

Zechariah sees a large flying roll

And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I see a flying roll: the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits. - Zec 5:2

This Lesson Outline was prepared by John M. Wharton

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Sources -

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Introduction -

This lesson is meant for us to have a little enjoyment as we look at an unusual passage in the prophecies of Zechariah where the prophet sees a strange object in the sky. This has provoked a lot of speculation among popular writers as to what the object was. Was it only symbolism, or was it a device of some type? There are some interesting thoughts and speculation among more Bible oriented writers as to what the object might have meant. Let's have a little honest fun as we look at this object Zechariah saw in the sky some 2500 year ago.

Lesson Text - Zechariah 5 -

And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I see a flying roll: the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits.

Zec 5:1 And I lifted up mine eyes again, and saw, and behold, a flying roll.

Zec 5:2 And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I see a flying roll: the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits.

Comments -

the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits - twenty standard cubits is about 30 feet, and ten is about 15 feet. The object is around 30 feet by 15 feet. That is interesting in that quite a few modern prophecy writers note that the modern GPS satellites we use are those dimensions. Earlier satellites were somewhat smaller, but the size has increased with new generations of them. That is presented only as an interesting thought, and not a certainty. But then, classic commentators such as Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, and Keil and

Delitzsch note that those are the dimensions of the temple porch where the people would assemble before God. See 1 Kings 6:3.

1Ki 6:1 And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of Jehovah.

1Ki 6:2 And the house that king Solomon built for Jehovah was sixty cubits in length, and twenty in breadth, and thirty cubits in height.

1Ki 6:3 And the porch, in front of the temple of the house, was twenty cubits in length, in front of the house broadways, and ten cubits was its breadth, in front of the house.

Keil and Delitzsch say that it is also the dimensions of the holy place within the temple. So the dimensions may reflect a meaning that has to do with one or both of these locations of the temple and their significance.

Zec 5:3 And he said unto me, This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole land: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off according to it on this side; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off according to it on that side.

Zec 5:4 I will cause it to go forth, saith Jehovah of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name; and it shall lodge in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.

Comments -

This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole land - **Does the roll cause the damage and judgment, or foretell it to the inhabitants? Since it is said to enter into the house of the guilty, I would think the later fits better.**

And 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.

Zec 5:5 And 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.

Zec 5:6 And I said, What is it? And he said, **This is the ephah that goeth forth.** And he said, This is their resemblance in all the land.

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia from the e-Sword Bible program vs. 7.8.3 -

Ephah (2)

ē' fa (אִיפָה, 'ēphāh): **A dry measure of about one bushel capacity.** It corresponds to the bath in liquid measure and was the standard for measuring grain and similar articles since it is classed with balances and weights ([Lev 19:36](#); [Amo 8:5](#)) in the injunctions regarding just dealing in trade. In [Zec 5:6-10](#) it is used for the utensil itself (see WEIGHTS AND MEASURES). - *Bold text emphasis mine.*

Zec 5:7 And behold, there was lifted up a round plate of lead; and this is a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah.

Zec 5:8 And he said, This is Wickedness: and he cast her into the midst of the ephah; and

he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof.

Zec 5:9 And I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold, there came out two women, and the wind was 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.

Zec 5:10 And I said to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these carry the ephah?

Zec 5:11 And he said unto me, To build it a house in the land of Shinar; and it shall be established, and set there upon its own base.

Comments -

and this is a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah – Who is this woman?

This is Wickedness: and he cast her into the midst of the ephah - We are told in verse 8 that this is wickedness. So she cannot represent any part of God's plan.

To build it a house in the land of Shinar - In verse 11, Zechariah asks where the two other women, with wings like those of a stork, are taking the first evil woman, and we are told that she is carried by them to the land of Shinar. That is Babylon the mother of all false mystery religions. Her worship had emphasis on a mother with a male child of a god, who dies and is reborn. It is a parody of what Satan knew in Genesis would be God's plan for the Saviour.

What is intriguing here is that Zechariah was contemporary with Haggai, and both were writing after the Babylonian captivity had ended and some of the Jewish people were returning to the land of Israel. The Persian Empire was in control of the entire Middle East at that time, and Babylon, itself was no longer the world power.

Yet this talks of wickedness, appropriately symbolized by the evil woman, in the land of Shinar, the earlier name of the area containing Babylon. This brings to mind Ishtar, or Semiramis, the evil wife of the rebel Nimrod, and the rebellion after the flood. This seems to indicate Babylon as a power again, which is a theme in the prophecies of Daniel, the Revelation of John, and other passages. It is still future during the time called the last days. That puts it in our modern technological times. Does that fit with the idea of the satellite, seen by some in Zechariah's flying roll? It is an intriguing thought. What do you think?

Conclusion -

In this lesson we've looked at the unusual passage in Zechariah chapter 5, where the prophet sees a strange object in the sky. Was it only symbolism, or was it a device of some type? There is speculation among some writers that the object seen was a modern satellite in orbit above the earth. The thought of it being a communications satellite, for example, is seen as fitting the idea that it pronounces the curse on the earth's inhabitants. Perhaps. What such a satellite would have to do with any function that could be used for this purpose, I don't know. But it really is an intriguing thought. It is genuinely interesting that the dimensions of this roll are 30 feet by 15 feet. That is, if you presume that the common cubit with a standard length of 18 inches or 1.5 feet is the one used here. Those are said, by the speculators, to be the same dimensions of our modern GPS (Global Positioning System) satellites. And Zechariah saw this object about 2500 years ago.