Zechariah 5:5-11

**Digging Deeper in the Word**

Wyn Laidig

November 2015

***Zechariah 5:5–11*** (ESV)  
**5** Then the angel who talked with me came forward and said to me, “Lift your eyes and see what this is that is going out.” **6** And I said, “What is it?” He said, “This is the basket that is going out.” And he said, “This is their iniquity in all the land.” **7** And behold, the leaden cover was lifted, and there was a woman sitting in the basket! **8** And he said, “This is Wickedness.” And he thrust her back into the basket, and thrust down the leaden weight on its opening. **9** Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, two women coming forward! The wind was in their wings. They had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between earth and heaven. **10** Then I said to the angel who talked with me, “Where are they taking the basket?” **11** He said to me, “To the land of Shinar, to build a house for it. And when this is prepared, they will set the basket down there on its base.”

1. The last section of Chapter 5 presents the SEVENTH vision of Zechariah. Review again the main points of the previous visions:  
   a) Introduction, Zech 1:1-6  
   b) First Vision, “Man & horses in the myrtle trees”: Zech 1:7-17   
   c) Second Vision, “Four horns and craftsmen”: Zech 1:18-21 .   
   d) Third Vision & Oracle, “ Man with measuring line”: Zech 2  
   e) Fourth Vision, “Satan accuses the High Priest”: Zech 3   
   f) Fifth Vision, “Golden Lampstand & Olive Trees”: Zech 4  
   g) Sixth Vision, “Flying Scroll”: Zech 5:1-4

a) Introduction, Zech 1:-1-6  
Repent! Don’t be like your ancestors! Return to me and I will return to you.

b) First Vision, “Man & horses in the myrtle trees”: Zech 1:7-17   
Be encouraged – YHWH will rebuild His city and His land, and with dwell with His people again, bringing prosperity to them.

c) Second Vision, “Four horns and craftsmen”: Zech 1:18-21 .   
YHWH knows His people have been suffering under the hands of others nations, and is going to punish those nations. The abuses will be paid for. Take heart, be encouraged, for I am your God.

d) Third Vision & Oracle, “ Man with measuring line”: Zech 2  
YHWH will be rebuild the city like never before. It will be filled with people so walls cannot contain it. It will be prosperous and powerful… they will plunder the nations that have plundered them. And they will have the protection and presence of YHWH. Judgment day is coming!

e) Fourth Vision, “Satan accuses the High Priest”: Zech 3  
Yeshua (Joshua the high priest) is a sign of Yeshua the Messiah to come; “my servant the Branch”. Satan accuses Yeshua before God as unclean and unfit for duties as High Priest; but then he is made clean and pure. Likewise, the sins of the nation will be removed in a single day.

f) Fifth Vision “Golden Lampstand & Olive Trees” This vision promises that the Zerubbabel will see the temple reconstruction completed. Therefore the people should follow his leadership. He will lead them successfully. Furthermore, he and Yeshua are anointed ones of YHWH, standing beside Him as chosen ones for this task.

g) Sixth Vision: It is a wake up call to know that judgment and destruction will come upon all those who refuse to align their lives with His Word. It would encourage them to want to be on the right side of this coming judgement.

1. In Zech 5:6 Zechariah sees a “basket” going out (going away). The Hebrew word translated as “basket” is **ehpah**. What is an **ephah**?

An ephah is a unit of measurement, about 2/3 of bushel (just over 5 gallons). An ephah could also be a container used to measure out an ephah of grain.

1. In Zech 5:6, the ephah is said to be “**their** **iniquity** in all the land”. Some versions translate this phrase as “**their eye**” or “**their appearance**”. Do a little research and see if you can find out why there are these different ways to translated this phrase.

The ancient manuscripts vary in the vowels for this word, so we have an ambiguity. The Greek Septuagint and the ancient Syriac texts both read “their iniquity,” based on a reading עֲוֹנָם, **`ăwōnām** “their sins” while the Hebrew Masoretic Text reads עֵינָם, **`ênām** “their eye”.

1. If it is to be translated as “their eye”, what might that refer to? Compare the context of the phrase “in all the land/earth” is used is Zech 1:10-11 and Zech 4:10.

***Zechariah 1:10–11***So the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered, ‘These are they whom YHWH has sent to patrol the earth.’ And they answered the angel of YHWH who was standing among the myrtle trees, and said, ‘We have patrolled the earth, and behold, **all the earth** remains at rest.’

***Zechariah 4:10***For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. “These seven are **the eyes of YHWH**, which range **through the whole earth**.”

It could be that this "evil eye" is the counterpart to the 7 eyes of YHWH, which is His "sevenfold/complete Spirit". The evil eye of Satan roves the earth as well, but his power and influence will be taken away.

1. Regardless of whether the ephah represents the “evil eye” of Satan or the sins of the people, we now see that it is symbolized by a woman. What title or name is the woman given?

A woman was inside is called “Wickedness”.

1. Compare this woman with the woman of Revelation 17-19. See Rev 17:3-6, Rev 18:2-5, and Rev 19:1-2. What did the woman of represent?

***Revelation 17:3–6***And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality. And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: “Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth’s abominations.” And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. When I saw her, I marveled greatly.

***Revelation 18:2–5***And he called out with a mighty voice, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living.” Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

***Revelation 19:1–2***After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.”

The woman represented a “spiritual prostitute”, and was referred to as Babylon, the place of evil and deceit.

1. Considering the possible connection between the woman in the ephah and the woman riding the beast of Rev 17, look at Rev 17:18. How does that fit with the “their eye / iniquity in all the land”.

***Revelation 17:18***And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth.”

The woman had power & influence over all the kings of the earth, like the “roving eye” throughout the land. The woman, because of her global influence, represents all the iniquities o the world.

1. Why do you think the ephah cover was made of lead?

Lead is very heavy. It shows the woman is bound and cannot get out.

1. Next we see two woman come to carry the ephah away. Zech 5:8 says “the wind was in their wings”. Compare Ps 104:3 and 2 Sam 22:11. What is the Hebrew word for “wind” and what else does that word mean?

***Psalm 104:3***He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind;

***2 Samuel 22:11***He rode on a cherub and flew; he was seen on the wings of the wind.

wind = Hebrew **ruach** “spirit”. This same word is used to refer to the Holy Spirit.

1. Wings = Hebrew **kanaf** which also symbolizes the healing and protection of YHWH. Look at Ps 17:1, Ps 57:1, Mal 4:2, and Ex 25:20. What did the wings of the cherubs cover in the tabernacle?

***Psalm 17:8***Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings,

***Psalm 57:1***Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by.

***Malachi 4:2***But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.

***Exodus 25:20***The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, their faces one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be.

The wings of the cherubim were over the ark of the covenant – the atonement cover – the place where the sins of the nation of Israel were atoned for each year.

1. Based on the above references, could there perhaps be further symbolism in the two woman with wind in their wings? If so, what?

Perhaps these are symbolically pointing us to the messengers of YHWH providing the healing & protection of YHWH through his Spirit. This would fit with their actions of taking away the sins of mankind.

1. What do the “wings of a stork” refer to?

A stork is known to have large wings, so they can carry a heavy load.

1. They are taking the ephah with the woman to Shinar. Where is Shinar and what does it represent? See Gen 10:10. Why would the woman be taken there?

***Genesis 10:10***The beginning of his kingdom was **Babel,** Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of **Shinar.**

Shinar is an ancient name for Sumer and Akkad, located in Mesopotamia, including the city of Babel, which is the same as Babylon “the gate of the gods”.

Perhaps the woman is "going home", being sent back to "Babylon" where her eventual destruction awaits (as foretold in Revelation).

1. Why was Babylon symbolically used to describe a place a evil? See Gen 11:4.

***Genesis 11:4***Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.”

This place (Babel, Babylon, Shinar) became “the epitome of humanistic independence of and resistance to God and His sovereignty. It was at Babylon, in the land of Shinar, that the rebel human race erected a great ziggurat, the purpose of which was to frustrate God’s mandate to ‘be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth’. The men of Babylon had said, ‘Let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the surface of the whole earth’. From that time Babylon became synonymous with arrogant human independence, the very fountainhead of antitheocratic social, political, and religious ideology.” Eugene Merrill, Commentary on Haggai. Zechariah & Malachi.

1. What does it mean that a “house” would be built for the Woman of Wickedness?

Perhaps this refers to the eternal dwelling place in the lake of fire, referred to Revelation.

1. Summarize this vision and its meaning.

God will rid the entire earth of sin and all influence of the evil one.

1. How would this vision have been received by the people of Zechariah’s time? How would it have encouraged them to respond?

This is good news in that the earth’s people will finally be free of iniquity. But it is bad news if you are allied with the woman of wickedness who is to be sent into exile.

Near fulfillment – the people came out of Babylon with a lot of sinful “baggage” from that culture. YHWH is saying “send that baggage back to Babylon”. He wants a spotless virgin bride, not one bride who has been associating with or acting like a prostitute.

1. How does this prophetic vision apply to us today?

Far fulfillment – God says “Come out of her (Babylon) my people!” “I don’t want a prostitute for a bride. I want a pure and spotless virgin for my bride.” We need to examine our lives for sinful baggage we are carrying from our culture, and send it back!