

ZECHARIAH: GOD'S PRESENT DIRECTIVES AND FUTURE HOPE
VIII: God's Judgment Of The World's Religious And Commercial Materialism
(Zechariah 5:5-11)

I. Introduction

- A. Zechariah along with Haggai called the returning Hebrews back to rebuilding the temple, and he gave God's directives and future hope. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Introduction to the Book of Zechariah," p. 1310)
- B. The seventh vision in Zechariah 5:5-11 of a set of eight visions predicts God's judgment of world religious and commercial materialism before the Millennial Kingdom. We view it for our insight and application:

II. God's Judgment Of The World's Religious And Commercial Materialism, Zechariah 5:5-11.

- A. Where the sixth vision of Zechariah 5:1-4 predicted God's judgment on Israel's individual materialism that the Hebrews had acquired in Babylon during their national captivity and that had hindered them from rebuilding the temple, the seventh vision of Zechariah 5:5-11 deals with God's judgment on the end-time ecclesiastical and commercial materialism that would be produced on a worldwide scale before the Millennial Kingdom. (Merrill F. Unger, Zechariah, 1974, p. 91-92)
- B. Accordingly, the angel speaking with Zechariah showed him the commercial dry measurement of an ephah basket that was slightly larger than today's bushel going forth over the land, a measurement representing the wicked world system that was embedded in commercial materialism, Zechariah 5:5-6 ESV; *Ibid.*, p. 91-94.
- C. A talent of lead functioned as the top cover for the ephah, with the talent serving to augment the emphasis on commercial materialism since lead "was employed in all commercial transactions for weighing out money," Zechariah 5:7a; *Ibid.*, p. 94-95.
- D. The angel lifted up the lead talent from the top of the ephah so that Zechariah saw a woman "sitting" inside the ephah, Zechariah 5:7b. "The participle 'sitting,' *yosheveth*, from *yashav*, 'to sit down, dwell, remain' . . . carries with it in this context the idea of sitting quietly, contentedly, and remaining in a relaxed position, or 'dwelling' in a place . . ." (*Ibid.*, p. 95) This woman is in "intimate contact with worldly wealth and commerce, by which she is supported and in which she delights," *Ibid.*
- E. The angel said the woman was "Wickedness" (v. 8a), what we later know from Revelation 17 is "Babylon the Great" that "represents all apostate religious movements from their inception in ancient Babylon of Nimrod (Gen. 10:8-10), the seat of the first departure from God eventuating in the judgment of the confusion of tongues (Gen. 11:1-9), to their terrible consummation in Romanism, apostate Protestantism, demon-controlled Judaism (Matt. 12:43-45), paganism, and other evil religious forces of the last days," *Ibid.*, p. 95-96.
- F. After identifying the woman as "Wickedness," the angel thrust the woman back down into the ephah, and pushed the lead weight down over its opening, forcibly imprisoning her in the ephah basket, Zechariah 5:8b. Thus, though the world's false religions will end up fully compromising with the world's godless commercialism to enjoy a life of luxury, when it is time for "commercial Babylon to be removed, to be destroyed, the woman tries to escape from it, because *she does not want to be removed with it*, and so share its inevitable fate. Therefore she tries to escape," *Ibid.*, p. 96-97. The Apostle John predicted the fall of Babylon the Great in Revelation 17:15-16 when the Antichrist and the ten kings of the Revived Roman Empire hate the "woman" so that God uses them to destroy her in divine judgment, *Ibid.*, p. 97.
- G. Zechariah then saw two women flying with wings of storks, ceremonially unclean birds, the women signifying demonic forces that protectively support the world's apostate religions, and they take the ephah with its contents off to the land of Shinar, that is, Babylon, to put it on its protective base there, Zechariah 5:9-11. This removal indicates God's removal of apostate commercialism from the land of Israel as a necessary step in preparing for the Millennial Kingdom without addressing the final annihilation of "Babylon the Great" from the entire world in the Great Tribulation as is taught in Revelation 17-18, *Ibid.*, p. 97-99. "Not until this evil system is removed from Palestine will it become 'the holy land,' and not until it is rooted out of the whole earth in its entirety will God's kingdom come and God's will be done in earth as it is in heaven," *Ibid.*, p. 99.

Lesson: *Before the Millennial Kingdom can be instituted, the world's apostate religions with their indulgence in idolatrous commercialism with its materialism must be purged from the Holy Land and from the whole world.*

Application: *(1) Negatively, may we as a church avoid false beliefs and materialism, for God will judge them both in the end in Babylon the Great, the world's apostate religions. (2) Positively, may we "use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away," 1 Corinthians 7:31 NIV.*