, “Where are you going?” And he said to me, “To measure Jerusalem, to see what *is* its width and what *is* its length.” ³And there *was* the angel who talked with me, going out; and another angel was coming out to meet him, ⁴who said to him, “Run, speak to this young man, saying: ‘Jerusalem shall be inhabited *as* towns without walls, because of the multitude of men and livestock in it.

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⁵‘For I,’ says the LORD, ‘will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.’ ”

⁶“Up, up! Flee from the land of the north,” says the LORD; “for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven,” says the LORD. ⁷“Up, Zion! Escape, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon.”

⁸For thus says the LORD of hosts: “He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye.

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⁹“For surely I will shake My hand against them, and they shall become spoil for their servants. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me.

¹⁰“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,” says the LORD. ¹¹“Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.

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¹²“And the LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem. ¹³“Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD, for He is aroused from His holy habitation!”

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- The vision of this chapter prophesies the rebuilding of the temple and the city of Jerusalem by the remnant of Israel in the days of Zechariah.
- However, this in *no way concludes the prophecy.* Zechariah—and this is true of all the other prophets—looks forward to the very end times and sees the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple during the Millennium as well.

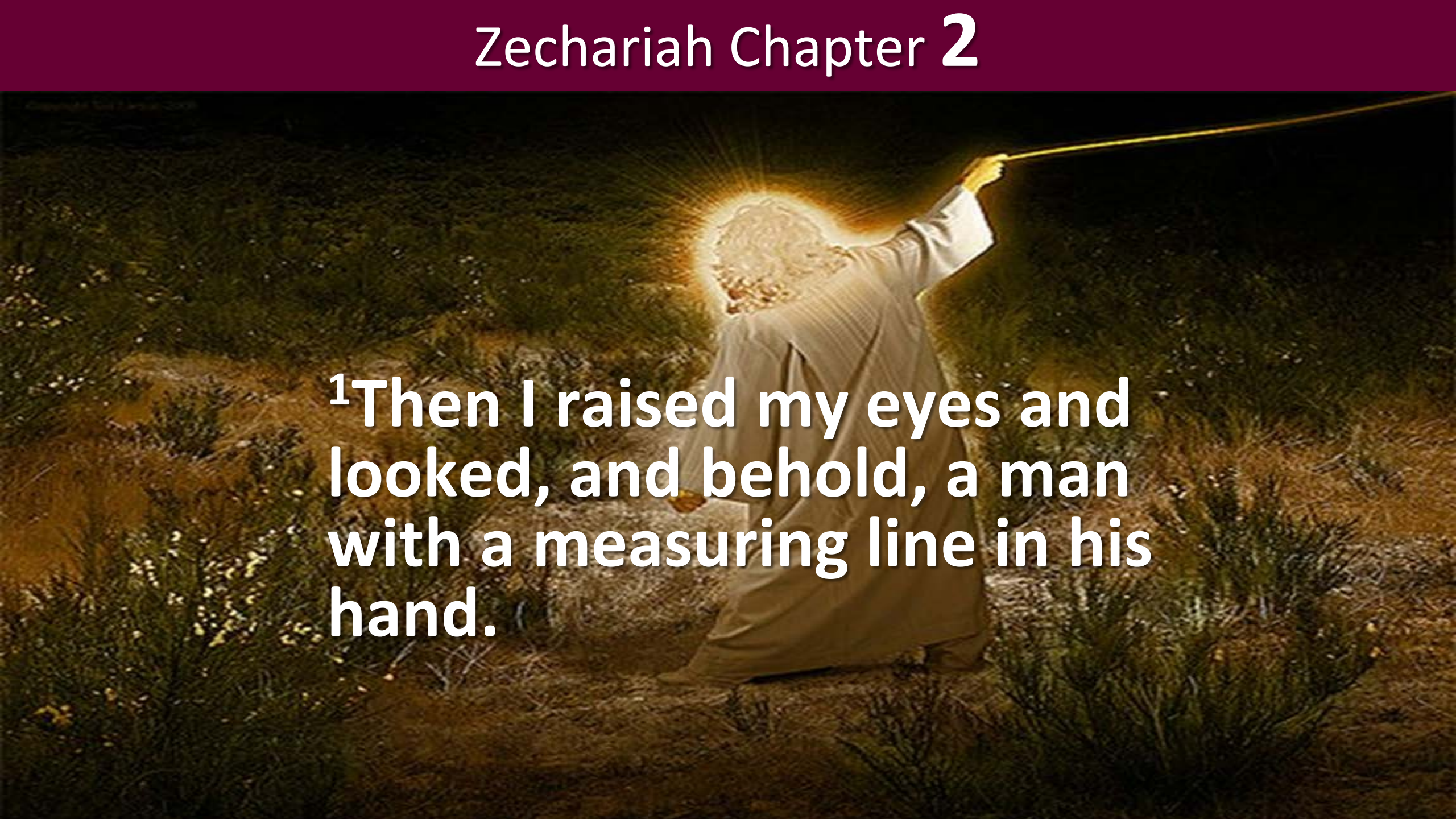
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- *And the Lord Himself will dwell in the city of Jerusalem. ... Keep in mind that Yeshua will do this—He has already said in chapter 1 verse 17, “My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.”*
- Everything that was to be done in Zechariah’s day had **eternal significance**. God has a purpose with Israel—He is not about to cast her off.

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COMMENTARY: *“Although local circumstances in Zechariah’s day were discouraging and it seemed that God has deserted them, He wanted them to know that not only had He not deserted them, but He has an eternal plan and purpose for them. They could say with us, “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Yeshua.” (Philippians 1:6). (McGee)*

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A man in a white robe is shown from behind, holding a long, thin measuring line that extends across the top of the frame. He is standing in a dark, rocky, and sparsely vegetated landscape. The man's head is surrounded by a bright, glowing halo of light. The overall scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the halo around the man's head.

¹Then I raised my eyes and looked, and behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand.

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- ***“Then I looked up”*** serves to tell us this is a new vision, but also that it is connected to the previous visions.
- The vision builds on the previous two visions, and **continues “comforting words”** given to Israel.
- In the previous visions we saw the 4 horns and the 4 carpenters, each one destroying the one before it.

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- Those visions represented Gentile world powers who **were EACH destroyed** by the power coming next (after them), until there was only **one power left**, and no more Gentile kingdoms.



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- That one power, that 4th “carpenter,” was none other than the **carpenter from Nazareth, Jesus Himself**. When He comes again in triumph, He will destroy all human government.
- So at this point, if we assume some sort of chronology, this vision of the man with the measuring line would indicate **something happening AFTER the end** of the Gentile world powers.

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- That “something” here is most likely connected to Israel’s restoration in the Millennial Kingdom.
- The imagery we see also reminds us of another passage in scripture, well known to Zechariah – the prophet Ezekiel (*writing at the beginning of the captivity in Babylon, but before Zechariah’s birth*).
- It is helpful for us to **read that passage now**, as it likely relates to what Zechariah is seeing.

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“In the twenty-fifth year of our captivity, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was captured, on the very same day the hand of the LORD was upon me; and He took me there. ² In the visions of God He took me into the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain; on it toward the south was something like the structure of a city. ³ He took me there, and behold, there was a man whose appearance was like the appearance of bronze. He had a line of flax and a measuring rod in his hand, and he stood in the gateway.

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⁴ And the man said to me, “Son of man, look with your eyes and hear with your ears, and fix your mind on everything I show you; for you were brought here so that I might show them to you. Declare to the house of Israel everything you see.” ⁵ Now there was a wall all around the outside of the temple.”

(Ezekiel 40:1-5)



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- Remaining chapters of Ezekiel describe in great detail a **temple that has never (so far) been built in Jerusalem**. Most commentators believe this would be the Millennial Temple, as descriptions defy current earthly conditions.
- It is thought these **two visions** (*Ezekiel and Zechariah*) **are related**. Ezekiel had his **DURING** the captivity most likely to encourage Israel while she was **IN** captivity, and Zechariah has his to encourage Israel in her **RETURN** from captivity. Israel definitely has a “hope and a future.”

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- **Who is the “man with the measuring line?”**
There are various interpretations including another angel, or a real surveyor Zechariah has seen working on the temple now under construction in reality. *But this is a vision...*
- However, the traditional interpretation (since the earliest commentators), is that the man with the measuring line is the same as the man in the myrtle trees.

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- In other words, **He is the Angel of the LORD**, or Yeshua in pre-incarnate form.
- There are good reasons for interpreting it like this:
- Using the background of Ezekiel 40, it is very clear the man with the measuring line in that vision is indeed Yeshua. His description makes that clear: “behold, there was a man whose appearance was like the appearance of bronze. He had a line of flax and a measuring rod in his hand...” (Ezekiel 40:3)

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- Whenever a “man” appears looking like bronze (*other than a statue!*) it is **likely the Messiah**.
- Remember the vision of John in Revelation 1: *“His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; ...”* (1:15)
- Brass/bronze is a symbol for judgment, and also a signal of God’s great power and glory.



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- The “man” in Ezekiel’s vision is measuring out and describing a new Temple to be built during Messiah’s reign. The “man” here in Zechariah’s vision **seems to be doing the same thing**.
- Also, the kind of work being done in this vision is one of building, and more specifically, **building the future of Israel**. It is a spiritual building that only God can do. Elohim is the great builder, the architect of the physical and spiritual future not only for Israel, but for everyone.

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- Scripture makes this clear: *“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding.⁵ Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it?”* (Job 38:4-5)
- This is Elohim’s rebuke for Job and his friends who think they know God’s ways, but fall far short.
- Or this: *“Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, Measured heaven with a span and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?”* (Isaiah 40:12)

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- It is also interesting to note the Hebrew word for “measuring line” here is different than the one used in chapter 1. This word is generally used not like our “tape measure” but as an instrument for measuring whole plots and districts of land. In other words, the measuring going on here involves more than simple dimensions measurement.



OR...



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- Note that **when “measuring” occurs in scripture** (at God’s direction) it can mean one of two things:
 1. **It can be as a prelude to judgment**, something that has been measured and fallen short, and deserves judgment (*such as Babylon in Daniel 5 and the writing on the wall, or the Temple in Revelation 11*).
 2. OR, it can mean that God is ready **to change the limits of something, generally as an expansion**. In this case He is promising to expand Jerusalem, way beyond its walls and current boundaries

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- This aligns with the Ezekiel passage, which would most likely have been known to Zechariah.
- He would have probably *recognized the man* here with the measure device as the **Angel of Lord**, or the Messiah Himself in another pre-incarnate appearance.

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² So I said, “Where are you going?” And he said to me, “To measure Jerusalem, to see what is its width and what is its length.” ³ And there was the angel who talked with me, going out; and another angel was coming out to meet him, ⁴ who said to him, “Run, speak to this young man, saying: ‘Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls, because of the multitude of men and livestock in it.’”

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- This is a **vision of Jerusalem's future enlargement.**
- A similar measuring line was stretched over Jerusalem in order to **judge and destroy** it years before: *"And I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab; I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down."* (2 Kings 21:13) This verse indicates that the same judgment that fell on the northern kingdom of Israel (*house of Ahab*) was coming then to Jerusalem.

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- Now, after that destruction, the exile and return, Zechariah hears of another measuring line but this time it is not in judgment, but in **promise of expansion and enlargement**.
- From that moment on, the population in Jerusalem continued to increase, until the diaspora of 70 AD.
- It is only in the past 150 years that the population of Jerusalem has been **increasing exponentially, even outside the city walls**. *(Remember these visions concern the end of time fulfillments.)*

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- There is a lot of angelic activity here. There is the one speaking with Zechariah (*seems to be his companion and interpreter throughout these visions*) and the one holding the measuring line (*the Angel of the LORD, Yeshua Himself*) and perhaps another to carry a message for the “young man.”
- **na’ar**, young man. This word is literally a young man, not a child. If Zechariah was a priest at this time of the visions, he would have been at least 30 years old, per Torah.

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- At this time (*of the visions*) the city is struggling to gain back even just a bit of its former structure, size and glory. The city walls were broken down, the city itself ruins. The people were a **bit depressed** about all this.
- Now an angel tells another angel to RUN and tell something to Zechariah, so he can tell all of returning Israel. The city is going to be so big, SO BIG, that it will have to expand well beyond the city walls because those walls won't be able to contain all the people and livestock (*signs of health and prosperity for a city*). That seems pretty amazing to Zechariah at this point!

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- In those days, a city “without walls” would indicate it was **highly vulnerable** to attack from local enemies.
- This news of a greatly enlarged Jerusalem is good news, however. The lack of city of walls won't stop the enlargement and prosperity of Jerusalem.
- **Zionism** is the term for the organized movement for the re-establishment, development, and protection of a Jewish homeland and nation. It was established as a political organization in 1897 by Theodor Herzl, and later led by Chaim Weismann.
- The angel reveals **things still about 2400 years away!**

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- A few decades before formal Zionism began, a British Jew, Sir Moses Montefiore, began building houses outside the walls of Jerusalem in the mid-1800's. *Unfortunately, no one would live in them until he hired a private security force to protect the people.*
- While the great expansion of Jerusalem began around this time, the real scope of the visions are “eschatological.” That is, they **deal with the very end of times**, until Yeshua returns. Jerusalem continues to expand, and will continue, until the end.

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COMMENTARY: *In our day the walls of Jerusalem surround only the older city, the small Arab city. Most of the city is outside the walls, scattered on the surrounding hills. This will also be true when this prophecy is fulfilled in the future. It won't be needful to have walls because (1) in modern warfare walls afford no protection, and (2) the city will be at peace, which means that the Prince of Peace will be reigning in Jerusalem. (McGee)*

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- For Zechariah, expansion into being an unwalled city **might have seemed a bit fearful**. But God will address that issue too, in a moment.
- However, if Zechariah knew the writings of the prophet Ezekiel, this passage would have caused him some concern: *“Thus says the Lord GOD: “On that day it shall come to pass that thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will make an evil plan: ¹¹ You will say, ‘I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates’ — ...*

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- *¹² to take plunder and to take booty, to stretch out your hand against the waste places that are again inhabited, and against a people gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell in the midst of the land.” (Ezekiel 38:10-12)*
- We know this passage is from the well known “**Gog and Magog**” war at the end of time. Obviously at that time, God’s promises to greatly expand the city of Jerusalem with lots of people (*and livestock and all the stuff that comes with lots of people!*) will be largely **fulfilled**.

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- Because of this, Israel's enemies will come against her, ***but to no avail.*** We know how this ends, with fire from heaven (*among other things*)! Reference to God being a “**ring of fire**” around Jerusalem will be very visible and tangible at that time!



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⁵ For I,' says the Lord, 'will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.'"

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- This wall of fire reminds us of the **pillar of fire** in Exodus (14:19-24; also Isaiah 4:5; and later in Zechariah 9:8); also the chariots of fire in 2 Kings 6:17; Isaiah 66:15; Joel 2:5).
- The Angel of the Lord had also been previously associated with the cloud (Exodus 13:21-22), as well as the One appearing in the **execution furnace of fire** with the three Hebrews in Babylon (Daniel 3:25)
- The **promise here is one of security**, as it was in the desert wanderings, and even in the fiery furnace.

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- When the armies of Egypt threatened to wipe out God's people as they crossed the miraculously parted Red Sea, **the pillar of fire stood in their way.** (Exodus 14:19-20, 24)
- The presence of One like the "Son of Man" protected the Hebrew boys (Daniel 3), and the prophet Elisha saw fiery chariots of God surrounding and protecting him and the city from the Assyrians (2 Kings 6:17)
- This fiery, protecting presence of God was not new to the Jews. They were very familiar with a picture of **God's power and glory seen in fire in scripture.**

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- We see this same picture of the risen, glorified Messiah in Revelation 1, in **His blazing countenance**.
- But there may be other reasons for this “ring of fire.” Fire is often associated in scripture with **refining and sanctification**.
- Later in the book of Zechariah we are horrified to discover that 2/3 of the Jews at that time will die during the “time of Jacob’s trouble.” **But the remainder of them will be “refined” as with fire:**

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*“And it shall come to pass in all the land,”
Says the LORD, “That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die,
But one-third shall be left in it:*

*I will bring the one-third through the fire,
Will refine them as silver is refined,*

And test them as gold is tested.

They will call on My name,

And I will answer them.

I will say, ‘This is My people’;

And each one will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’”

(Zechariah 13:8-9)

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- ***“I will be the glory in her midst.”*** This should remind us that God’s glory, His Shekinah, departed from the Temple before it was destroyed. (*During conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon*).
- Ezekiel had a clear vision of the departure of God’s glory from the Temple (Ezekiel 9:30, 19:19). **It did not return until** His glory walked the earth in the flesh of the Messiah.

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- Ezekiel was given vision of that day of the Shekinah's glory returning, and he described it like this:
"Afterward he brought me to the gate, the gate that faces toward the east. ² And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory. ...⁴ And the glory of the LORD came into the temple by way of the gate which faces toward the east. ⁵ The Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple." (Ezekiel 43:1-5)
- In that day the name of the city will be "**YHVH Shammah**" ("*The Lord is there*") (Ezekiel 48:35).

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COMMENTARY: *This certainly is not true in our day. Their [Israel's] help comes from other nations. But God says that in the future He will be a wall of fire around them. This means that God will be their protection. And, my friend, when God protects them, that will be miraculous. Not only will He be their protection, but He Himself will be in their midst. In other words, the shekinah glory will then be back in the temple—it did not return to the little temple which the remnant built in the days of Zechariah. But to the harassed little remnant God is promising His protection, ... Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Revelation are the four apocalyptic books in the Bible. They all look to the future when the Kingdom is to be established here upon earth. (McGee)*

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- In the day that Elohim speaks of in these visions, **He alone will protect Israel.**
- The remainder of Chapter 2 is in poetry in two stanzas, vv. 6-9 and 10-13. Each begins with a command followed by “for...”
- Zechariah now speaks (*as God directs him*), first, to the exiles in Babylon; and then, the people of Zion whose return will act as a symbol of God’s work in the final Day of the Lord.