

The Hope of Israel (1922) By Philip Mauro

Excerpt from CHAPTER II - "HOW ARE THE O.T. PROPHECIES OF BLESSING TO ISRAEL TO BE INTERPRETED?"

Zechariah is one of the books that is frequently referred to as containing prophecies which await a "literal" fulfillment in a future dispensation.

Zechariah, with Haggai, prophesied during the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple, after the return from Babylon of some of the deported Israelites; at which time "the elders of the Jews builded and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo" ([Ezra 6:14](#)). But, as all are agreed, the prophet looks beyond what those men were building, to a temple and a city that were to be far more glorious. He records the word of the Lord concerning Zion: "For, lo I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord *in that day* and shall be My people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee" (2:10,11). And the prophet goes on to speak of a priest, Joshua, who was clothed at first with filthy garments, but to whom it was said, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment" (3:3,4). This Joshua and his fellows were to be "men wondered at; for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch. For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua" (vv. 8,9).

There is no difficulty in recognizing in this passage a prophecy of the coming of Christ as the Branch of Jehovah and as the Foundation Stone of the true Temple of God; for Peter (quoting a similar prophecy by Isaiah) writes to those who have been "redeemed... by the precious blood of Christ," saying:

“Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold I lay *in Sion* a chief corner stone, elect, precious”; and he had just said in the preceding verse, “Ye also, as living stones are [being] built up, a *spiritual* house, an holy priesthood” – as typified by Joshua’s change of garments – “to offer up *spiritual* sacrifices” ([1 Pet. 2:5,6](#)). Thus by Peter’s application of the prophecy we are given plainly to understand that it relates to “spiritual” things, and that it is *now* being fulfilled in the spiritual realm.

It will greatly help us in our efforts to understand the class of prophecies above referred to, if we give due heed to the facts stated in the above quotation from Peter (and stated also in [Hebrews 12:22-24](#), and in the Epistle to the Ephesians as pointed out below) that God’s “*spiritual house*” is in course of erection *now*, that it is being built “in Sion”, and that the believers in Jesus Christ are “living stones” therein, and are also a “royal priesthood.”

Zechariah refers again (6:12-15) to “the Man whose name is The BRANCH,” and who “shall build the temple of the Lord”; and says of Him that “He shall bear the glory, and He shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne.” None will dispute, in the light of New Testament Scriptures, that this prophecy is being fulfilled *now* ([Heb. 2:9](#); [8:1](#), etc.). And the prophet goes on to say that crowns shall be given also to certain men, whom he names, and that “they that are *far off*” (a scriptural designation of Gentiles, see [Acts 2:39](#) and [Eph 2:13](#)), “shall come and build in the temple of the Lord.”

Furthermore, in [Zechariah 9:9](#) we have the familiar passage: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion... behold, thy King cometh unto thee”; and we know to a certainty, from [Luke 19:38](#), that that

prophecy was fulfilled when Christ came to Jerusalem to die for our salvation.

In [Zechariah 13:7-9](#) the atoning death of Christ is foretold in the words, “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow, saith the Lord of hosts. Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered” (See [Matt. 26:31](#)). And what was to follow as regards the Jewish people is foretold in these words: “And it shall come to pass that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts shall be *cut off*, and die; but the third part shall be left therein.” And in agreement with this, the two great parties, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, were “cut off”; but a third part, *the disciples of Christ*, were left. And as to these, the prophecy goes on to say: “And I will bring the third part through the fire and will refine them as silver is refined” (See [1 Pet. 1:6](#) and [4:12](#)); “they shall call on My Name and I will hear them. I will say, It is *My people*; and they shall say, The Lord is My God” (See [Rom. 11:1,2](#)).

Moreover, the apostle Paul declares the same truth concerning the building of God’s true temple *now* as declared by Peter. He makes known that those who believe in Jesus Christ are even now “quickened together with Christ, – and raised up together, and made to *sit* together [*i.e. on thrones*] in heavenly places [Zion] in Christ Jesus” ([Eph. 2:5,6](#)); which plainly declares that we live and reign with Christ even now. This indeed is not perceived with the natural eye or realized in our conscious experience. Nevertheless it is true, and this truth is developed in [Chapter XX](#) of this volume.

And furthermore, in the immediate context, Paul also declares the companion truth revealed by Peter, namely that the saints of this era, Gentiles as well as Jews, and being “built upon the

foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into *an holy temple* in the Lord” (vv. 20, 21).

The expression “in that day” occurs about twenty times in the book of Zechariah; and, as a judicious commentator says, “It is a synonym for the great Messianic hope.” The first of these occurrences we have quoted, “And many nations shall be joined unto the Lord *in that day*” (2:11). What was “*that day*”, then, is *this day now*, for “*now* is the day of salvation”; and “all the prophets from Samuel... as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of *these days*” ([Acts 3:24](#)). And so, when Zechariah says (13:1) “*In that day* there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness,” we understand clearly that he is foretelling the cross of Christ; as very plainly appears from verse 7, “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.” Further reference to the prophecies of Zechariah will be found in Chapter X, *The New Covenant*.

Enough has been said, however, to make evident that the prophecies of Zechariah referred to above, and hence other prophecies of like character as well, relate to things spiritual and have their fulfillment in this present era of grace.

But it will be profitable to follow a little further the subject of the building of God’s true temple. So we recall that, at our Lord’s first visit to Jerusalem, when He had driven the traffickers out of the temple which Herod had built and which was one of the wonders of the world; and when the onlookers demanded of Him what sign He could give in proof of his authority to do those

things, He answered and said unto them, “*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*” ([John 2:19](#)). The Jews understood this “literally”; that is to say, they took it as applying to that building of material stones which stood on Mt. Moriah; and had the record stopped there, it would doubtless be insisted by some in our day that that great edifice, which has been meanwhile destroyed so completely that not one stone remains upon another, is to be miraculously restored in the coming millennium. But, to the end that we should not be misled and also *that we might have a key to the interpretation of prophetic utterances of this sort*, the Spirit caused John to insert the explanatory note: “But He spake of *the Temple of His Body*.”

This is just one of the many, seemingly casual, indications scattered throughout the Scriptures, that God’s promises are to be fulfilled and His purposes are to be accomplished *in the resurrection*; that is to say, in the new creation.

Again, at a subsequent visit to Jerusalem, at the season of one of the feasts, “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying, If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink, he that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” ([John 7:37,38](#)). We might well wonder what would have been made of this saying by those who insist upon “literal” interpretations, had it been left unexplained; and therefore we should be thankful indeed for the added words, “But this spake He *of the Spirit*, which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” Those words put beyond all uncertainty the meaning of the phrase “living water,” as used, for example, in [Zechariah 14:8](#), “And it shall be *in that day* that *living waters* shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them

toward the former (or eastern, *marg.*) sea [the Caspian], and half of them towards the hinder sea” [the Mediterranean] – in other words, both eastward and westward – “in summer and in winter it shall be” – that is, all the year round.

In the light of John’s explanation, we understand, therefore, that our Lord was foretelling, not some extraordinary *physical* phenomenon, which was to happen in a far off millennial age, but the then approaching era of the Holy Spirit, when there was to be an outflow of the gospel, “with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven” ([1 Pet. 1:12](#)), both eastward and westward from Jerusalem. Thus both the place whence (Jerusalem) and the time when (“in that day”) those living waters were to begin to flow out into all the world, both summer and winter, are plainly foretold in Zechariah’s prophecy. Further explanations of the prophecies concerning the outflow of living waters from the Temple at Jerusalem will be found below (Chapter XIII) in connection with a discussion of Ezekiel’s temple and of the question, *Where did the Spirit descend at Pentecost?*

And again let it be noted that these explanations put us in possession of the general principle upon which all prophecies of the same sort should be interpreted. They harmonize fully with all other indications contained in the Scriptures; making it abundantly plain that all the prophecies of future glory and blessing for Israel, Zion, and Jerusalem, pertain to that “holy nation” ([1 Peter 1:9](#)) “the Israel of God” ([Gal. 6:16](#)), and to that heavenly “Mount Sion,” and to “the city of the living God, the *heavenly* Jerusalem,” to which we already “*are come*” ([Heb 12:22](#)).

Therefore, for the above, and for other reasons set forth elsewhere in this volume, the writer reaches the conclusion that we are to look for the fulfillment of the prophecies in question –

not to another *age* than this, but – to another *locality*; namely, to that *spiritual realm*, which Paul designates “*the heavenlies*“; where our Lord is gone to prepare a place for us, where the true temple is now in course of erection, and where already exists “the Jerusalem which is above, which is the mother of us all” ([Gal. 4:26](#)).

The idea of a future “dispensation” for the fulfillment of prophecies on the earth, abounds in difficulties, and moreover it contradicts many passages of Scripture; whereas the idea of *another locality*, a spiritual and heavenly realm where those prophecies are in course of fulfillment *now*, is free from all difficulty, and has, moreover, the support of many N.T. Scriptures.

Concerning the now-existing realm of unseen things enough is said in the Scriptures to make known that it is a region of great activity; that the “principalities and powers” therein are numerous and mighty – angels and demons, good spirits and evil – and hence we must infer that there are happenings there which are of immense importance and significance. For example, we read: “There was a war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels” ([Rev. 12:7](#)). Also, that “we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” ([Eph. 6:12](#)).

In this connection it were well to recall that the title of the last book of the Bible, “The Apocalypse,” means *the unveiling*; that is to say, the taking away of the veil that normally separates the realm of spiritual things from that of natural things. That the title indicates that the visions described in the book of “Revelation” bring into view things and happenings in the spiritual realm,

whereof, except for this unveiling, we should be wholly unaware. And when we come to Chapter XX, where is found the only reference in the Bible to the millennium – “the thousand years” – the language of the inspired writer makes it evident that the happenings of the millennium *are part of the history of the spirit realm*. This will be shown in the last chapter of this volume. It follows that all effort to find a place for those happenings in the history of this physical world, whether before or after the second advent, is utterly vain.