

# Zechariah 5 Commentary

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[Zechariah Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll  
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<b>ZECHARIAH</b> ("Yahweh Remembers") <a href="#">Timeline on Zechariah</a>					
Zec 1:1-6	Zec 1:7-6:8	Zec 6:9-6:15	Zec 7:1-8:23	Zec 9:1-11:17	Zec 12:1-14:21
Return to Me Zec 1:3	Messianic Kingdom Visions	The Branch	Four Messages	Two Oracles or Burdens	
Zechariah 1-6			Zechariah 7-8	Zechariah 9-14	
Apocalyptic			Ethical Prophecy 1) Rebuke 2) Reminder 3) Restoration 4) Return	Predictive Prophecy 1) Burden Against the Nations 2) Burden For Israel	
Call to Repentance	Eight Visions <a href="#">(Picture)</a>	Crowning of Joshua	Question of the Fasts <a href="#">(Calendar)</a>	First Burden: Rejection of Messiah	Second Burden: Reign of Messiah
The Way of Salvation	Messianic Kingdom Visions	The Bringer of Salvation	Commands Concerning Present Things	Oracles (Burdens) Concerning Future Things	
	Behold the man...the Branch		Love, Truth and Peace	The Day of the Lord	
PICTURES			PROBLEMS	PREDICTIONS	
ISRAEL'S FORTUNE			ISRAEL'S FASTING	ISRAEL'S FUTURE	
"My house will be built in Jerusalem" Zec 1:16			"Let your hands be strong" Zec 8:9	"HOLY TO THE LORD" Zec 14:20	

<b>PLACE: JERUSALEM</b>	
<b>Written During the Building of the Temple</b> 520-518BC	<b>Written after the Temple Was Completed</b> circa 480-470BC

**Charles Feinberg summarizes his Zechariah studies...**

"And throughout the prophecy there is presented to us on every page the spotless, blemishless Holy One of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah and King of Israel. See Him in..."

1. Chapter one as the **Riding One**;
2. Chapter two as the **Measuring One**;
3. Chapter three as the **Cleansing One**;
4. Chapter four as the **Empowering One**;
5. Chapter five as the **Judging One**;
6. Chapter six as the **Crowned One**;
7. Chapter seven as the **Rebuking One**;
8. Chapter eight as the **Restoring One**;
9. Chapter nine as the **Kingly One**;
10. Chapter ten as the **Blessing One**;
11. Chapter eleven as the **Shepherding One**;
12. Chapter twelve as the **Returning One**;
13. Chapter thirteen as the **Smitten One**;
14. Chapter fourteen as the **Reigning One**.

Borrow Feinberg's [Minor Prophets - Zechariah commentary on page 272](#) (note may say "unavailable" which means it is checked out)

**Walter Kaiser** - "Zechariah is not only the longest of the books of the twelve Minor Prophets, it is one of the most frequently quoted. There are seventy-one quotations from or allusions to Zechariah in the New Testament. One third of these appear in the Gospels and thirty-one are found in the book of Revelation (including twenty from chapters 1–8 and eight from chapters 9–14). Of all the Old Testament books, Zechariah is second only to Ezekiel in its influence on the book of Revelation." — Mastering the Old Testament

**Charles Swindoll** - "Zechariah is second only to Isaiah in its number of messianic passages. Among Zechariah's explicit references to Christ are the **angel of the Lord** (Zech 3:1-2); the **righteous Branch** (Zech 3:8; 6:12-13); the **King-Priest** (Zech 6:13); the **cornerstone, tent peg, and bow of battle** (Zech 10:4); the **good shepherd** who is sold for thirty pieces of silver (Zech 11:4-13); the **pierced One** (Zech 12:10); and the **coming Judge and righteous King** (Zech 14)."

**George Klein** - "One of the great ironies concerning the book of Zechariah is its relative obscurity to the **modern church** contrasted with its profound significance to the **early church**. Unfortunately, students of the Bible rarely study Zechariah today. However, strong reasons exist for suggesting that the book ascended to a place of paramount importance to the writers of the New Testament and to the early church at large. "The book of Zechariah exerted a profound influence over the New Testament, particularly in the realm of Messianic passages—a point long noted by New Testament scholars. Several important themes from the book figure prominently in the New Testament. One of the most important of these is the shepherd-king. From Zech 9:9 the King who rode into Jerusalem on a "donkey" reemerges in Matt 21:5 and John 12:15. C. H. Dodd even suggests that Zechariah provided the Gospel writers with material of equal importance to the very testimonia [their eyewitness accounts] of Christ's ministry." — NAC, 61-2

**Zechariah 5:1 Then I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold, there was a flying scroll.**

- **Scroll:** Zec 5:2 Isa 8:1 Jer 36:1-6,20-24,27-32 Eze 2:9,10 Rev 5:1-14 Rev 10:2,8-11

### A FLYING SCROLL

**Then I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold, there was a flying scroll** - Scrolls were made of skins sewn together and were usually written on one side only, but this one as described below was written on both sides.

[Believer's Study Bible](#) - The last three visions turn from words of comfort to stern words of judgment. The "flying scroll" is best

understood as a large unfurled scroll (15 x 30 feet) which contained curses against sins of all sorts, inscribed (unusually) on both sides (cf. Ezek. 2:9, 10; Rev. 5:1). As the scroll flies through the air, it settles upon the wicked, bringing about their destruction. Thus, the vision is a picture of sinners being swept away and the land being purged. The word "curse" (Zech 5:3) is a collective noun and doubtless reflects the curses against sin and disobedience set forth in Mosaic revelation (cf. Deut. 27:11-26; 28:15ff.; also see Mal. 4:6).

**Zechariah 5:2 And he said to me, "What do you see?" And I answered, "I see a flying scroll; its length is twenty cubits and its width ten cubits."**

- **What:** Zec 4:2 Jer 1:11-14 Am 7:8
- **flying:** Zep 1:14 2Pe 2:3
- **length:** Ge 6:11-13 Rev 18:5

**And he said to me, "What do you see?" And I answered, "I see a flying scroll**

**Its length is twenty cubits and its width ten cubits** The dimensions are about 30 x 15 feet (9 x 4.5 meters) assuming that a cubit is 18 inches (45 cm),

**NET NOTE** adds - Heb "twenty cubits...ten cubits" (so NAB, NRSV). These dimensions ("thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide") can hardly be referring to the scroll when unrolled since that would be all out of proportion to the normal ratio, in which the scroll would be 10 to 15 times as long as it was wide. More likely, the scroll is 15 feet thick when rolled, a hyperbole expressing the enormous amount and the profound significance of the information it contains.

**Zechariah 5:3 Then he said to me, "This is the curse that is going forth over the face of the whole land; surely everyone who steals will be purged away according to the writing on one side, and everyone who swears will be purged away according to the writing on the other side.**

- **the curse:** De 11:28,29 27:15-26 28:15-68 29:19-28 Ps 109:17-20 Pr 3:33 Isa 24:6 43:28 Jer 26:6 Da 9:11 Mal 3:9 4:6 Mt 25:41 Ga 3:10-13 Heb 6:6-8 Rev 21:8 22:15
- **the face:** Lu 21:35
- **everyone who steals** - Ex 20:15 Pr 29:24 30:9 Jer 7:9 Ho 4:2 Mal 3:8-10 1Co 6:7-9 Eph 4:28 Jas 5:4
- **everyone who swears:** Zec 5:4 8:17 Lev 19:12 Isa 48:1 Jer 5:2 23:10 Eze 17:13-16 Mal 3:5 Mt 5:33-37 23:16-22 1Ti 1:9 Jas 5:12

## **THE CURSE CUT OFF FOR STEALING & SWEARING!**

**Then he said to me, "This is the curse that is going forth over the face of the whole land-** This curse from God was on the **whole land** of Israel for sins committed.

**Surely everyone who steals will be purged away according to the writing on one side, and everyone who swears will be purged away according to the writing on the other side** - Two sins are mentioned but surely representative of many other specific sins in Israel in the decalogue. As noted it was unusual for writing to be on both sides of the scroll, the implication being that sins were so many that they had to be dealt with on both sides!

**NET Note** - The Hebrew word translated "**curse**" ('alah) alludes to the covenant sanctions that attend the violation of God's covenant with Israel (cf. Deut 29:12, 14, 20-21). Stealing and swearing falsely (mentioned later in this verse) are sins against mankind and God respectively and are thus violations of the two major parts of the Ten Commandments. These two stipulations (commandments 8 and 3) represent the whole law.

**Henry Morris** - Those who rejected God's grace, as shown in the previous visions, continuing in their sins, unrepentant and unforgiven, would be "cut off." The two sins mentioned in Zechariah 5:4, taking God's name in falsifying the truth and stealing, involve the central commandment in each of the two tables of the law, in effect stand for breaking any of God's commands.

**Zechariah 5:4** “I will make it go forth,” declares the LORD of hosts, “and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name; and it will spend the night within that house and consume it with its timber and stones.”

- **it will enter the house of the thief.** Lev 14:34-45 De 7:26 Job 18:15 20:26 Pr 3:33 Hab 2:9-11 Jas 5:2,3

### THE FLYING SCROLL MAKES A CURSED LANDING!

**I will make it go forth,” declares the LORD of hosts, “and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name; and it will spend the night within that house and consume it with its timber and stones** - What is “it?” Is this not the flying scroll with the curse written on it, the curse being for violation of God’s law.

**Zechariah 5:5** Then the angel who was speaking with me went out and said to me, “**Lift up** now your eyes and see what this is going forth.”

- **the angel:** Zec 1:9,14,19 2:3 4:5
- **Lift up now your eyes:** Zec 5:1

### ZECHARIAH COMMANDED TO VIEW ANOTHER VISION

Zechariah 5:5-11 is often overlooked in establishing the identification of Babylon in Revelation 17-18.

**Then** - Marks progress in the narrative, in context a new vision. It is important to keep in mind that the prophet Zechariah is writing this vision in about 520 B.C., twenty years after the fall of Babylon to the Medo-Persians (539 BC), and here he sees evil returning to its original place in Babylon in the future. The upshot is that even though the Babylonian Empire had fallen, this passage seems to indicate that **wickedness** will again reside in the region of Shinar.

**The angel who was speaking with me went out and said to me, “Lift up now your eyes and see what this is going forth** - As the context reveals, Zechariah 5:5-11 records an incredible vision that pertains to the city of Babylon in the last days.

**Believer's Study Bible** - The vision of the woman in the basket symbolizes that sin (especially idolatry) will ultimately be banished from Israel and transferred back to Shinar (Zech 5:11), i.e., Babylon, the epitome of wickedness and ungodliness (cf. Ge 11:1-10; Isa. 13; 14; Jer. 50; 51; Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21). The woman (Zech 5:7, 8) is the personification of sin and evil. Apparently, she attempts to escape from the basket, but is thrust back with a leaden cover being placed on top. As the stork was an unclean bird (cf. Lev. 11:19), the two women (v. 9) are evidently agents and servants of the woman in the basket.

**Expositor's Bible Commentary** - In Zech 2:12 Palestine was called "the holy land." In Zech 3:9 a future day was anticipated when the sin of that land would be taken away. The sixth vision has just dealt with the purging of flagrant, persistent sinners from the land. Now, in the seventh vision, this motif continues to be developed as the removal of wickedness is vividly depicted. Not only sinners, but also the whole sinful system must be removed—apparently to the place of its origin (Babylon). (SEE [Haggai, Zechariah](#))

**MacArthur** - The previous vision dealt with the purging of sinners from the land. This seventh vision of a woman in a basket continues the theme, focusing on the removal of the whole sinful system from Israel, which will happen before the kingdom comes (**ED: HE IS ALLUDING TO THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM**) (cf. Ezek 20:38). (BORROW [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**William MacDonald** - This seems to signify the removal of idolatrous and mercenary religion from Israel to its base in Babylon where it originated. Such a removal would, of course, be preparatory to the judgment of Babylon and to the setting up of the kingdom. (BORROW [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**A W Pink** - First, the prophet sees as “ephah” (or bath) which was the largest measure for dry goods among the Jews. **It would, therefore, be the natural symbol for Commerce.** Next, we note that twice over it is said that the **ephah** “goeth forth” (Zec. 5:5, 6). As the whole of the preceding visions concern Jerusalem and her people, this can only mean that the center of Jewish commerce is to be transferred from Palestine elsewhere. Next, we are told that there was a “**woman**” concealed in the midst of the ephah (Zec. 5:7). We say “concealed,” for in Zec. 5:5 and Zec. 5:6 the “woman” is not seen - the leaden cover (cf. Zec. 5:8) had to be lifted before she could be beheld. The writer (**A W PINK**) is satisfied that this hidden woman in the ephah is “the Woman” which is fully

revealed in Revelation 17+ and Revelation 18+. Next, we are told that “**wickedness**” (lawlessness) was cast into the **ephah**, before its cover was closed again. Then, in what follows, we are shown this **ephah**, with the “**woman**” and “**wickedness**” shut up therein, being rapidly conveyed from Palestine to “the **land of Shinar**” (Zec. 5:11). **The purpose for this is stated to be, “to build a house,” i.e. a settled habitation.** Finally, we are assured, “it shall be established, and set there (in the land of Shinar) upon her own base.” **This vision or prophecy contains the germ which is afterwards expanded and developed in such detail in Rev. 17+ and Rev 18+, where it is shown that “the house” which is established for this system of commerce is “Babylon the great.”** (See [Antichrist and Babylon.](#))

#### Related Resource:

- [The Shinar Effect](#) - Dr Anthony Garland

**Zechariah 5:6 I said, “What is it?” And he said, “This is the ephah going forth.” Again he said, “This is their appearance in all the land**

- Eze 44:10,11 Am 8:5

### ANGEL DESCRIBES THIS AS AN EPHAH

**I said, “What is it?” And he said, “This is the ephah going forth!”**- An ephah refers to a basket. "

**NET NOTE** - An ephah was a liquid or solid measure of about a bushel (five gallons or just under twenty liters). By metonymy it refers here to a measuring container (probably a basket) of that quantity.

**Wycliffe Bible Commentary** - The **ephah** was the largest measure in use among the Jews. It is employed here to symbolize the appearance of the wicked in the land; as grains are brought together in a measure, so the ungodly of the land will be gathered together for final disposition. (BORROW [The Wycliffe Bible Commentary](#))

**Again he said, “This is their appearance in all the land-** Other translations are easier to understand - **NIV** = "This is the iniquity of the people throughout the land."

The English of the Septuagint reads " And I said, What is it? And he said, This is the measure that goes forth. And he said, This is their iniquity in all the earth"

**NET NOTE** - The LXX and Syriac read ('avonam, "their iniquity," so NRSV; NIV similar) for the MT ('enam, "their eye"), a reading that is consistent with the identification of the woman in v. 8 as wickedness, but one that is unnecessary. In 4:10 the "eye" represented divine omniscience and power; here it represents the demonic counterfeit.

**Zechariah 5:7 (and behold, a lead cover was lifted up); and this is a woman sitting inside the ephah.”**

- **a lead cover was lifted up,** Isa 13:1 15:1 22:11
- **this is a woman sitting inside the ephah** Jer 3:1,2 Eze 16:1-63 23:1-49 Ho 1:1-3:5 Rev 17:1-18

### A WOMAN IN THE BASKET

**(and behold, a lead cover was lifted up); and this is a woman sitting inside the ephah.”**- The cover was lifted so Zechariah could see the contents. From the context, this was not a real woman but was a personification of sin and evil.

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#### QUESTION - [Why is wickedness portrayed as a woman in Zechariah 5:7-8?](#)

**ANSWER** - One of the prophet Zechariah's visions is of a measuring basket with a lead cover. In Zechariah 5:7-8 he writes, "Then the cover of lead was raised, and there in the basket sat a woman! [The angel] said, 'This is wickedness,' and he pushed her back into the basket and pushed the lead cover down over its mouth." Why would God use a woman to portray wickedness in this vision?

Here are a couple of things to consider: first, the Hebrew word translated "wickedness" is a feminine noun. As such, using feminine

imagery throughout this section would be appropriate, from a purely grammatical standpoint. While the English language does not typically speak of non-living objects as male or female, other languages often do. For example, we would refer to "evil" as an "it": "Evil, it is a negative thing." In Spanish, however, *evil* is a masculine noun, *el mal*, and would be referred to as "he": "Evil, he is a negative thing." Likewise, in Hebrew, *wickedness*, is a feminine noun, referred to as "she."

Second, the use of "woman" in verse 7 parallels the mention of "two women" in verse 9. The woman in the basket represented widespread wickedness (verse 6); after the prophet sees what's inside, two women pick up the basket and fly away with it to Babylonia, where it finds a home (5:11).

The basket's destination also gives us a clue as to the presence of a woman in Zechariah's vision: Babylon is the name of the evil world system in the final days. Revelation 17 pictures this system as a woman, called "the great prostitute" (verse 1). So, the woman in Zechariah's vision is let out of the basket in order to ride the scarlet beast in John's vision. In other words, the wickedness that was previously kept in check will be unconfined and wreaking havoc in the last days.

In summary, the entity in the basket is a *woman* for grammatical reasons and also for consistency with later prophecies. Other passages symbolize worldwide sin with similar imagery; for example, Revelation pictures the spiritual adultery of the last days as a prostitute. Thus, Zechariah's prophecy dovetails nicely with John's apocalyptic vision of the future.

**Zechariah 5:8 Then he said, "This is Wickedness!" And he threw her down into the middle of the ephah and cast the lead weight on its opening.**

- **This is Wickedness:** Ge 15:16 Mt 23:32 1Th 2:16
- **cast the lead weight :** Zec 5:7 Ps 38:4 Pr 5:22 La 1:14 Am 9:1-4

## A BASKET OF WICKEDNESS

**Then he said, "This is Wickedness!"** - The woman in the ephah symbolized **wickedness**. The Septuagint translates wickedness with anomia which means a general state of wrong and thus lawlessness, wickedness, iniquity (e.g., "sin is lawlessness" 1Jn 3:4).

**THOUGHT** - Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could throw "wickedness" into a basket and put a heavy lead cover over it? That's of course rhetorical, but in a sense is that not what Jesus did for us on the Cross when He bore our sins in His body (1 Peter 2:24+) and broke the yoke of the power of sin (Ro 6:11+)? That's also rhetorical! And, beloved of God (1Th 1:4+) the best is yet to come, because in that great coming day when we are glorified, the basket will not only be eternally covered, it will not even be present! Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved (and daily saves) a wretch like me from the havoc wreaked by wickedness in my life. And dear Father by the Spirit of the Living God, enable us daily to "put wickedness in the basket," continually "putting to death the deeds of the body, (so that we) will live." (Ro 8:13+) Thank You Jesus for so great a salvation (Heb 2:3+). Amen.

**And he threw her down into the middle of the ephah and cast the lead weight on its opening:** Why does the angel throw **her down**? Clearly she is trying to escape! Figuratively trapping the woman/wickedness in the basket so it would not get out.

**Wickedness** (07564)(rishah) - The feminine form of the noun **rasha'**, "guilt," **rish'āh** seems to be used in a more abstract and general sense of "wickedness" and "guilt" (Deut. 9:4; Prov. 11:5). In Deut. 25:2, rish'āh refers to the guilt for a specific crime of an individual. Ezekiel 18:20 uses it of the practices of a person who is not living according to the covenantal law of the Lord.

**TWOT (ONLINE)** - Guilt, wickedness. This feminine noun appears fifteen times, mostly in the abstract sense of wickedness or act of wickedness. Moses explained to his people that the wickedness of Canaan was the reason Israel could enter Canaan. The conquest was to be a judgment, not a demonstration of Israel's greatness (Deut. 9:4-5). Moses also told the civil judges to beat those who committed rish'ā. Twice the wise men contrasted rish'ā with righteousness (Proverbs 11:5; Proverbs 13:6). In Malachi 3:15 those who do wickedly are said to be arrogant enemies of God (cf. Ezekiel 5:6) with dire results (see Isaiah 9:18; Malachi 1:4; Malachi 4:1). An angel showed Zech. a woman (wickedness) trapped in an ephah. Ezekiel 18, 30 also sets forth the alternatives facing man. A person may turn to rish'ā and die, or turn from it to God and live.

**Baker** - A feminine noun meaning wickedness, guilt. This word for immorality refers to a wide range of evil. It indicates a crime worthy of punishment (Deut. 25:2); the unrestrained evil that lurks in the human heart (Isa. 9:18[17]); the vileness of surrounding enemies (Mal. 1:4); the breach of a religious expectation (Mal. 4:1[3:19]); or an unlawful act in general (Ezek. 33:19). (The Complete

**Strong's** adds "1) wickedness, guilt 1a) wickedness (in civil relations) 1b) wickedness (of enemies) 1c) wickedness (ethical and religious).

**Rishah** - 14v - evildoer\*(1), guilt(1), wickedly(1), wickedness(11). Deut. 9:4; Deut. 9:5; Deut. 25:2; Prov. 11:5; Prov. 13:6; Isa. 9:18; Ezek. 5:6; Ezek. 18:20; Ezek. 18:27; Ezek. 33:12; Ezek. 33:19; Zech. 5:8; Mal. 3:15; Mal. 4:1

**Lead** (05777) ophereth - Possibly a loanword from Sumerian (NIDOTTE) that is unrelated to the Hebrew root 'āphar (HED #6311), the noun 'ōphereth refers to "lead." It is mentioned in biblical contexts with other metals (Num. 31:22; Ezek. 22:18, 20; 27:12). It also refers to a lead cover (Zech. 5:7) or weight (Exo. 15:10; Zech. 5:8), and it denotes lead in a state of flux (Jer. 6:29). Finally, it refers to lead that was poured into engravings made with an iron pen on a rock. The lead made the record more imperishable than merely engraving the rock with a pen (Job 19:24). (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary – Nun-Ayin)

**Baker** adds on **opherah** (operet) - A feminine noun referring to lead. It indicates a heavy metal. It was a scarce but useful metal (Ezek. 27:12). It was used as a weight (Zech. 5:8). It is used figuratively of the way the Egyptians sank in the Red Sea, like lead (Ex. 15:10). It was used in some engraving processes (Job 19:24). It is used figuratively of the impurity of God's people (Jer. 6:29). It needed to be heated to remove its dross, as did God's people (Ezek. 22:18; 22:20).

Complete Word Study Dictionary, The - The Complete Word Study Dictionary – Old Testament.

**Opherah** - 9v - lead (9x) - Exod. 15:10; Num. 31:22; Job 19:24; Jer. 6:29; Ezek. 22:18; Ezek. 22:20; Ezek. 27:12; Zech. 5:7; Zech. 5:8

**Zechariah 5:9 Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and there two women were coming out with the wind in their wings; and they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heavens.**

- **and they had wings like the wings:** De 28:49 Da 9:26,27 Ho 8:1 Mt 24:28

## WOMEN TRANSPORT THE EPDAH

**Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and there two women were coming out with the wind in their wings; and they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heavens** - God "airlifts" the woman "wickedness" using **two** winged **women**. Note that **wings of a stork** refer to an unclean bird.

**NET NOTE** - Here two women appear as the agents of the LORD because the whole scene is feminine in nature. The Hebrew word for "**wickedness**" in v. 8 is grammatically feminine, so feminine imagery is appropriate throughout.

**David Baron** ([see below](#)) thinks the wickedness that was removed was idolatry - Idolatry, into which they were so liable to fall, was forever left behind in Babylon; but a godless commercialism, with its temptations "to make the ephah small and the shekel great, and to deal falsely with balances of deceit" (Amos viii. 5), eventually becomes not less hateful to God not only because it has too often been supported by theft and perjury, which, as we have seen, are transgressions of the central commands of both tables of the Law, but because it was destined to develop a new system in which all iniquity would finally be summed up."

**Zechariah 5:10 I said to the angel who was speaking with me, "Where are they taking the ephah?"**

**I said to the angel who was speaking with me, "Where are they taking the ephah-** Zechariah desires to know the destination of basket of "wickedness."

**Zechariah 5:11 Then he said to me, "To build a temple for her in the land of Shinar; and when it is prepared, she will be set there on her own pedestal."**

- **Then he said to me:** De 28:59 Jer 29:28 Ho 3:4 Lu 21:24
- **in the land of Shinar:** Ge 10:10 11:2 14:1 Isa 11:11 Da 1:2



## Related Passages:

Genesis 10:8-11+ Now Cush became the father of Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth. 9He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD." The beginning of his kingdom was **Babel** and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the **land of Shinar**. 11 From that land he went forth into Assyria, and built Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah,

Genesis 11:2+ It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the **land of Shinar** and settled there.

## A TEMPLE FOR THE WOMAN WICKEDNESS IN SHINAR

**Then he said to me, "To build a temple for her in the land of Shinar- NET -** "To build a temple for her in the land of Babylonia." Temple is bayith which refers to a fixed, established structure made from some kind of material and can mean house. It is often coupled with

**And when it is prepared, she will be set there on her own pedestal- NIV =** "When it is ready, the basket will be set there in its place."

**Henry Morris** - "**Shinar**" is Babel, where Nimrod first built his great anti-God empire based upon pantheistic evolutionism and idolatrous covetousness, thence to become the earth's "mother of harlots" (Revelation 17:5). In the last days, this Babylonian system of anti-God commercialism, perhaps apostate religion and a political union of the Gentile nations, will swiftly, on wind-borne wings, be carried back to its ancient home in Babylon. Babylon will then quickly be reestablished as the world's center of government, culture and commerce, the capital of the Beast (see notes on Revelation 17, 18). Babylon, even now, is being rebuilt by the Iraqi government.

**William MacDonald** - Israel was cleansed of idolatry after the Babylonian captivity, but it will embrace a worse form of idolatry in the future when it worships the Antichrist as God. (BORROW [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

## DAVID BARON CHAPTER VIII THE SEVENTH VISION

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**David Baron** (1855–1926) was a [Jewish convert](#) to [Protestantism](#) and co-founder of the Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel (HCTI) missionary organisation.

### THE EPHAH (Zechariah 5:5–11)

Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth. And I said, What is it? And he said, This is the ephah that goeth forth. He said moreover, This is their appearance in all the land (and behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead); and this is the woman sitting, in the midst of the ephah. And he said unto me, This is wickedness; and he cast her down into the midst of the ephah: and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof. Then lifted I up mine eyes and saw, and, behold, there came forth two women, and the wind was in their wings; now they had wings like the wings of a stork; and they lifted up the ephah between earth and heaven. Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? And he said unto me, To build her a house in the land of Shinar: and when it is prepared, she shall be set there in her own place.

CHAPTER VIII - WE now come to the second of the two visions contained in the 5th chapter, which, together, set forth the full and final removal, not only of the guilt of sin, but of sin itself (especially in its final and yet future form of "wickedness" or lawlessness] and that by means of judgment from off the "holy land," and from the very presence of His redeemed and purified people.

### What the Prophet saw

After instructing the prophet as to the meaning of the preceding vision, the Interpreting Angel had again with drawn for awhile, and the prophet was left to himself to meditate on the solemn significance of the Flying Roll. Then the angel "went forth" (probably from the choirs of angels among whom he had retired in the interval, as Pusey suggests), and telling the prophet once more to lift up his



eyes, he beholds another object, which the Angel tells him is " the ephah which goeth forth" and adds the enigmatical words: " This is their resemblance (lit., their eye ) in all the land"

As the prophet looks, the cover, consisting of a circular mass, or "talent," of lead, was lifted up, and he beheld a woman (lit., " one woman ") sitting in the midst of the ephah, of whom the angel said, pointing to her: " This is the Wickedness." As there is evidently an attempt on the part of the woman to get out, or escape, the angel casts her down into the midst of the ephah: "And he cast the weight (lit., stone ) of lead upon the mouth thereof"

Then the prophet saw two women with wings like the wings of a stork " coming forth " from the invisible, and the wind was in their wings, and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven. On his inquiring of the angel: " Whither do these bear the ephah? " the answer was:

"To build her an house in the land of Shinar: and when (or if ) it be prepared (or established ) it shall be set there upon her own base."

### **The Significance of the Symbolism**

Let me now try very simply to explain the various items in this vision in the order in which they occur in the text.

(a) **The ephah, the same as bath, was the largest measure for dry goods in use among the Jews,**<sup>[1]</sup> though there is still some difference of opinion as to its exact size and capacity. The most general interpretation of this symbol the one which I myself have previously held is that it signified the (full) measure of Israel's sins, beyond which there is to be no more forgiveness, but a carrying away, or banishing from the land, or (as some interpreters will have it) from " the earth." Thus, already one of the, Church Fathers, quoting the solemn words of our Lord, " Fill ye up the measure of your fathers" says: " The measure, then, which the prophet saw pointed to the filling-up of the measure of the transgression against Himself";<sup>[2]</sup> and another says: "The angel bids him behold the sins of the people Israel heaped together in a perfect measure, and the transgression of all fulfilled, that the sins which escaped notice one by one, might, when collected together, be laid open to the eyes of all, and Israel might go forth from its place, and it might be shown to all what she was in her own land."<sup>[3]</sup>

A somewhat similar interpretation is given by Kliefoth (who is followed by Keil and others), who says: " Just as in a bushel the separate grains are all collected together, so will the individual sinners over the whole earth be brought into a heap when the curse of the end (contained in the Flying Roll) goes forth over the whole earth."<sup>[4]</sup>

But, though it is a solemn truth that God allows evil fully to develop itself, and iniquity to fill up its full measure of guilt before He finally interposes in judgment, the usual interpretations quoted above overlook the fact that the ephah instead of being represented as the measure into which the people pile up their iniquities, is spoken of as itself "going forth " (riNVi n, the same expression as is used of the Flying Roll in ver. 3) to pervade the people with its influence, and to stamp upon it, so to say, its own characteristic features, so that " this shall be their appearance ( their aspect, or resemblance ) in all the land."<sup>[5]</sup>

If we ask ourselves what was this new power, or principle, which exercised such a mighty formative influence over the Jewish people ever since the Babylonian Captivity, and which is gradually also bringing all the other nations of the earth under its sway, the answer is trade or commerce, of which the ephah is the natural emblem.

**With their banishment to Babylon and subsequent dispersion and peculiar position among the nations, there not only began an altogether new period of Jewish history, but there commenced also the processes by which the bulk of the nation became gradually transformed from an agricultural and pastoral people into a nation of merchant men,**<sup>[6]</sup> and the new occupations into which they were forced by the altered circumstances tended in a peculiar sense to develop the two transgressions (namely, theft and perjury) which are specified in the preceding vision of the Flying Roll, with which this vision of the Ephah stands very closely related. **Idolatry, into which they were so liable to fall, was forever left behind in Babylon; but a godless commercialism, with its temptations " to make the ephah small and the shekel great, and to deal falsely with balances of deceit" (Amos 8:5), eventually becomes not less hateful to God not only because it has too often been supported by theft and perjury, which, as we have seen, are transgressions of the central commands of both tables of the Law, but because it was destined to develop a new system in which all iniquity would finally be summed up.**

(U) In conjunction with the ephah we have the 133, kikar, which the English Version renders " talent." The Hebrew word literally means " a circle," and thus kikar lehem, " a circle of bread," is used to denote a round loaf.<sup>[7]</sup>

The word, as Dr. Wright points out, is not elsewhere found in the signification of a cover, though that is a possible sense. "It is constantly used of a fixed weight, by which gold, silver, and other things are weighed and measured, and is naturally spoken of in such a meaning here in connection with the Ephah, as the latter was the usual measure of capacity. The talent was the largest

measure of quantity, and the weight was made of lead as the most common heavy metal, and was used in all commercial transactions for weighing out money."

That a "talent," the other chief emblem and instrument of trade, should have been seen by the prophet as forming the cover of the ephah, is of solemn significance, as will be shown further on.

(c) The "talent," or circular mass of lead, being lifted,<sup>[8]</sup> the prophet beheld a woman<sup>[9]</sup> sitting in the midst of the ephah.

"And he said" (i.e., the Angel, as if to call anew the prophet's special attention), "this is the Wickedness" the very embodiment of iniquity, rendered in the Septuagint avopia, lawlessness.

The woman is usually taken by commentators to symbolise the Jewish people, which, when the measure of sin shall have become full, would be carried away into captivity. But the seventy years captivity in Babylon was now at an end, and the idea of a retrospective significance of the symbolism of this vision, which Jerome and Rosenmuller adopt, seems to me untenable. All the other visions of Zechariah relate to the future as Hengstenberg well observes, why should this be the sole exception? In the judgment of the Flying Roll a coming judgment is foretold. Why should this one of the Ephah be referred to the past?

Neither can it be properly referred to the subsequent captivity, as Hengstenberg and others attempt to do. There was, indeed, another dispersion of the Jewish people after the restoration from Babylon, but that could not well be represented in any special sense as a carrying away "into the land of Shinar." Besides, as I have tried to show in the introductory remarks to the exposition of the preceding vision of the Flying Roll, the scope and purport of the two visions in chap. v. are not the punishment of the nation, but the cleansing of the restored people and land, and the stamping out and banishment from their midst not only of the guilt of sin, but of iniquity or "wickedness" itself.

We regard, therefore, the woman in this vision, not as a personification of the Jewish people, nor as a collective representation of individual sinners who are finally gathered into one heap in the ephah, but as delineating the (then as yet hidden) moral system of which the ephah is the emblem.

And it is not inappropriate that the system engendered by the ephah, which in its essence is the worship of Mammon, should be represented by a woman, "because of the power it displays as a temptress, whereby it exercises such an enticing and dangerous influence over the souls of men." Or, as Grotius observed: This form of wickedness is here described as a woman "because she is the mother of thefts and perjuries, and of all crimes." But though this vision, like all the rest, has primary reference to the land and the people and the purport of its message is that the system which is characterised as the Wickedness (and is altogether alien and opposed to the principles of the redeemed and sanctified community in the land in which the King of Righteousness shall have His seat) shall be banished to the place, or sphere, to which it originally belongs it is a solemn truth that this same evil power of the ephah, with its all-pervading controlling influence, is "going forth" also in the whole world; so that of all the civilised nations in particular it must be said: "This is their aspect, or resemblance, in all the earth."<sup>[10]</sup>

It is a striking and noteworthy fact, which no intelligent man can fail to observe, that commerce is more and more bringing the nations under its sway.

It now sets up the governments and dictates the policies of the nations. It is for it that the mighty armaments are being built and that wars are being made.

In all the earth and among all nations that which is symbolised by the ephah is becoming the great controlling centre of society. "The producing power of manufacture, the distributing skill of the merchant, the controlling power of those who trade in money and command the circulating medium of commerce these and similar interests, when combined, are able to speak with a voice which no government can refuse to hear. Their will is potent. Legislation and government accommodate themselves to their demands."

That, for instance, "which is most distinctive in the present condition of England is her commercial system. Commerce, or the wealth and influence thence arising, has become the mainspring of England's energies the chief bulwark of her social institutions, the pillar of her government. When ecclesiastical power fell, and the feudal aristocracy became gradually enfeebled, and when the steady advance of the people seemed to make democracy (perhaps revolutionary democracy) the sure end of the social movement, there was gradually being formed in this country a new aristocracy, more potent than any, whether ecclesiastical or hereditary, that had preceded the aristocracy of wealth. The expressions commercial interest, manufacturing interest/ moneyed interest, Indian interest, and the like, suggest sufficiently intelligible ideas to English minds. The ramifications of these interests are so various and so extended that the mass of society is effectually reached and controlled by their influence; and thus a power has been consolidated the like to which has never before existed. In England this power is learning to work in harmony with the State. Indeed, the State has virtually become its organ. Plutocracy is a comprehensive, not an exclusive system. Its elasticity is great. It can adapt itself to the changing circumstances of the hour, and receiving within its circle both the aristocrat and the democrat, it provides a place of honour and influence for both.

"In its relations to ancient systems, it seeks, not to annihilate, but rather to modify, adapt, harmonise, and employ. It possesses, therefore, not only its own intrinsic weight, but is acquiring also all the weight which govern mental authority can give. No other interest, whether royal or ecclesiastic, aristocratic or popular, is allowed to throw any effectual impediment in its course. Virtually, its will is paramount. The appropriate device of England would not be either the crown or the mitre, the coronet or the sword, but some emblem of commerce. An ephah should be emblazoned on her banners. Our Government is a commercial Government, not because England happens to be a mercantile country, but because manufacturing and trading interests supremely sway her councils, and all other interests are being made subordinate. Such are the features which characteristically mark the period during which the powers of civilisation have been renovated in this Western corner of the Roman world.

" The abasement of ecclesiastical supremacy, the establishment of constitutional monarchy, and the rise of commerce into sovereign influence, may be regarded as accomplished facts. They distinctively characterise England; and finally they will equally characterise every other kingdom that falls within the Roman world. The success of England naturally causes her to be imitated. Her influence, which is great, is exerted, as might be expected, for the propagation of her principles, and the circumstances of the hour favour these principles. We cannot marvel at this, for the Scriptures plainly declare that such shall be the principles of the closing period of our dispensation. Whatever opinion may be formed as to the particular city indicated in the 18th of the Revelation, this at least is evident, that that chapter describes a closing scene in the world's present history, and speaks of merchants being the great men of the earth, and of a commercial city being queen of the nations.

" But it may be asked, Why should this be regretted? Is an ephah the symbol of evil? In other words, Is commerce necessarily sinful? We reply, No; commerce is not necessarily sinful. Commerce may be the mere exchange on just and righteous principles of the productions of various regions, or of various labourers. The effecting such exchange may involve no course of conduct that militates against the principles of God, or sacrifices His truth. But it may be otherwise. If commerce comes into such supremacy as to make her merchants the great men of the earth, the influences that governmentally order the nations would in that case fall into her hand. The world educationally, politically, religiously, socially would be virtually under her control. How blessed if her principles were the principles of God! But if the arrangements which are to characterise the nations as the latter day draws nigh are as evil as the Scriptures declare them to be, then they who by means of their commercial greatness control or sustain these arrangements must be the very pillars of the last great system of evil, and the commercial period of the world's history becomes the period of its systematised transgression."<sup>[11]</sup>

It is most probably, then, because of the part this system is to play in connection with the final apostasy, that it is characterised by the Angel with such emphasis as "the wickedness," or "the lawlessness."

But to return to the Scriptures immediately before us.

The Angel's action in throwing the woman back into the ephah, and casting the circular mass of lead "upon the mouth thereof," is meant, I believe, to set forth, not only the fact that the instruments of sin become the instruments of her punishment, but the still more solemn truth that men and nations who sell themselves to sin are, after a time, kept down and tied to that particular sin; or, to use the language of Prov. v. 22: "His own iniquities shall take the wicked, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sin"

Not only in relation to the future eternal destiny of the individual (of which the words are primarily used), but already also in the earthly history of men and nations, there comes a time when the solemn judicial sentence goes forth from the mouth of God: "He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still" (Rev. xxii. 11, R.V.).

Thus, when the woman attempts to escape, she is thrown back into the ephah, which becomes, so to say, the chariot in which she is carried away as something which is defiled and defiling, from the land in which God shall dwell; and the talent with which she carries on her unrighteous trade becomes the heavy weight by which she is held down till she is landed safely "in her own place," where, after a season of lawless liberty in which she will allure men to their own destruction by her seductive attractiveness and luxury, she will be judged and destroyed, together with him who is pre-eminently styled "The Wicked One," by the brightness of the Lord's parousia (2 Thess. ii. 8).

(d) We come now to the last act in the drama of this vision, which, as already said, is primarily intended to set forth the removal of "wickedness" from the holy land without occupying itself with its final destiny in the land to which, by the aid of evil powers, it was for a time to be transplanted.

That every item in the description of the actors in the 9th verse is of symbolical significance (as is the case with all the details in the other visions), and not merely picturesque figures of speech with a view "to give distinctness to the picture" (as Keil, Hengstenberg, Bredenkamp, and others assert), there can be no doubt; but it is impossible to speak with absolute positiveness as to what each particular is intended to signify.<sup>[12]</sup>

In a general way I agree on this point with those writers who regard these women as typifying instruments or systems of evil, who

for a time deliver the woman in the ephah from the vengeance which was about to destroy her.

"By reason of the curse described (in the previous vision) as overtaking all who followed in her wicked ways," observes Dr. Wright, "no place is left for her any longer in the land of righteousness, among a people whose transgressions are forgiven and who are sanctified to bring forth fruit unto holiness. The winged women, therefore, bear off the evil one to the land of Shinar, there to build for her a home and a house."<sup>[13]</sup>

And if we are asked what two evil systems, helped and impelled by evil spirits (as may be gathered from the fact that they had the wings of a stork, which is an unclean bird, and that "the wind," or "spirit," certainly not of God, "was in their wings"), would thus eventually unite in finding a home for the ephah and the woman, which for a season would be permitted to dominate the nations through its power, we can only suggest that it may be apostate Christianity united in the last days to apostate Judaism, and both given over to the worship of Mammon, on which the power of the ephah is based; or, as in these series of visions, the civil and ecclesiastical powers, as represented by Zerubbabel and Joshua, are frequently brought before us; and in the fifth vision (chap. iv. 1-4) are probably "the two" who are represented "as standing before the Lord." The two women here may, perhaps, be meant to signify civil government broken loose, even outwardly, from every acknowledgment of God (and, therefore, an instrument in the hand of lawlessness), and a corrupt anti-Christian and anti-theistic priesthood both Jewish and Gentile ready to unite as sponsors and protectors to a system which, though as yet not so regarded, even by the elect, is characterised by God as "the Wickedness."

(<?) There is yet one more point that we must briefly touch on before taking our leave of this vision namely, what are we to understand by "the land of Shinar," which, according to the words of the Interpreting Angel, is to be the destination to which the two women bear the ephah, there for a time to establish it on its own base. According to the commentators, the name "Shinar" is not to be taken geographically here, as an epithet applied to Mesopotamia, but "is a national, or real, definition, which affirms that the ungodliness carried away out of the sphere of the people of God will have its permanent settlement in the sphere of the imperial power that is hostile to God."<sup>[14]</sup> Or, as another explains it: "The name Shinar, though strictly Babylonia, carries us back to an older power than the world-empire of Babylon, which now was destroyed. In the land of Shinar was the first attempt made, ere mankind was yet dispersed, to array a world-empire against God. And so it is the apter symbol of the anti-theistic or anti-Christian world, which, by violence, and falsehood, and sophistry, wars against the truth."<sup>[15]</sup>

But while there is truth in the words of yet another writer that Shinar was the land of unholiness, and stands here contrasted with Palestine, which shall be "the holy land" (chap. ii. 1-2), and that the chief point in the vision is the renewal of the special form of "wickedness" which is symbolised by the ephah from the land of Israel to find its resting-place "in the land of world-power which is antagonistic to God," we cannot altogether agree that "the picture is an ideal one," and that "the land of Shinar is an ideal land contrasted with the land of Israel."<sup>[16]</sup>

Without any spirit of dogmatism, and without entering at this place into the question of the identity and significance of the Babylon in the Revelation whether mystical or actual we would express our conviction that there are Scriptures which cannot, according to our judgment, be satisfactorily explained except on the supposition of a revival and yet future judgment of literal Babylon, which for a time will be the centre and embodiment of all the elements of our godless Western "civilisation," and which especially will become the chief entrepot of commerce in the world, in which will be gathered "merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stone, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet; and all tjiyine ivoor, and every vessel of ivory, and every vessel made of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble; and cinnamon, and spice, and incense, and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and cattle, and sheep; and merchandise of horses and chariots and bodies; and souls of men"<sup>[17]</sup> until it shall finally and for ever be overturned by one terrible act of judgment from God.

To this conviction we are led chiefly by the fact that there are prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the literal Babylon which have never in the past been exhaustively fulfilled, and that Scripture usually connects the final overthrow of Babylon with the yet future restoration and blessing of Israel.

And it is very striking to the close observer of the signs of the times how things at the present day are rapidly developing on the very lines which are forecast in the prophetic Scriptures. "The fears and hopes of the world political, commercial, and religious," writes one in a monthly journal which lies before me, "are at the present day being increasingly centred upon the home of the human race Mesopotamia. ... As the country from which the father of the Jewish nation emigrated to the land of promise, it is also occupying the thoughts and aspirations of the Jews."

Whatever may be the outcome of the negotiations which have been carried on recently with the Turkish Government by the Jewish Territorialists "for the establishment of a Jewish autonomous State" in this very region, in which many Zionists and other Jews were ready to join, there is so much truth in the words of another writer that when once a considerable number of such a commercial people as the Jews are re-established in Palestine, "the Euphrates would be to them as necessary as the Thames to London or the Rhine to Germany. It would be Israel's great channel of communication with the Indian seas, not to speak of the commerce which

would flow towards the Tigris and Euphrates from the central and northern districts of Asia! It would be strange, therefore, if no city should arise on its banks of which it might be said that her merchants were the great men of the earth."

"Noteworthy in this connection," observes another writer, "is the watchful eye of the German Imperial Government upon the railway in course of construction from Konia (the biblical Iconium) to Bagdad. Some six hundred miles of the Anatolian, or Euphratean, line have already been opened to traffic." In short, there is a general impression that this region, the highway between Asia and Europe, and contiguous to Africa, is about to become a great "commercial centre of gravity." The new Turkish Government (in contrast to the old regime) is very keen on the development of the resources<sup>[18]</sup> of that ancient and naturally fertile region, and alive to the very important aid which Jewish capital and energy could render in that direction. Very recently, therefore, they engaged the services of a distinguished English hydraulic engineer, Sir William Willcocks, K.C.M.G., to survey the district and report on the establishment and development of irrigation works. He returned full of enthusiasm, declaring that his "future hopes, ambitions, and work are bound up with the re-creation of Chaldea."

A very interesting paper which he read at a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society last November is published in The Geographical Journal for January 1910. The following are his concluding remarks: "In her long history of many thousands of years, Babylonia has again and again been submerged, but she has always risen with an energy and thoroughness rivalling the very completeness and suddenness of her fall. She has never failed to respond to those who have striven to raise her. Again, it seems that the time has come for this land, long wasted with misery, to rise from the very dust and take her place by the side of her ancient rival, the land of Egypt.

"The works we are proposing are drawn on sure and truthful lines, and the day they are carried out the two great rivers will hasten to respond, and Babylon will yet once again see her waste places becoming inhabited, and the desert blossoming as the rose."<sup>[19]</sup>

All this may be regarded by some as a long digression from the subject before us; but it is not altogether so, for it shows from actual facts and events which are before us the very strong probability that "the land of Shinar" which in the past was so "prominent in connection with the manifestation of evil on the part of man, and of judgment! on the part of God, that it stands peculiarly as a memorial of proud ungodliness met by the visitation of righteous vengeance from above" will yet, as Scripture forecasts, play a very important part in the consummation of human "wickedness" in the final anti-Christian apostasy, in which a godless Judaism and a corrupt, unbelieving Christianity will be united for the sake of the false peace, and pomp, and luxury, and a humanitarianism dissociated from God and the truth, which the system, outwardly symbolised by the ephah, will for a time minister to them, but which, as Scripture also warns us, will end in the most terrible judgment which has yet befallen man upon the earth.

1. <sup>↑</sup> The omer, which contained ten ephahs, appears, as Keil points out, to have had only an ideal existence, namely, for the purpose of calculation.
2. <sup>↑</sup> Cyril.
3. <sup>↑</sup> Jerome.
4. <sup>↑</sup> So also Bredenkamp, in his Prophet Sacharja, in almost exactly the same words: "Wie in einem Scheffel die einzelnen Korner gesammelt werden, so werden alle Gottlose in diesem epha gesammelt, so dass sie ein Weib ausmachen."
5. <sup>↑</sup> The LXX have either had another MS reading, namely, Djij (avonam), "their iniquity," instead of the present Hebrew text of Djy (^enam), "eye," or appearance, or have simply blundered in their translation, for they render the sentence, "this is their iniquity in all the earth," a reading which has been adopted by several of the German commentators. But there is no reason to doubt the correctness of the Masoretic text.
6. <sup>↑</sup> This is the explanation given in the Targum and by Rashi. Kimchi, who quite unjustifiably applies this vision to the Ten Tribes, gives the following far fetched interpretation: "He showed him an ephah, which is a measure, to signify that God had measured out to them measure for measure; for, according as they had done by continuing many days in their wickedness, from the day that the kingdom was divided until the day that they were led away captive; and as they had not had one out of all their kings who turned them to good, but, on the contrary, they all walked in an evil way: according, I say, as they had continued long in evil, so they shall be many days in captivity this is measure for measure; therefore the prophet saw an ephah which is a measure."

Among German commentators, Pressel, in his Commentar zu Haggai, Sacharja, und Maleachi, is the only one who, as far as I know, has caught what, on mature consideration, seems to me the true significance of the ephah, and he is followed by Dr. C. H. H. Wright.

Lange, in his Bibelwerk, refers somewhat contemptuously to Pressel's view, his great objection being expressed in the words: "Wie wenn etwa von einem heutigen judenviertel die Rede ware, und nicht von der Geheiligten Colonie zu Jerusalem" ("as if the subject dealt with was a modern Jewish quarter instead of the sanctified colony in Jerusalem"). But the answer to this objection is that the present state of the Jewish people as seen "im heutigen judenviertel" cannot be dissociated from Israel's past or future. That the beginning of the new power of commercialism as associated with the Jewish people can be traced



back to the dispersion, and began already to assert itself in Zechariah's time, is a matter of history. Beside this, these two visions in chap. v. do not set forth the "sanctified colony in Jerusalem," but rather show how transgressors shall be "cut off" (or "cleansed away"), and how the evil which is the very embodiment of "wickedness," or "lawlessness," shall finally be banished from the "holy land," so that those who remain after the purifying judgment shall "be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem" (Isa. iv. 3).

7. [↑](#) Ex. xxix. 23; I Sam. ii. 36.
8. [↑](#) According to Pressel and Dr. Wright the woman was sitting (as it were, enthroned) in the ephah carrying the kikar, or talent of lead (the emblem of the means by which her traffic is carried on), in her lap. They render the 7th verse thus: "And behold a talent of lead was being lifted up (i.e. carried), and I saw, and this was one woman sitting (or as she sat) in the middle of the ephah." But, though this is a possible though somewhat forced rendering of the verb *nxiyj* (which is the Niphal participle fern, of NJ), it seems to me clear from the 8th verse that the "talent" formed the cover. The impression left on the mind by reading the narrative of the vision in the original is certainly that there is an attempted escape on the part of the woman from the ephah, and that the Angel casts the talent on the mouth of the ephah with a view to secure her, that she may be safely carried to the land of Shinar. It is for this reason, I suppose, that it may serve as a cover, or circular lid apart from its emblematic significance as the instrument of trade that a talent of lead, consisting of a large, circular, undefined mass, is seen in the vision, instead of one of gold, or of silver, which in size would be very much smaller.
9. [↑](#) *hshah achath* literally, "one woman." The words, "and this is one woman," are those of the Interpreting Angel, who proceeds in the next verse to describe her character.
10. [↑](#) *!!?>* *tretz* as already explained means both "land" and "earth," though its primary use in this vision is of the "land."
11. [↑](#) *Babylon and Egypt*, by B. W. Newton.
12. [↑](#) Keil, whose remarks are repeated almost verbally by Bredenkamp and others, easily passes over this verse with the following remarks: "Women carry it because there is a woman inside; and two women because two persons are required to carry so large and heavy a burden, that they may lay hold of it on both sides. These women have wings because it passes through the air; and a stork's wings because these birds have broad pinions," etc.
13. [↑](#) It may be remarked that the final cleansing of the land and people of Israel does not, in point of time, take place until after the full development of "Wickedness," and the manifestation of the "Wicked One," who shall be destroyed by the "brightness" (or "shining forth") of Christ at His coming (2 Thess. ii. 8). Not until the King of Righteousness reigns over Mount Zion, will Palestine be "the land of righteousness," and the nation of Israel "a people whose transgressions are forgiven, and who are sanctified to bring forth fruits unto holiness."

But we are not to expect in these visions, or indeed in Old Testament prophecy generally, a clear setting forth of eschatological events in their true chronological order.

The/act is clearly, though symbolically, set forth, that among a people, and in a land whence "iniquity has been removed" (chap. iii. 9), and which should thenceforth be known as the "holy land" (chap. ii. 12), and the holy people, the system of "wickedness" outwardly symbolised by the ephah, can have no place.

Incidentally, it also sets forth the fact that for a time this system will find a place in the land and sphere to which it, so to say, belongs.

14. [↑](#) Keil.
15. [↑](#) Pusey.
16. [↑](#) Dr. C. H. H. Wright. According to Hengstenberg, who, as I believe erroneously, regards the woman in the ephah as symbolising the Jewish people, who, when the measure of their sin became full, was to be banished again from the land and carried away into captivity, Shinar stands for the lands of their present dispersion: that is, "the future dwelling-place of the Jews, who were to be banished from their country, is called by the name of the land in which they were captives before." And he finds in it a "striking example of the custom which the prophets adopted of representing future events by images drawn from the past, and at the same time transferring to the former the names which belong to the latter."
17. [↑](#) Rev. xviii. 12, 13.
18. [↑](#) All this was written in 1910.
19. [↑](#) The following paragraph forms the concluding remarks of an article in the London Standard for August 30, 1910, in which the beginnings of the great irrigation works proposed by Sir William Willcocks are described:

"These gigantic schemes cannot be carried out in their entirety without the co-operation of great capitalists; but an experiment might well be made with a limited area, when the feasibility of the whole would be apparent. Nowhere in the world do the natural conditions and the possibilities of hydraulic science offer a greater field to the agricultural capitalist. One hears from time to time of one or other scheme of Jewish colonisation on a vast scale. If Baron Hirsch's committee, who have, apparently, ransacked the world for a suitable locality, would give the scheme the attention it deserves, it might mean great things for the Jewish race. Here, in the very cradle of their race, in the land so intimately and so sadly associated with their subsequent

history, a new Psalmist may arise, converting the sadness of the Super flumina into joy; the old-time captivity may yet be turned, as the rivers in the South. Here is the land, and here is the water; it only needs money, intelligently applied, to convert a wilder ness into another Garden of Eden.

"One cannot take leave of this subject without reference to the certain advent of the railway, possibly of more railways than one. It will, indeed, be a wonder ful revival. Ur of the Chaldees as the centre of an important trade and railway system, must appeal to the dullest imagination; yet such it assuredly will be in the not very distant future. Such great possibilities as here exist cannot, at this stage of the world's history, be allowed to lie dormant for ever."