

# The Whitefield Seminary Papers

“Law & Religion Forum”

Volume 2, Apostolate Paper #21



---

## A HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

“Zechariah’s Prophecy: A Prologue to the New Testament”<sup>1</sup>

---

by

Roderick O. Ford, Litt.D., LL.D.

Copyrighted Material © 2021

---

<sup>1</sup> Roderick O. Ford, *The Apostolate Papers* (unpublished research papers, 2015 to 2022). [www.roderickford.org](http://www.roderickford.org).

# “Zechariah’s Prophecy: A Prologue to the New Testament”<sup>2</sup>

by

Roderick O. Ford, D.Litt. (Law & Religion)



## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Chapter 1. Allegorical Symbolism .....	6
Chapter 2. The King Comes Riding on a Colt.....	15
Chapter 3. Universal Shepherd: Parable of Two Staffs.....	18
Chapter 4. Social Justice.....	20
Chapter 5. Prophecy of the Church.....	22
Conclusion.....	23
Appendix, “Social Justice, Torah, and U.S. Constitution” .....	24

---

<sup>2</sup> Roderick O. Ford, *The Apostolate Papers* (unpublished research papers, 2015 to 2022). [www.roderickford.org](http://www.roderickford.org).

## Introduction

The Prophet Zechariah was a 6<sup>th</sup> century Hebrew prophet who lived during the reign of the Persian king named Darius I. He was the son of Berekiah and the grandson of Iddo.<sup>3</sup>

Jesus of Nazareth mentioned Zechariah in the New Testament as a martyr, stating:

And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to **the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.** Truly I tell you, all this will come on this generation.

**“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you,** how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. 38 Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”<sup>4</sup>

The Prophet Ezra mentioned Zechariah in the Book of Ezra as being one of two prophets who were concerned with the rebuilding of the Second Temple, stating:

### Completion and Dedication of the Temple

Then, because of the decree King Darius had sent, Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and their associates carried it out with diligence.

So the elders of the Jews continued to build and prosper under the preaching of Haggai the prophet and **Zechariah, a descendant of Iddo.** They finished building the temple according to the command of the God of Israel and the decrees of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes, kings of Persia.

---

<sup>3</sup> Zechariah 1:1.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 23: 35-39.

The temple was completed on the third day of the month Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.<sup>5</sup>

And so, we may deduce from both the Book of Zechariah and other biblical sources that the Prophet Zechariah was known for his advocacy of repentance, religious reform, social justice,<sup>6</sup> the building the Second Temple, and martyrdom.<sup>7</sup>

The Book of Zechariah is filled with symbolism and allegory, including the four horns;<sup>8</sup> the four craftsmen;<sup>9</sup> the man with the measuring line;<sup>10</sup> the clean garments for the high priest;<sup>11</sup> the gold lampstand;<sup>12</sup> the two olive trees;<sup>13</sup> the flying scroll;<sup>14</sup> the woman in a basket;<sup>15</sup> and the four chariots.<sup>16</sup>

In addition, the Book of Zechariah predicted that Israel's (i.e., Zion's) king "comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."<sup>17</sup> The Early Church believe that this passage was fulfilled by Christ in the New Testament.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Ezra 6: 13-15.

<sup>6</sup> Zechariah 7:1-14.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 23:35; Luke 11:51.

<sup>8</sup> Zechariah 1: 18-21.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Zechariah 2:1-13.

<sup>11</sup> Zechariah 3:1- 10.

<sup>12</sup> Zechariah 4: 1-14.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Zechariah 5:1-4.

<sup>15</sup> Zechariah 5: 5-11.

<sup>16</sup> Zechariah 6: 1-8.

<sup>17</sup> Zechariah 9: 9.

<sup>18</sup> Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10.

There is also in the Book of Zechariah a reference to “the one they have pierced”<sup>19</sup> and “the handsome price” of “thirty pieces of silver.”<sup>20</sup> And this, along with all the other allegorical symbols, involve the passion of Christ in the New Testament.

Furthermore, the Book of Zechariah describes the allegorical symbols of the “two staffs,” one called “Favor” and the other called “Union.” This message clearly describes a “**covenant... made with all nations,**”<sup>21</sup> symbolizing God’s universal grace made accessible to all of humanity—not only the ethnic Jews, ethnic Hebrews, or the ethnic Israelites— denoting a “spiritual” Israel, an internationalization of orthodox Judaism, a “reformed” or “catholic” Judaism, amongst all nations.

Finally, the Book of Zechariah appears to describe the restoration of Israel, the revolt of many nations against Israel; and the ultimate reign of the LORD God as “king over the whole earth.”<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Zechariah 12:10.

<sup>20</sup> Zechariah 11:12.

<sup>21</sup> Zechariah 11:10.

<sup>22</sup> Zechariah 14:9.

## Chapter One

### “Allegorical Symbolism”

Reformed theology—and particularly that of Augustine of Hippo’s—includes that of allegorical interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures.<sup>23</sup>

To be sure, the Book of Zechariah is an “allegorical” theological discourse on the significance of the building the Second Temple and the restored Israel.

#### 1. Four Horns and the Four Craftsmen

For instance, Zechariah sees a vision of four horns. “These are the horns that scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem” throughout the earth.

Up to the time of Zecharia, there had been only two major captivities: the Assyrian captivity in 722 BC, and the Babylonian captivity in 597 BC.

But according to the Book of Daniel, the four Beasts are (1) Babylon; (2) Mede-Persia; (3) Greece; and (4) Rome. And so perhaps the “four horns” in the Book of Zechariah refers to these four kingdoms. But others have given the word “four” an allegorical interpretation, meaning “numerous nations from the four corners of the world.” To that end, Reformed theologian John Calvin (1509 – 1564) writes:

But let us see in the first place why the Prophet mentions four horns. The Jews refer to the Assyrians and the Babylonians, to the Persian, the Grecians, and the Romans; because we find in other places, and Daniel especially shows very clearly, (Daniel 2:32,) that there were to be four principal monarchies, by which God intended to give clear and memorable examples of his judgments. But the Prophet, I have no doubt, speaks here of the Moabites and of the Syrians, and of other nations, as well as of the Assyrians or Chaldees. They are then mistaken, as I think, who suppose that these four monarchies are intended here: **but Zechariah says that they were four horns,**

---

<sup>23</sup> The “allegorical” method of interpretation was established at Alexandria, Egypt during the second and third centuries, BC. Origen was a great champion of this method of Scriptural hermeneutics.

**because they arose from the four quarters of the world;** for we know that the Jews were not harassed only on one side, but on the east and the west, on the north and the south. Since then enemies on every side joined their strength and their forces against the Jews, **so that there was a cause for trembling from the four quarters of the world,** that is, from all places around them, the Prophet says, that they had been scattered by four horns

This view, however, seems still frigid, because it was not necessary for the Prophet to state what was well known to all: but **God intended to show that the nations which had been inimical and hostile to the Jews,** had done nothing but through his hidden impulse, in order that the Jews might understand that these were so many scourges by which he purposed to chastise them.<sup>24</sup>

The “four craftsmen” are equally numerous as the “four horns,” and thus these craftsmen are God’s laborers in the earth—whether angels or humans—who build up the kingdom of God to overthrow the vicious horns of the devil. The craftsmen are skilled workers. They practice a variety of arts and crafts. They shall serve God in overthrowing evil work of the “four horns.” John Calvin has opined that these “craftsmen” represent God’s creative power and means for overthrowing evil.

## 2. The Man with the Measuring Line

The Book of Zechariah next describes the nature and the dimensions of the newly-built Jerusalem.

The Prophet Zechariah sees a man with a measuring line who preparing “To measure Jerusalem, to find out how wide and how long it is.”<sup>25</sup>

The implicit answer is that these dimensions are immeasurable: “Jerusalem will be a city without walls because of the great number of men and livestock in it. And I myself will be wall of fire around it,” declares the LORD, “and I will be its glory within.”<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Calvin’s *Commentaries on the Bible* (Zechariah 1:18.)

<sup>25</sup> Zechariah 2:2.

<sup>26</sup> Zechariah 2:4-5.

Here, Zechariah is already speaking of a “spiritual” Jerusalem—as opposed to a physical one.

There is next a disturbing reference to “the Daughter of Babylon”<sup>27</sup> and a “land of the north,”<sup>28</sup> and prophetic statement:

I will surely raise my hand against them so that **their slaves** will plunder them. Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me....

Many nations will be joined with the LORD in that day and will become my people. I will live among you and you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you....

Be still before the LORD, all mankind, because he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.<sup>29</sup>

Hence the “Jerusalem” in Zechariah’s prophecy is, among other things, a haven for “slaves” from the spiritual Babylon which is also called a “land of the north.”

Zechariah’s “Jerusalem” is spiritual in nature, a city without walls protected by the LORD God Himself who shall be its “wall of fire around it.”<sup>30</sup>

Zechariah’s “Jerusalem” shall comprise of “many nations”<sup>31</sup> and “all mankind.”<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Zechariah 2: 7.

<sup>28</sup> Zechariah 2: 6.

<sup>29</sup> Zechariah 2: 9-12.

<sup>30</sup> Zechariah 2:5.

<sup>31</sup> Zechariah 2:11.

<sup>32</sup> Zechariah 2:13.



### 3. Clean Garments for the High Priest

We find the High Priest Joshua wearing dirty clothes, standing next to the Satan, who stands ready to accuse him before the LORD.<sup>33</sup> But the LORD justifies Joshua and replaces his filthy clothes with “rich garments.”<sup>34</sup>

“See, I have taken away your sin,” says the LORD.<sup>35</sup>

Significantly, the Persian king is Darius I, and he is the imperial ruler over ancient Judea at this time.

Perhaps for this reason, the executive leadership in Zechariah’s Jerusalem is vested in the high priest, Joshua. The Book of Zechariah states:

The angel of the LORD gave this charge to Joshua: “This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘If you will walk in obedience to me and keep my requirements, **then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts**, and I will give you a place among these standing here.

“Listen, High Priest Joshua, you and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come: **I am going to bring my servant, the Branch.**

See, the stone I have set in front of Joshua! There are seven eyes on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it,’ says the LORD Almighty, ‘**and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day.**

“In that day each of you will invite your neighbor to sit under your vine and fig tree,’ declares the LORD Almighty.”...<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, a crown is made for this same high priest, to wit:

Take the silver and gold and make a crown, and set it on the head of the high priest, Joshua son of Jozadak.

---

<sup>33</sup> Zechariah 3:1-4.

<sup>34</sup> Zechariah 3: 4.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Zechariah 3: 6-10.

Tell him this is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘**Here is the man whose name is the Branch**, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord.

It is he who will build the temple of the Lord, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.’

The crown will be given to Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah and Hen son of Zephaniah as a memorial in the temple of the Lord.

Those who are far away will come and help to build the temple of the Lord, and you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you. This will happen if you diligently obey the Lord your God.”<sup>37</sup>

As Christ would be the new High Priest as well as the new Davidic King (i.e., Messiah), he was also as the “Branch,” that is referenced in the Book of Zechariah. To this point, Reformed theologian John Calvin (1509- 1564) explains further, to wit:

Let us notice this, which is the main part of the verse, Behold, I send my servant, the Branch. The God of hosts no doubt refers to the priest, who is eminent beyond the common comprehension of men. He is called a Branch, because he was to come forth as a stem, according to what is said in Isaiah, the eleventh chapter, Isaiah 11:1 and in other places. It is then the same as though he had said, “this priesthood is as yet disregarded, nevertheless my servant, the priest, shall come forth like a branch which arises from the earth, and it will grow.” The word **צמח**, *tsamech* means a shoot. **He then compares Christ to a shoot, for he seemed, as we say, to rise up from nothing, because his beginning was contemptible.** For what excellency had Christ in the estimation of the world when he was born? how did he commence his kingdom? and how was he initiated into his priesthood? Doubtless, whatever honor and glory the Father had given him was regarded we know with contempt. It is then no wonder that he is on this account called a Branch.

---

<sup>37</sup> Zechariah 6: 11-15.

**Now the reason for the similitude is apparent enough: and though the angel speaks indefinitely, the person of Christ is no doubt intended.** How so? We may judge by the event itself. What priest succeeded Joshua who equalled him in honor, or who in the tenth degree approached him? We know that nearly all were profane and ungodly men; we know that the priesthood became venal among them; we know that it was contended for with the most cruel hatred; nay, we know that a priest was slain in the temple itself; ambition was burning so furiously that no success could be gained without shedding innocent blood. After the death of Joshua nothing could have been more base and more disgraceful than the Jewish priesthood. Where then is to be found this servant of God, the Branch? **This principle must also be ever borne in mind, that the reformation of the temple was to be made by Christ:** we must, therefore, necessarily come to him, that we may find the servant mentioned here. And why he is called a servant has been stated elsewhere; for he humbled himself that he might be not only the minister of his Father, but also of men. **As then Christ condescended to become the servant of men, it is no wonder that he is called the servant of God.**<sup>38</sup>

This, in the Book of Zechariah, the High Priest Joshua thus wore the crown, and was called the Branch, as a “type” of Christ. The High Priest Joshua would build the physical Temple (i.e., the Second Temple) which Jesus Christ (i.e., the Branch) would complete anew.

#### **4. Gold lampstand and Two Olive Trees**

The Book of Zechariah next describes an allegorical lampstand with two olive trees on its right and left sides.

The lampstand is describes as “golden” with “seven lights on it” and with “seven channels to the lights.” The said channels run up to the bowl, which is atop the seven lights.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Calvin’s Commentaries on the Bible (Zechariah 3:8).

<sup>39</sup> Zechariah 4:2.

The sevens lights represent “seven... eyes of the LORD, which range throughout the earth.”<sup>40</sup> The two olive trees represent “the two who are anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth.”<sup>41</sup>

According to the Book of Revelation, these two olive trees are “two witnesses” who shall prophesy for 1,200 days.<sup>42</sup>

Since Reformed hermeneutical principal adheres to the doctrine that Scripture interprets Scripture, the Book of Revelation’s interpretation of the “two olive trees” is most authoritative.

## 5. The Flying Scroll

The Prophet Zechariah mentions a “flying scroll” that has a message on both sides.

On one side, all thieves are cursed. On the other side, all false swearers are cursed.<sup>43</sup> The prophecy states that this scroll will enter into the homes of all thieves and false swearers and destroy those homes.

Reformed theologian John Calvin (1509 – 1564) interpreted this prophecy to convey the important point that “[t]here is no doubt but that God intended to show to Zechariah, that the Jews were justly punished, because the whole land was full of thefts and perjuries.”<sup>44</sup>

But in the Book of Ezekiel<sup>45</sup> and the Book of Revelation,<sup>46</sup> the prophet and the apostle, respectively, are told to eat the scrolls, which symbolized the Word of God.

---

<sup>40</sup> Zechariah 4:10.

<sup>41</sup> Zechariah 4:14.

<sup>42</sup> Revelation 11:3-4.

<sup>43</sup> Zechariah 5:3.

<sup>44</sup> *Calvin’s Commentaries on the Bible* (Zechariah 5:1).

<sup>45</sup> Ezekiel 3:1-3.

<sup>46</sup> Revelation 10:9-11.

Therefore, I interpret the “Flying Scroll” in this passage in the Book of Zechariah to represent the “Word of God” (i.e., Christ). For, indeed, the “Word of God” shall condemn all thieves and all liars.

## **6. The Woman in a Basket**

The prophecy describes an angel who is carrying a basket. “Then the cover of the lead was raised, and there in the basket sat a woman!”<sup>47</sup>

The angel then said: “[t]his is wickedness,’ and he pushed her back into the basket and pushed the lead cover down over its mouth.”<sup>48</sup> The angel then flies away to take the basket to “the country of Babylon to build a house for it.”<sup>49</sup>

This “woman,” who is called “wickedness” and associated with “Babylon,” is similar in description to the “great prostitute” who is also called “MYSTERY, BABYLONE THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATION OF THE EARTH” that is in the Book of Revelation.<sup>50</sup>

This description is also consistent with the symbolism of wicked woman who is a prostitute, as set forth in the Book of Hosea and the Book of Ezekiel.

Accordingly, this “woman in a basket” is symbolism of the wickedness in nations (i.e., the proverbial Babylon the Great).

## **7. Four Chariots and Four Horses**

Zechariah’s prophecy next describes four chariots and four horses— “the four spirits of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world.”<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> Ezekiel 5:7.

<sup>48</sup> Ezekiel 5:8.

<sup>49</sup> Ezekiel 5:11.

<sup>50</sup> Revelation 17: 1-18.

<sup>51</sup> Zechariah 6:5.

The first chariot that had a red horse went to the [East.]<sup>52</sup>

The second chariot that had the black horse when to the North.<sup>53</sup>

The third chariot that had the white horse when to the West.

The fourth chariot that had the dappled horse when to the South.

These four chariots and horses were directed to go throughout the earth.

Interestingly, only the black horse and chariot are mentioned further, to wit: “Look, those going toward the north country have **given my Spirit rest in the land of the north.**”<sup>54</sup>

Here, the Reformed theologian John Calvin concluded that the words “given my Spirit rest” means that God had subdued His enemies (i.e., Babylon or the Chaldeans) in that part of the world.<sup>55</sup>

Though the Book of Revelation mentions four horses, these horses have riders, not chariots;<sup>56</sup> and, furthermore, it is unclear whether these horses reference the same apocalyptic visions.

---

<sup>52</sup> This was omitted in the Scripture. Therefore, I only assume that this may be what the prophet implied.

<sup>53</sup> Zechariah 6: 1-6.

<sup>54</sup> Zechariah 6:8.

<sup>55</sup> *Calvin's Commentaries on the Bible* (Zechariah 6:8), stating:

The words, they **have quieted my spirit**, are understood by interpreters in two ways. Some think that God's favor towards his people is here designated, as though he had said, that he was already pacified; but others, by the word spirit, understand the vengeance of God, because he had sufficiently poured forth his wrath on the Chaldeans; and both meanings are well adapted to the context. For it was no common solace to the Jews, that God had poured forth his wrath on the Babylonians until it was satiated, as when one ceases not to be angry until he has fulfilled his desire, and this mode of speaking often occurs in Scripture. **I am therefore disposed to embrace the second explanation — that God began to be quieted after the second chariot had gone forth; for he was then reconciled to his chosen people, and their deliverance immediately followed.** That the Jews might know that God would be propitious to them, he bids them to continue quiet and undisturbed in their minds, until these chariots had run their course through the whole of Chaldea; for what the angel now says would be fulfilled, even that the Spirit of God would be quieted, who seemed before to be disturbed, when he involved all things in darkness, even in Judea itself.

<sup>56</sup> Revelation, Chapter Six.

## **Chapter Two**

### **“The King Comes Riding on a Colt”**

The Prophet Zechariah proclaimed a description of the Messiah that has since become symbolic of Jesus of Nazareth as he is described in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, to wit:

A.

#### **Zechariah 9: 9- 10**

##### **“The Coming of Zion’s King”**

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!  
Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!  
See, your king comes to you,  
righteous and victorious,  
lowly and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

I will take away the chariots from Ephraim  
and the warhorses from Jerusalem,  
and the battle bow will be broken.  
He will proclaim peace to the nations.  
His rule will extend from sea to sea  
and from the River[a] to the ends of the earth.

B.

#### **Matthew 21:1-11**

##### **“Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King”**

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. <sup>3</sup> If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

<sup>4</sup> This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

<sup>5</sup> “Say to Daughter Zion,  
‘See, your king comes to you,  
gentle and riding on a donkey,  
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”

<sup>6</sup> The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. <sup>7</sup> They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. <sup>8</sup> A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup> The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!”  
“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”  
“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

<sup>10</sup> When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?”

<sup>11</sup> The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”



C.

**Mark 11:1-10**

**“Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King”**

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>3</sup> If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.’”

<sup>4</sup> They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, <sup>5</sup> some people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying that colt?” <sup>6</sup> They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. <sup>7</sup> When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. <sup>8</sup> Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. <sup>9</sup> Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

“Hosanna!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

<sup>10</sup> “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!”

“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

The Early Church thus believed that Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled Zechariah’s prophecy of the “king riding on a colt.”

## Chapter Three

### “Universal Shepherd: Parable of the Two Staffs”

The Book of Zechariah further describes the universal or global jurisdiction of God’s great Shepherd (i.e., Christ)

This prophecy describes a Shepherd having two staffs:

Staff of Favor; and,

Staff of Union.<sup>57</sup>

The “Staff of Favor” represents God’s universal covenant with “all nations” or “all peoples”—not just with Israel and Judah.

The Scripture here says:

New International Version: “Then I took my staff called Favor and broke it, revoking **the covenant** I had made with **all the nations**.”<sup>58</sup>

King James Version: “And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break **my covenant** which I had made **with all the people**.”

Orthodox Jewish Bible: “And I took my staff, even No’am, and I broke it asunder, breaking off my Brit (**covenant**) which I had made with kol ha’amim (**all the peoples**).”

Evangelical Heritage Version: “I took my staff, Favor, and I broke it in two, to cancel **my covenant** that I had made with **all the peoples**.”

Here we find a clear reference to the Noahic covenant that all nations or peoples inherited, namely, to take dominion of the earth by dispensing substantive justice. The Prophet Zechariah here states that God thus resolved: “For I will no

---

<sup>57</sup> Zechariah 11:7.

<sup>58</sup> Zechariah 11:10.

longer have pity of the people of the land.... I will hand everyone over to his neighbor and his king. They will oppress the land, and I will not rescue them from their hands.”<sup>59</sup>

The LORD then retorted, “If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it.”<sup>60</sup>

At this response, the peoples paid Him “thirty pieces of silver.”<sup>61</sup> The LORD God then broke the second staff, the “Staff of Union,” which symbolized the brotherhood between “Judah and Israel.”<sup>62</sup>

Thenceforth, as the prophesy goes on to say, the LORD God allowed worthless, careless shepherds to rule over Israel, Judah, and perhaps also other nations as well.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> Zechariah 11:6.

<sup>60</sup> Zechariah 11:12.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Zechariah 11:14.

<sup>63</sup> Zechariah 11:15-16.

## Chapter Four

### “Social Justice”

Like his brother prophets Isaiah, Hosea, and Amos, the Prophet Zechariah proclaims that justice—and especially social justice—is much more important to the LORD God than religious rites, liturgical practices, and rituals.<sup>64</sup>

The Prophet Zechariah wrote that justice and mercy was more important than fasting, stating:

The people of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regem Melek with their men to plead for the favor of the Lord by asking the priests who were at the house of the Lord of Armies and the prophets, “Should I mourn and fast in the fifth month, as I have done these many years?”

Then the word of the Lord of Armies came to me:

Speak to all the people of the land and to the priests.

When you fasted and lamented during the fifth and seventh months for these seventy years, was it really for me that you fasted?

And when you eat and drink, is it not for yourselves that you eat and drink?

Weren’t these the words that the Lord proclaimed through the earlier prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous, with her cities around her, and when the Negev and the Shephelah were inhabited?

Then the word of the Lord came to Zechariah:

---

<sup>64</sup> **Isaiah 1:11-17** (“To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? ... Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow”); **Hosea 6:6-7** (“For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me”); and **Amos 5:12-24** (“I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thug away from me the noise of thy songs: for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.”)

This is what the Lord of Armies says. Execute true justice. Each man is to show kindness and compassion to his brother.

Do not oppress the widow, the fatherless child, the foreigner living among you, or the poor. Make sure that none of you plan evil in your heart against your brother....<sup>65</sup>

These are the things that you are to do: Speak the truth to one another. Render judgments that uphold truth, justice, and peace in your gates.

Do not plot evil in your hearts against each other. Do not love false oaths. Indeed I hate all these things, declares the Lord.<sup>66</sup>

Thus, the imperative to do justice— and especially social justice— is thus a primary and fundamental duty of the ancient Hebrew religion, and it is plainly manifest in the Book of Zechariah.

---

<sup>65</sup> Zechariah 7:2-10.

<sup>66</sup> Zechariah 8:16-17.

## Chapter Five

### “Prophecy of the Church”

The Book of Zechariah closes with a description of an internationalized, reformed Judaism, whereby all nations of the world will worship the one true Almighty God, to wit:

A day of the LORD is coming when your plunder will be divided among you....

The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name....

Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.

If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, they **will have no rain.**<sup>67</sup>

And, then, again in this prophetic work— as Augustine of Hippo has pointed out in *The City of God*<sup>68</sup>— Christ is referenced where it says: “[a]s for you, because of the **blood of my covenant with you**, I will free your prisoners from the **waterless pit.**”<sup>69</sup>

This Christocentric interpretation of the Prophet Zechariah’s and well as the other prophets’ prophetic descriptions of a “restored Israel,” whereby all of the nations shall be gathered together and subjected the rulership of the LORD God, as references to Jesus Christ and the Christian Church (i.e., spiritual Israel).

---

<sup>67</sup> Zechariah 14:16-17 [NIV].

<sup>68</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 642-643.

<sup>69</sup> Zechariah 9:11 [NIV].

## Conclusion

The Book of Zechariah is filled with allegorical symbolism, some of which corresponds to the same prophetic symbols that are utilized in the Book of Revelation.

The *symbol of the king riding on a colt or donkey* is perhaps the clearest reference to Jesus Christ of the New Testament.<sup>70</sup>

In addition, the Book of Zechariah's final chapter's description of the ultimate triumph of the LORD God over all the nations of the earth corresponds with the Book of Revelation's description of the triumph of Christ over the nations.

Lastly, the Book of Zechariah is notable for its de-emphasis of orthodox Jewish religious practice in favor of righteousness, holiness, and social justice.<sup>71</sup> This tendency runs throughout the writings of several of the other prophets as well.<sup>72</sup>

At the same time, in the Book of Zechariah and in the writings of several other Hebrew prophets, the doors of the orthodox Jewish Church are thrown open to the Gentiles and to all nations. According to Reformed theology, this phenomenon is an explicit reference to the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth and the organization of the Christian Church.

## THE END

---

<sup>70</sup> This was the theological conclusion reached by Augustine of Hippo in *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 642-643.

<sup>71</sup> Christian law, constitutional jurisprudence, political theory, and civil polity are thus deeply-rooted in this emphasis upon righteousness, holiness, and social justice. See, e.g., John Witte, Jr. and Frank S. Alexander, *Christianity and Law: An Introduction* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Robert F. Cochran and Zachary R. Calo, *Agape, Justice and Law: How might Christian Love Shape Law?* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2017). See, also, *The English Philosophers from Bacon to Mill* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1994), [page number omitted] quoting John Stuart Mill's essay on Utilitarianism, as stating: "[i]n the golden rule of Jesus of Nazareth, we read the complete spirit of the ethics of utility. To do as you would be done by and to love your neighbor as yourself, constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality."

<sup>72</sup> **Isaiah 1:11-17** ("To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? ... Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow"); **Hosea 6:6-7** ("For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me"); and **Amos 5:12-24** ("I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thug away from me the noise of thy songs: for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.")

## Appendix

### “Social Justice, Torah, and the United States Constitution”

By

Roderick O. Ford, J.D., LL.D.

The prophetic preoccupation for social justice that is found within the books of Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah became a preoccupation of European Jews, ostensibly owing to their own plight following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D. and, especially, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Holocaust that occurred in Nazi Germany.

Jerold S. Auerbach’s *Rabbis and Lawyers: The Journey from Torah to Constitution*<sup>73</sup> inform us that many European Jews, who came to North America during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, closely affiliated with the Calvinistic Puritans of colonial New England, because they acquired an affinity with Puritan “Mosaic” theology, constitutional law, and political theory.

The Puritan church-states of colonial New England were founded upon the belief that “**the house of Israel among all nations**,”<sup>74</sup> as depicted in the prophetic books of the Old Testament, was the “true Israelites”<sup>75</sup> whom God had united under one head,<sup>76</sup> i.e., the Messiah or Christ.<sup>77</sup> As a consequence, the 17<sup>th</sup>-century New England church-states adopted law-codes based upon the Sacred Scriptures

---

<sup>73</sup> Jerold S. Auerbach, *Rabbis and Lawyers: The Journey from Torah to Constitution* (New Orleans, La.: Quid Pro, LLC, 2010).

<sup>74</sup> Amos 9:9.

<sup>75</sup> See, e.g., St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 658 (“... the **true Israelites**, the citizens of the country that is above.”)

<sup>76</sup> See, e.g., Hosea 1:11.

<sup>77</sup> See, e.g., St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 660 (“It was given as the chief and most necessary sign of His coming... that every one of them spoke in the tongues of all nations; thus signifying that the unity of the catholic Church would embrace all nations, and would in like manner speak in all tongues.”) and p. 696 (“This heavenly city, then, while it sojourns on earth, calls citizens out of all nations, and gathers together a society of pilgrims of all languages, not scrupling about diversities in the manners, laws, and institutions whereby earthly peace is secured and maintained, but recognizing that, however various these are, they all tend to one and the same end of earthly peace.”)



and, in many instances, ratified verbatim several Mosaic laws.<sup>78</sup> This Puritan legal system, then, was not much distinguishable from the sacred laws of the Jews. At the same time, this Puritan legal system was an extension of English jurisprudence that had developed under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church and Church of England— of which, the end result was American constitutionalism that was founded upon Puritan covenant theology.<sup>79</sup> For this reason, Jewish lawyers and rabbis were naturally attracted to American constitutional law and jurisprudence:

---

<sup>78</sup> See, e.g., Algernon Sidney Crapsey, *Religion and Religion* (New York, N.Y.: Thomas Whittaker, 1905), pp. 242-244, stating:

It was not the purpose of these founders of the Puritan commonwealth to grant either liberty of thought or liberty of action. Their conception of the church and of the state forbade their entertaining the notion of what we call religious liberty. In their estimation it was treason to doubt the plenary inspiration of the Bible, or to question the doctrines of the church. They endeavored to secure the absolute identity of church and state by limiting political privileges to the members of the church. We cannot in this lecture enter minutely into the history of this Puritan state-church. It is easy to speak scoffingly of the bigotry and narrowness of the Puritan, to tell lurid stories of the whipping of the heretics, the hanging of women, and the burning of witches; but it is not so easy to measure the moral value and the spiritual potency of that conception of the state which looks upon it as the instrument of divine justice; which teaches that officers of the state are the vicegerents of God. Such a conception is the only one that can make the state other than a merciless machine. If the state is not divine it is brutal.

And when to this conception you join that other pregnant doctrine of which the Puritan was the exponent, which declares the sacredness and the right of the common man; when you make every man's destiny an expression of the eternal will of God,— then you have a foundation for government which cannot be shaken. Every man in the Puritan conception is a church-state in himself. In the man the spiritual power must be supreme. Conscience, not interest, must be the guide of life. Each man, is a divinely inspired, divinely guided, political and spiritual power, and the state is simply a federation of these political and spiritual units in a general government.... This union of Teutonism and Hebraism; this marriage of Mosaic theocracy to English democracy, is the contribution of English Puritanism to the political life of the world, and the modern state is the offspring of this union.

<sup>79</sup> See, e.g., William Goodell, *The Democracy of Christianity* (New York, N.Y.: Cady & Burgess, 1852), p. 484, stating:

[T]he democracy of Christianity is signally illustrated in the history of the Puritans, and in the effects of their labors, in America.... [T]he people of Great Britain are indebted to the Puritans. What is wanting, both in England and America, to the completeness and the security of human freedom, is an undeviating fidelity to those principles of Christian democracy which the Puritans in some measure restored.

And, in the same text, on pp. 376-377, Rev. Goodell writes:

These Puritan and Common Law expositions of Paul, in Romans XIII, are among the most revolutionary maxims we have in modern times, and, as a matter of historical fact, they have wrought two tremendous revolutions already, one in England and one in America, whether they are to be regarded as sound expositions or otherwise. An echo of these expositions we have in our Declaration of Independence. Bracton, in his exposition of Romans XIII, had said:

In a supreme irony of American Jewish history, Jews turned to the Puritans and Pilgrims as the authoritative interpreters of their own biblical heritage. Eager to identify themselves as Americans, they were led back to their own sacred texts as a guide to the American experience. From fragments of seventeenth-century Protestant thought, they constructed a unitary Judeo-American tradition that enabled them, as Jews, to become Americans.....<sup>80</sup>

For Jews who so preferred, and many did, the identification with American law and justice could even provide an escape from Judaism. Among Jews, it has been suggested, ‘one way of hiding is to choose a universal mask’; as defenders of the American rule of law, and **as champions of social justice**, Jews located themselves securely within the prevailing liberal precepts of modern America....<sup>81</sup>

Hence, the American Jewish community embraced the secular American legal system as an avenue for the application, manifestation, and realization of the Jewish religion and their sacred Jewish traditions.<sup>82</sup> The Anglican jurisprudence,

---

‘He is called a king for ruling righteously, and not because he reigns. Wherefore he is a king when he governs with justice, but a tyrant when he oppresses the people committed to his charge.’

In nearly the same language our Declaration of Independence abjures the authority of the British monarch:

‘A prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.’

These words of Jefferson seem but a paraphrase or application of Bracton’s, and Bracton’s are but his own inference from his own exposition of Paul.

<sup>80</sup> Jerold S. Auerbach, *Rabbis and Lawyers: The Journey from Torah to Constitution* (New Orleans, La.: Quid Pro, LLC, 2010), p. 13.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>82</sup> See, generally, Alan M. Dershowitz, *Abraham: The World’s First (And Certainly Not Last) Jewish Lawyer* (New York: N.Y.: Schocken Books, 2015). See, also, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, “A Word of Torah: Why Are There So Many Jewish Lawyers?” *The Detroit Jewish News* (July 16, 2021), stating:

Justice has seemed, throughout the generations, to lie at the beating heart of Jewish faith.

At the beginning of D’varim, Moses reviews the history of the Israelites’ experience in the wilderness, beginning with the appointment of leaders throughout the people, heads of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. He continues:

which had expressly incorporated the Holy Bible into England’s fundamental laws and from which Puritan jurisprudence had been extracted, was partially overthrown by the American Revolution;<sup>83</sup> and, following the U.S. Civil War (1861 – 1865) and the rise of the great American corporation and the Gilded Age during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>84</sup> that Anglican and Puritan jurisprudence was nearly obliterated from American law.

But the American Jews, perhaps through the necessity of survival and the desire for social justice for themselves, resuscitated and preserved the old Puritan constitutional law and jurisprudence which placed Justice (i.e., God) at the helm of all secular authority.<sup>85</sup> This approach to American constitutional law— whether Anglican, Puritan-Calvinistic, or Jewish— saw a religious and moral objective

---

“And I charged your judges at that time, ‘Hear the disputes between your people and judge fairly, whether the case is between two Israelites or between an Israelite and a foreigner residing among you. Do not show partiality in judging; hear both small and great alike. Do not be afraid of anyone, for judgment belongs to God. Bring me any case too hard for you, and I will hear it.’” (Deut. 1:16-17)

Thus at the outset of the book in which he summarized the entire history of Israel and its destiny as a holy people, he already gave priority to the administration of justice: Something he would memorably summarize in a later chapter (16:20) in the words, “**Justice, justice, shall you pursue.**”

The words for justice, *tzedek* and *mishpat*, are repeated, recurring themes of the book. The root *tz-d-k* appears 18 times in *D’varim*; the root *sh-f-t*, 48 times.

Justice has seemed, throughout the generations, to lie at the beating heart of Jewish faith....

In the course of a television program I made for the BBC, I asked Hazel Cosgrove, the first woman to be appointed as a judge in Scotland and an active member of the Edinburgh Jewish community, what had led her to choose law as a career, she replied as if it was self-evident, “**Because Judaism teaches: Justice, justice shall you pursue**”....

In modern times, Jews reached prominence as judges in America: among them Brandeis, Cardozo and Felix Frankfurter. Ruth Bader Ginsburg was the first Jewish woman to be appointed to the Supreme Court. In Britain, between 1996 and 2008, two of Britain’s three Lord Chief Justices were Jewish: Peter Taylor and Harry Woolf. In Germany in the early 1930s, though Jews were 0.7% of the population, they represented 16.6% of lawyers and judges.

One feature of Tanach is noteworthy in this context. Throughout the Hebrew Bible some of the most intense encounters between the prophets and God are represented as courtroom dramas. Sometimes, as in the case of Moses, Jeremiah and Habakkuk, the plaintiff is humanity or the Jewish people. In the case of Job, it is an individual who has suffered unfairly.

<sup>83</sup> Algernon Sidney Crapsey, *Religion and Politics* (New York, N.Y.: Thomas Whittaker, 1905), pp. 244-245.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Jerold S. Auerbach, *Rabbis and Lawyers: The Journey from Torah to Constitution* (New Orleans, La.: Quid Pro, LLC, 2010).

within the plain text of the American Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution.<sup>86</sup>

For the Jewish lawyer could just as easily carry out the Jewish prophetic mission of pursuing social justice within an American nonsectarian secular legal system, as though he was practicing or applying Jewish law before a sacred Jewish tribunal. American Jews thus chose the profession of law as an avenue to discharge their sacred obligation to pursue justice:

The euphoric celebration of the rule of American constitutional law... should not obliterate the fact that it was **never law alone, but law as an instrument of justice**, that ostensibly bound the Jewish and American traditions.

Justice was a recurrent theme in the American Jewish discourse of compatibility. It was a necessary insertion, for it enabled Jews to submerge 'arid' legalism, the part of their tradition with which modern Jews felt least comfortable, in the resounding call of the ancient Hebrew prophets for social justice and moral righteousness.

Justice was described as 'the golden thread' that Judaism stitched into the fabric of American democracy. A 'passion for justice' was part of the 'unconscious inheritance' that Jews brought to this country. In the United States they transformed 'the quest for social justice' into the truest expression of 'Jewish orthodoxy.' Jewish 'cultural and theological values,' which make it 'unJewish not to be preoccupied with freedom and justice for everyone,' explained the enduring liberal commitments of American Jews....<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup> See, e.g., Algernon Sidney Crapsey, "The American Church-State," *Religion and Religion* (New York, N.Y.: Thomas Whittaker, 1905), pp. 297- 326 ("When the Constitutional Convention of 1787 sent forth the Constitution which it devised for the government of the nation it did so in these words: 'We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, **establish justice**, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our children, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.' Now can any man write a more perfect description of the Kingdom of god on earth or in heaven than is to be found in these words? A government resting upon such principles as these is not a godless policy; it is a holy religion.... A religion having as its basis the principles of individual liberty and obedience to righteous law is really the religion of the golden rule.")

<sup>87</sup> Jerold S. Auerbach, *Rabbis and Lawyers: The Journey from Torah to Constitution* (New Orleans, La.: Quid Pro, LLC, 2010), p. 23.

The other notable American minority group which has come closest to adopting the Jewish conceptualization of American constitutional law and jurisprudence is African Americans. Martin Luther King, Jr's *Letter from the Birmingham City Jail* (1963), for instance, represents a plea to the Gentiles to return to the old Anglican or Puritan constitutional methods of subordinating law to the demands of social justice.<sup>88</sup> And so, the Old Testament's mandate "to do justice and judgment" (Genesis 18:18-19) throughout ancient Israel is very much alive and well within mainstream American political, legal, and constitutional discourse. But it can only remain alive if American lawyers and judges— such as those committed Jewish jurists and lawyers of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century—continue to honor the sacred Judea-Christian heritage of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution.

### **End of Note**

---

<sup>88</sup> Unfortunately, the Black Church, due in large measure to its emergence from the adverse condition of slavery and racial segregation, never developed a strong "legal tradition" amongst its clergy that could be considered comparable to the Anglican or Puritan or Jewish lawyers and jurists. While the Black Church served as the backbone of the American Civil Rights movement during the 1950s and 60s, and while the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) led the struggle for social justice in the American courts during that same period, it cannot be said that African American lawyers and judges, as a whole, when measured by the parameters of their voluntary bar associations at the local or national levels, have conceptualized the practice of secular law (including civil rights law) as an extension of the "social justice" mission of Black Church. Nor has the Black Church, in general, endeavored to commission African American lawyers to carry out a "social justice" mission through the courts or otherwise. The undersigned author leads The Methodist Law Centre ([www.methodistlawcentre.com](http://www.methodistlawcentre.com)) in an effort to encourage African American clergy and lawyers to work together for social justice.

