

- Last week we looked at the prophet Joel and the Greek empire and their contributions to the Gospel. We looked at how the prophet Joel predicted that God would pour out His spirit on people ([Joel 2:28](#)). This had happened under Moses so the people understood what Joel was talking about. ([Numbers 11:24-30](#)). This does happen again in the New Testament under the day of Pentecost ([Acts 2:1-21](#)) ([Acts 2:42-43](#)). Then we talked about the rise to power of the Greek Empire under Alexander the Great. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_the_Great We discussed how the Greek Empire contributed a beautiful, elegant, and common language (Koine Greek) to the world which was also used by the writers of the New Testament. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koine_Greek
- This week we will look at the first four chapters of the book of Zechariah and then turn our attention to the next empire (the Roman Empire) which will rise. We will look specifically at the rise of the engineers within the Roman Empire and how that will impact that the spread of the Gospel.
- Grandson of the priest Iddo, Zechariah prophesied to the people of Judah after they returned from their seventy years of exile in Babylon ([Zechariah 1:1-6](#)).
- Iddo (Zechariah's grandfather) was a priest who was allowed to go home from Babylonian exile with the first wave of Jews ([Nehemiah 12:1, 4, 16](#)). He was one of those who went home under the decree of Cyrus the King of Persia that had just overrun the Babylonian empire. ([2 Chronicles 36:22-23](#))
- Zechariah begins a series of visions which probably come to him all in one night. His first two visions are of beasts that come and conquer Israel, most likely representing the foreign powers (like the Assyrians) that had invaded and taken them away. ([Zechariah 1:7-21](#)).
- Zechariah third vision is of a man who we later find out was an angel with a measuring line who intends to measure Jerusalem. ([Zechariah 2:1-2](#))
- A second angel explains he doesn't need to do that because Jerusalem won't have any borders because God will be like a "wall of fire" protecting it and will be "the glory in the midst of her." ([Zechariah 2:3-5](#))
- The angel further encourages Israel to free itself from foreign influence and that ultimately all nations will be joined to the Lord "in that day," ([Zechariah 2:6-13](#)) another reference to the day of Pentecost where men from many nations are joined to the Lord in Jerusalem. ([Acts 2:5](#))
- Zechariah's fourth vision is of Joshua standing next to Satan. ([Zechariah 3:1-2](#))
- Zechariah recognizes that Joshua is wearing filthy garments, and he gives him new ones, signifying a removal of his sin. ([Zechariah 3:3-5](#))
- Keeping garments clean is a common reference in the Bible. ([Revelation 3:1-5](#))
- In the fourth vision, the angel also tells Zechariah that he will bring forth his servant "the branch" and remove the iniquity of the land "in one day" ([Zechariah 3:6-10](#)). These are clearly references to bringing the forgiveness to everyone through the death of Christ which was accomplished in one day and applies to all people.

- In the fifth vision of Zechariah, he sees two olive trees which he later discovers are branches, a candlestick of gold with a bowl on top, and seven pipes leading to seven lamps. (Zechariah 4:1-3)
- An angel comes to interpret all the elements of the dream, including the fact that Zerubbabel who is rebuilding the temple will complete his work. (Zechariah 4:4-14)
- This gentleman Zerubbabel is also mentioned briefly in many places in the Bible, including the genealogy of Jesus. (Matthew 1:11, Luke 1:27)
- Last week we talked about how Christ came in the “fullness of time” (Galatians 4:4-7) meaning that instead of sending Christ immediately after the Old Testament book of Malachi, God waited for empires to make major contributions that would help the Gospel message spread. We talked about how the major Persian contribution was mass communications, and the Greek contribution was language (Koine Greek).
- Last week we also ended our history discussion with the death of Alexander the Great. We mentioned that his empire would be split in four parts. Eventually one will overcome the other three. Right now, that empire is rising, and it is rising largely on the strength of engineering feats. There were several major engineering leaps taking place, but perhaps the most notable one was the invention of concrete. This invention was used later in the construction of Aqueducts to carry water so towns could flourish in places where there was no water. Roads which were built to last for centuries (some of them even still carry trucks today). They also were the first people to start binding books.
<http://www.history.com/news/history-lists/10-innovations-that-built-ancient-rome>

Questions:

1. What family was Zechariah from and how did they get to Israel?
2. What does Zechariah’s first vision represent?
3. What is Zechariah’s second vision?
4. What does an angel say that will protect Jerusalem?
5. Where does the angel say that God will be in Jerusalem?
6. Why does the angel say the Israelites should give up foreign influences?
7. What does the prediction that “men from all nations” will be joined together in Jerusalem reference?
8. Who appears in Zechariah’s third vision?
9. What does Joshua’s change of clothes represent? Is that a common metaphor?
10. How can the iniquity of the land be removed in “one day”?
11. What strange things does Zechariah see in his fifth vision?
12. Who was Zerubbabel and what do we know about him?
13. What were some of the major architectural innovations in Rome and why were they significant?