

The Lord Draws Back the Curtain a Little: Book of Zechariah
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From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 1: ABSOLUTE TERMS GOVERN THE UNIVERSE, 1:1-6.

#1. We in this world are veiled by the nature of the temporal order. Realities, unseen, exert controlling influence upon the entire universe. The prophetic language of Zechariah draws back the curtain to allow partial knowledge of THE DIRECT INVOLVEMENT OF GOD IN TIME. Naturalism, empiricism and materialism are hopeless epistemologies (ways of knowing) to detect such immaterial reality. Yet they are there.

#2. The reality of God is assumed. But the text asserts that the relation of God to time is His choice and not of human election.

#3. "In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the prophet...", 1:1. As true to its nature, the phenomenon of revelation breaks into time, life, historical conditions and personal circumstance. A de facto recognition is required: THE WORD OF GOD IS VIABLE IN TIME! ITS VIABILITY IS, FURTHERMORE, UNBREAKABLE. This is considered a modern heresy by the unbelieving world.

#4. "The Lord was very angry with your fathers", 1:2. Manifestation of supernatural anger implies that a supernatural standard of behavior is in force in the universe, that consequences will be imposed, that limits are placed upon human behavior and that historical conditions can be turned against human complacency.

#5. "...Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Return to Me...that I may return to you'...", 1:3. REDEMPTIVE RELATIONS WITH THE ALMIGHTY ARE STRICTLY CONDITIONAL. At every moment in time one may obey or disobey ABSOLUTE TERMS.

#6. The prophet calls for a necessary and fundamental change of course. "Do not be like your fathers...'Return now from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.' But they did not listen or give heed to Me...", 1:4. Their fathers (the past) rejected the revealed truth that ABSOLUTE TERMS GOVERN THE UNIVERSE.

#7. Generations come and go (1:5), but THE WORD OF GOD OVERTAKES THEM ALL. "But did not My words and My statutes...overtake your fathers"?, 1:6.

#8. Time, events, circumstances and men, sooner or later, will all be overtaken by the Word of God. No one escapes this most absolute of facts. No one! "As the Lord of hosts purposed to do to us in accordance with our ways and our deeds, so He has dealt with us", 1:6.

#9. The Lord made it patent to Zechariah that ABSOLUTE TERMS GOVERN THE ENTIRE EXPANSE OF THE UNIVERSE.

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 2: THE ETERNAL LEVERAGES THE TEMPORAL, 1:7-11.

#1. "On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat...", Zechariah learned of the Lord's leverage over time, events and circumstance.

#2. On that day "the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the prophet...". From that point forward this man grasped that his life was entirely leveraged by the will of God. He had been leveraged into THE INDEX POSITION.

#3. This is the linking position between the Eternal and the temporal. Zechariah is assigned the task of connecting the thoughts of God to the minds of men in the cauldron of temporal life.

#4. The index position is the providential position of the church in the world. Therefore, the index is the rightful place of the believer in time and circumstance. Consequently the index position is the assigned place of the Book of Zechariah. We stand between two worlds and there we are to function. Let no complaint be heard from us. WE ARE LEVERAGED BY GOD with everything that goes with that state of being.

#5. Zechariah had a vision from the Lord: A night rider on a red horse was seen standing "among the myrtle trees in a ravine", 1:8. Red, sorrel and white horses were behind him.

#6. The Lord draws back the curtain--a little, to expose, otherwise, unseen SUPERNATURAL ACTIVITY.

#7. These celestial horsemen were unexpected by the prophet. He was interested and "the angel" explained; "I will show you what these are", 1:9.

#8. ". . . the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered...", 1:10. (The riders were on the earth!) He said, "These are those whom the Lord has sent to patrol the earth", 1:10.

#9. "These" patrol the earth making themselves perfectly aware of human thought, speech and behavior. The riders gave their report to "the angel of the Lord", as He "was standing among the myrtle trees", 1:11.

#10. The patrol riders put their findings into evidence: "...We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth is peaceful and quiet", 1:11.

#11. Beyond human capacity to know, SPIRITUAL ACTIVITY is at work in the material universe. Believers are not unattended here on the earth, in the ebb and flow of experience.

#12. When beleaguered by circumstances, tending toward despair, uncertain of outcomes, it could be of great encouragement to remember Zechariah. Just beyond the reach of our senses and the extent of our trials, right there among the myrtle trees, stands an ANGELIC HORSE PLATOON; ready to protect, defend and leverage our circumstance.

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 3: RESTORATION and COMMENSURATE CAUTION, 1:12-17.

#1. The "angel of the Lord" (1:-12) asked a rhetorical question (where one already knows the answer). "...O Lord of hosts, how long will You have no compassion for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which You have been indignant these seventy years"?

#2. That rhetorical question sets the case for greater understanding of how the Lord behaves in relation to men in time.

#2. The Almighty does not compromise with sin among His own people. His integrity is above that. Because of willful sin the nature of time is leveraged by the Lord. "Compassion" is withdrawn from time and a supernatural "indignant" relation puts pressure on historical conditions. Life can get much harder under those Eternal impositions.

#3. The "Lord of hosts" is not a disinterested observer of human behavior. ONE MUST BE SUPREMELY CONSCIOUS THAT GOD IS THE DETERMINANT HISTORICAL ACTOR! His behavior in time is the behavior that matters.

#4. What is it that motivates the Almighty's behavior in time?: "...Proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion'", 1:14.

#5. God is a possessor of emotion. He is "jealous" of those He calls His own and of what He calls holy. The point is, that the "Lord of hosts" will behave accordingly in time and toward human loyalty. "Seventy years" is a long time.

#6. "But I am very angry with the nations who are at ease; for while I was only a little angry, they furthered the disaster", 1:15. The entire arc of what is called NATURAL DISASTERS should be reconsidered in the light of revelation; the Bible! The fact that the Lord is "jealous" and can be "angry" is causal in the temporal universe.

#7. The Lord's behavior can equally be RESTORATIVE. "...I will return to Jerusalem with compassion; My house will be built in it...and a measuring line will be stretched over Jerusalem", 1:16.

#8. SUPERNATURAL BEHAVIOR is not a trivial matter. "...My cities will again overflow with prosperity, and the Lord will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem", 1:17.

#9. Because of SUPERNATURAL BEHAVIOR in the universe of men, A COMMENSURATE CAUTION on our part is directly necessary.

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PART 4: REVEALED LANGUAGE IS CONTINGENT UPON SUPERNATURAL MEANING 1:18-21.

#1. "Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, there were four horns", 1:18. Zechariah expresses that what was revealed to him was not immediately meaningful to him. The prophet did not attribute to the "four horns" his own suppositions. He did not rationalize the symbols.

#2. In the same way Christians should not propose meanings or "abduct" (abductive reasoning: to find the most simple/likely explanation; a guess).

#3. But the Word of God is not subject to abductive reasoning. (Sarai and Abraham made an abductive conjecture in Genesis 16, and were wrong).

#4. "So I said to the angel who was speaking to me, 'What are these?'" , 1:19.

#5. The revelation of God must explain itself or abductive reasoning is the only resort.
ZECHARIAH HAD BEEN OVERTAKEN BY AN OCEAN OF SUPERNATURAL MEANING and HIS EXPERIENCE DID NOT APPLY!

#6. The angel "...answered me, 'These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem'" (1:19) and these are "the horns of the nations who have lifted up their horns against the land of Judah in order to scatter it", 1:21.

#7. The "horns" are a symbol dependent upon meaning from outside of the symbol. This revealed symbol has the will of God imposed upon it.

#8. THE RELATION OF GOD TO LANGUAGE IS THEN APPLIED TO TIME and CIRCUMSTANCE! The relation of God to language is the reader's source of meaning in the temporal setting. This is of supreme importance.

#9. "Then the Lord showed me four craftsmen", 1:20. Zechariah knew that the symbol was of importance and how to learn its significance. "...these craftsmen have come to terrify them ('the nations'), to throw down the horns..." , 1:21.

#10. These words signal a dramatic change in historical conditions resultant from the power of God in time.

#11. GENERALIZATION: WHEN THE LORD OF HOSTS TAKES HOLD OF LANGUAGE, HE DOES NOT LET GO! EVER!

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PART 5: THE ENGINE OF SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING, 2:1-5.

#1. Experiential understanding of this world is of little aid in the effort to comprehend THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION. A different engine of reasoning and a dedicated language regime are necessary to a more complete comprehension of the reality behind "the curtain".

#2. "Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a man with a measuring line in his hand", 2:1.

#3. The "man" was pursuing some kind of dimensional understanding. Zechariah, intrigued, asked, "Where are you going?" And he said to me, "To measure Jerusalem, to see how wide it is and how long it is", 2:2.

#4. But this text indicates that that measurement, even once secured, was irrelevant. The temporal dimensions of Jerusalem are of no consequence and no particular significance.

#5. Because Jerusalem is not only a place, it is a symbol of the invisible yet very real spiritual kingdom of Heaven. It is inclusive of men in the temporal universe but who hold a purchase on eternal life.

#6. An "angel" was told urgently, "Run, speak to that young man, saying, 'Jerusalem will be inhabited without walls because of the multitude of men and cattle within it'", 2:4.

#7. Boundaries of the material sort are without meaning. "Walls" as we know them are meaningless. Why? "For I", declares the Lord, 'will be a wall of fire around her, and I will be the glory in her midst", 2:5.

#8. Temporal dimensions, human natural perceptions, imprecision in language are obstacles to correct comprehension. God, Himself, is the frontier of the spiritual kingdom.

#9. Reasoning founded upon common sense and human lived experience do not serve believers well in comprehending the determining reality behind "the curtain".

#10. The Israelites, in general, never gave themselves to the cultivation of the ENGINE OF SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING. The contingent terms of this world were often imposed upon the spiritual realities behind "the curtain".

#11. This is why revelation is so indispensable. There is a LAW OF THE MIND to be derived from this text. THE ENGINE OF SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING MUST SUPPLANT THE CONTINGENT UNDERSTANDING OF THIS WORLD. Concordantly, contingent terms cannot overrule revealed language. If not, PERFUNCTORY RELIGION (minimal effort and reflection) is all that will ever develop.

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PART 6: THE ENGINE OF SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING, 2:6-13.

#1. In spite of appearances and the play of emotions, events, circumstances, historical conditions and states of being are NEVER OUT OF CONTROL. To think so is a misconception predicated upon human experience and not THE ENGINE OF SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING. "...for I have dispersed you as the four winds of the heavens, declares the Lord", 2:6.

#2. The Almighty is firmly in control! The Lord ordered a withdrawal of those of His people from the universe of blatant idolatry; "...Escape, you who are living with the daughter of Babylon", 2:7.

#3. THE ENGINE OF SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING is the point of departure from the interpretive powers of human reason. This must be true because our trials and hardships ("plunder you") do not, in themselves, confirm that loyal believers are..."the apple of His eye", 2:8. THE ENGINE OF SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING is the truth about what dwells behind "the curtain".

#4. That truth, we expect, is to be affirmed in the oft chaos of human circumstances. "For behold, I will wave My hand over them so that they will be plunder for their slaves. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me", 2:9.

#5. Maintaining personal hope in the sometime turgid immediacy of events will have to be drawn from THE ENGINE OF SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING sourced in the Word of God. Such hope and faith is not to be found in our interpretations of circumstance.

#6. "Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst, declares the Lord", 2:10. Our hope is a direct effect of THE ENGINE OF SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING.

#7. The power of SPIRITUAL COMPREHENSION is a gift to the world. It is THE TRUE ALTERNATIVE to spiraling culture death and all its casualties. "Many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day and will become My people. Then I will dwell in your midst...", 2:11.

#8. The Lord will "possess" (2:12) His people; body, mind and soul. The instrument is THE ENGINE OF SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING. That factor challenges all traditions, social imperatives, experience generated rules and fleshly impulse.

#9. With the advent of THE ENGINE OF SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING all priorities, traditional, social, cultural and personal are overturned. "Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord; for He is aroused from His holy habitation", 2:13.

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PART 7: THE BRAND PLUCKED FROM THE FIRE, 3:1-5.

#1. There is something else behind "the curtain". A someone else, malignant of motive, possessive of human destiny, zealous for human worship. "Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him", 3:1.

#2. "Joshua the high priest" was subject to "accus(ation)" because of personal sin. The high priest, chosen to represent the people before God, was corrupt of soul. Satan was correct in his charge.

#3. Notably, "the angel of the Lord" and "Satan" are not on the same plane of power and authority. The angel of the Lord holds the power of determining judgment. Sin is the universal curse of mankind.

#4. In that setting "The Lord said to Satan, 'The Lord rebuke you, Satan! Indeed the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?', 3:2.

#5. Israel and Jerusalem and in this particular instance, Joshua the high priest, all merit judgment. Sin ("iniquity", 3:4), in general, is the attempt to break the bond between God and time and men in time. "Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel", 3:3. These are the symbols of sin.

#6. Yet immediately "the angel" made a dramatic, unexpected and unmerited declaration: "...Remove the filthy garments from him...See I have taken your iniquity away and will clothe you with festal robes", 3:4.

#7. The angel of the Lord is more than He appears to be. "a clean turban" was "put" "on" Joshua's "head" and he was re clothed, 3:5. And "the angel of the Lord was standing by".

#8. Zechariah saw from afar what is now perfected; the forgiveness of sin. All gratitude is ours! We are all guilty of sin, meriting judgment. But remember that our guilt has been exceeded by the cost of our redemption. We are called to live in a specific way. We live every day and in every way AS "BRAND(S) PLUCKED FROM THE FIRE"!

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 8: TEMPORAL LIFE AS SYMBOLISM, 3:6-10.

#1. For believers in God, material existence is not lived for itself. Sensory experience (as satisfying as possible) no longer dominates the temporal space of the disciple of the Lord.

#2. "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'If you will walk in My ways and if you will perform My service, then you will also govern My house and also have charge of My courts, and I will grant you free access among these who are standing here", 3:7.

#3. The revealed symbolic life is the devotion to achieving the approval of God. Self-gratification is displaced by STRICT OBEDIENCE ("walk in My ways"). Fleshly temptations present themselves and are dispelled by the greater purpose of serving the Almighty ("perform My service").

#4. THE BIBLICAL SYMBOLIC LIFE is saturated with and absorbed by the axial and causal reality of the SUPERNATURAL ("My ways", "My service", "My house", "My courts"). And the most precious of all is the promise of "grant(ed) free access". Open "access" to the source of all things and to their Master.

#5. "Now listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you-- indeed they are men who are a symbol...", 3:8.

#6. "A symbol" , by its nature, refers to something outside and beyond itself. Especially in the case of this text, "a symbol" reflects something greater than itself.

#7. Believers are assigned this privilege without faltering in its responsibility. These human symbols have A DISTINCT SIMILITUDE to the OBJECT OF THE SYMBOL (the Lord).

#8. Their symbolic behavior presages the appearance of "My servant the branch", 3:8.

#9. When the Almighty inscribes His will on "the stone" , then, it most certainly is "engrave(d)" upon time and historical conditions, 3:9. Nothing can stop it. The "seven eyes" could already see the day when "...I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day" -- His purpose for mankind achieved.

#10. THE LIFE DEVOTED TO BIBLICAL SYMBOLISM is forward looking. It represents a culmination of the purpose of God; a time of final peace. A time when "every one of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree", 3:10.

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 9: THE ALTERING CASE, 4:1-7.

#1. There is a force behind "the curtain" that exerts great power over situations, circumstances, events and states of being in the temporal world.

#2. The Lord provides a symbol to represent typical human predicaments: Zechariah saw "a lampstand all of gold with its bowl on the top of it, and its seven lamps on it with seven spouts belonging to each of the lamps which are on the top of it", 4:2.

#3. There is some detail to the description. Acute visualization is possible. That "lampstand" gives light; its purpose, to elucidate the meaning of situations and historical conditions.

#4. Revealed light carries one beyond just the appearances and emotion of the circumstance. Prophets, kings, men of eminence and every believer must have revealed light to stand on faith in this world. Human wisdom will not satisfy the need for true appreciation of temporal conditions and earthly challenges.

#5. Zechariah did not comprehend the significance of the lampstand at first. "...This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit', says the Lord of hosts", 4:6.

#6. Here is THE ALTERING CASE for the believer's thought, speech and behavior! Christians are not expected to respond to temporal conditions founded upon human wisdom and experience.

#7. THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT is active in the affairs of the world and especially in the personal circumstances of His people. "Zerubbabel" needs the knowledge shining from "the lamp stand"--"What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!", 4:7.

#8. Been climbing any mountains lately, that are just too big? Take heart! Go to "the lampstand" shining truth between the "two olive trees"!

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 10: THE ALTERING CASE, 4:8-14.

#1. Revealed truth ("lampstand") and the power of the Holy Spirit (4:6) comprise THE ALTERING CASE for how Christians deal with temporal conditions.

#2. Faced with obeying the will of God and fulfilling His purposes one needs supernatural support. "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house and his hands will finish it. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you", 4:9.

#3. One of the functions of the word of God is to ALTER THE CASE for reasoning and perception. This means that the personal thought, speech and behavior of the believer are not to be grounded upon the temporal dimension; but rather upon that which is behind "the curtain".

#4. This means living in a quite tangible, quantifiable world but upon the supremely immaterial foundation of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, human behavior is NOT TO BE TYPIFIED by our material circumstances!

#5. "For who has despised the day of small things? But these seven will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel--these are the eyes of the Lord which range to and fro throughout the earth", 4:10.

#6. Anyone who despises "the day of small things" does not recognize nor respect who and what is behind "the curtain". Such a one has not ventured to ALTER THE CASE OF UNDERSTANDING. Their behavior will follow that form.

#7. The Holy Spirit ("these seven"; 4:2) and the omnipresence of God ("eyes of the Lord"; 3:9) assure the full realization of the will of God.

#8. THE ALTERED CASE OF UNDERSTANDING PREDICATES that the presence of God and the power of God in the universe are fully determinant in temporal matters.

#9. There are two supernatural agents ("olive trees", "branches"), the "anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth", 4:14. Not much doubt about their identities.

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 11: THE SPANNING FUNCTION, 5:1-4.

#1. THE SCROLL: "Then I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold, there was a flying scroll", 5:1. Implicit in this vision is A SPANNING FUNCTION. The purpose of the "flying scroll" was to span the differences between the eternal realm behind "the curtain" and the tangible, material realm of men in time.

#2. The word of God (revelation) must, therefore, be read and understood relative to its SPANNING FUNCTION; and not its vulnerability to interpretation. The Bible is not to be separated from its inherent purpose and function.

#3. This "flying scroll" was sent forth to span the differential between the mind of God and the minds of human readers. The "scroll" REPORTS the thoughts of God to human cognitive ability. But human cognition is not determinant.

#4. CONTENT: "...I see a flying scroll; its length is twenty cubits (30 ft) and its width ten cubits (15 ft), 5:2. One assumes that the size of the scroll reflects the density of content. THE CONTENT of the scroll was assembled outside of and beyond the RATIONAL COMPOSITION OF MAN. In consequence the starting point for understanding is not man.

#5. The epitome of irrelevance is to observe that the content of the scroll does not agree with human cognitive standards. There should be no expectation of coherence between revealed content and human wisdom.

#6. INSTRUMENTALITY: "I will make it go forth, declares the Lord of hosts...", 5:4. THE INSTRUMENTALITY of the scroll is anchored in the hands of "the Lord of hosts" and in the "Spirit" (4:6). It is not located on the earth, in time nor in the hands of men who receive it.

#7. Necessarily, then, one's reading of scripture must accord with its INSTRUMENTALITY. Any other reading of the text is in error.

#8. THE EFFECTS: "...This is the curse that is going forth over the face of the whole land...", 5:3. The scroll SIGNALS THE THEN RELATION OF GOD TO HUMAN BEHAVIOR. That relation is critical.

#9. It purges "those who steal" and "everyone who swears", 5:3. The scrolls mark those who are unacceptable to the Lord, marked by their behavior.

#10. The EFFECTS OF THE SCROLL ENTER INTO THE INTIMATE SPACES OF THE PERPETRATORS. "...and it will enter the house of the thief...and the one who swears falsely..., 5:4. The scroll applied to the errant will "consume" "that house" and "consume its timber and stones". The flying scroll is a representation, a fact and a causal agency.

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 12: AN ICON OF WICKEDNESS, 5:5-11.

#1. The issue here is the way that "Wickedness" (5:8) is presented:

- PERSONIFICATION. General wickedness is personified. This means that it is always somebody's wickedness. This evil behavior is not disembodied; it is attributed to the character and willful practice of someone, some person, living in time and circumstance. In this case the personification is feminine, "a woman", 5:7.
- UBIQUITY. "Wickedness" is everywhere. She is "going forth". "This is "the ephah going forth", 5:6. General wickedness is most fertile, virulently reproductive. Encountering this kind of person is quite likely in space and time.
- POWER OF ATTRACTION. The feminine gender is stipulated and is reinforced by the "two women...coming out with the wind in their wings", 5:9. People are always vulnerable to attractive presentations. The presentation may hold the appearance of promise.
- ACTIVE BUT LIMITED. The "ephah" is a dry measurement, but the idea of CONTAINMENT is implicit in the image. The "angel" (5:5)... "threw her down into the middle of the ephah and cast the lead weight on its opening", 5:8. Three noticeable factors, at least, were involved in this CONTAINMENT feature. One is the power of God who obliged "Wickedness" to occupy the ephah space. The second is the confined area of the ephah itself. And thirdly, there is the "lead weight" holding her captive. "Wickedness" is not unmanageable. It does not and cannot run out of control. It is measurable, containable, controllable.

- INSTITUTIONAL. (proving acceptance and its influence). "...Where are they taking the ephah?" (5:10)--"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'", 5:11. Evil, wickedness and sin are always institutionalized among peoples, cultures and societies. Be that driving force institutionalized or not, believers are not permitted to willingly suffer its influence.

#2. The land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem were not allowed to host this degrading institutionalized way of life.

#3. Institutionalized "Wickedness" is our enemy, the enemy of God, the word of God and faith in them. Complacency does not apply!

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PART 13: STIPULATED REALITIES VERSUS SENSORY EXPERIENCE, 6:1-8.

#1. Suddenly the prophet sees another inexplicable vision: "Now I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold, four chariots were coming forth from between the two mountains; and the two mountains were bronze mountains", 6:1.

#2. These images make reference to INVISIBLE STIPULATED REALITIES. Having seen the chariots, Zechariah asked: "What are these my Lord?" He did not grasp their meaning. "The angel replied..." "These are the four spirits of heaven, going forth after standing before the Lord of all the earth", 6:5.

#3. These revelations drive a wedge between REVEALED STIPULATED REALITIES and SENSORY EXPERIENCE. Reliance upon experiential or sensory ways of knowing can never afford true understanding of the unseen yet very real SPIRITUAL REALITIES behind "the curtain".

#4. Contradiction always characterizes the differential between revealed truth and human experience. THE STIPULATED REALITIES (strictly invisible) come to bear upon men in time and circumstance. "When the strong ones ("chariots") went out, they were eager to go to patrol the earth. And He said, 'Go, patrol the earth.' So they patrolled the earth", 6:7.

#5. One aspect of the test of faith is this: DOES ONE PUT GREATER CREDENCE IN REVELATION and ITS WITNESS TO INVISIBLE STIPULATED REALITIES, OR DOES ONE ELEVATE RELIANCE ON SENSORY EXPERIENCE ABOVE THE WORD OF GOD?

#6. The prophet was shown THE STIPULATED REALITIES and was positioned to instruct the Israelites regarding their influence upon historical conditions and circumstances, 6:8.

#7. This means that all of us exist in a sea of SUPERNATURAL STIPULATED POWER and CAUSATION! The four chariots represent "the four spirits of heaven" and their dominion over

all things temporal. All faith failures, in the Bible, represent a kind of belief reluctant to trust in REVEALED STIPULATED REALITIES.

#8. The visions reported in the Book of Zechariah, like the "four chariots", are calculated to loosen our hold on human wisdom!

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 14: THE GENERATRIX OF SUPERNATURAL HISTORY, 6:9-15.

#1. Certain things are going to MATERIALIZE IN HUMAN HISTORY. These historical achievements will take place by the determined will and power of God.

#2. This future will be generated in time, but by THE STIPULATED REALITY BEHIND "THE CURTAIN". "...Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the Lord", 6:12.

#3. History is malleable by the predetermined will of God. At a certain point in time, a SUPERNATURAL AGENT WOULD BE DESTINED TO APPEAR IN THE HISTORICAL SETTING ("branch out").

#4. This historical actor was charged with a sacred responsibility: (a) to "build the temple of the Lord", (b) "He will bear the honor", (c) "and sit and rule on His throne", (d) "He will be a priest on His throne", (e) the One named "Branch" will hold "two offices": priest and king, 6:13, (f) "and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices", 6:13.

#5. These facts, to be accomplished, are temporal demonstrations of the Lord's purpose to draw together, on His terms, Heaven and earth, God and men.

#6. All of this is much beyond what is often called geopolitics or historicism (that conditions are determined by the deterministic forces of history, that history determines meaning).

#7. Human wisdom and the experience of time and circumstance may allow men to attribute meanings to history that it does not have and never did have.

#8. But real meaning is always spiritual and is therefore added to history by "the Lord of hosts". Human history is not strictly shaped by personal behavior but it has a non-trivial effect upon the Lord and He does shape history. "And it will take place if you completely obey the Lord your God", 6:15.

#9. Behavior poses a very serious issue to believers. The issue has to do with whether or not personal behavior is compatible with or in contradiction to THE GENERATRIX OF SUPERNATURAL HISTORY.

#10. "An ornate crown" of "silver and gold" was commissioned by the Lord to "set...on the head of Joshua", 6:11. The crown served as "a reminder" (symbol) to those indicated (6:14). The One called "Branch" would wear that crown; THE PRIEST-KING!

#11. The "exiles" would be set free, one day and "Those who are far off will come and build the temple of the Lord", 6:15. What the Almighty says behind "the curtain" will MATERIALIZE IN TIME and HISTORY!

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.

PART 15: EXTINGUISHED MEANING IS THE PRELUDE TO RITUALIZATION OF RELIGION, 7:1-7.

#1. The descent into the RITUALIZATION OF RELIGION is strongly cautioned against by this text. Ritualized religion is that without meaning and is therefore useless to its practitioners.

#2. "In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev", 7:1.

#2. That announcement came with some exactitude. From "Bethel" came "Sharezer and Regemlech and their men to seek the favor of the Lord", 7:2.

#3. The question was put: "Shall I weep in the fifth month and abstain, as I have done these many years?", 7:3. The observance of the "fast(ed)ing" and the "mourn(ed)ing" (7:5) had become meaningless to the people of Bethel. So the issue was, then why continue to do these things?

#4. "Then the word of the Lord of hosts came to me saying", 7:4. "...When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months these seventy years, was it actually for Me that you fasted?", 7:5.

#5. Ritual (practice) without meaning has no purpose. THE UNITY BETWEEN MEANING and practice had, long before, been broken. So, the exact issue is this: Does revealed truth (revelation) hold and conserve viable permanent meaning; or should men in the temporal setting eclipse the authority of revelation?

#6. "When you eat and drink, do you not eat for yourselves and do you not drink for yourselves?" Here is the core problem: At Bethel, at least, MEN HAD APPROPRIATED THE MEANING OF THE WORD OF GOD!

#7. Under the guise of religion, men began, at some point, to SUPPLY MEANING TO THE TEXT INSTEAD OF DERIVING TRUE UNDERSTANDING FROM THE REVEALED WORD OF GOD!

#8. "Are not these the words which the Lord proclaimed by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous...", 7:7. Better times were associated with revealed meaning.

#9. Incautiously, a reader of the Word may attribute anywhere from CASUAL TO HIGHLY RATIONALIZED MEANINGS TO THE WORD OF GOD and THEREBY DISCOUNT and DISCREDIT ITS INHERENT TRUTHS!

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 16: THE MOST DANGEROUS PLANE: PERSONAL BEHAVIOR, 7:1-7.

#1. Sometimes underestimated, one's personal behavior can activate consequences originating from behind "the curtain". Certainly, human existence in the temporal dimension is rife with dangerous and inescapable material circumstances, yet Zechariah makes the case that BEHAVIORAL DISASTER IS PRECEDENTIAL TO (precedes) MATERIAL/PHYSICAL DISASTERS.

#2. "They made their hearts like flint so that they could not hear the law and the words which the Lord of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets; therefore great wrath came from the Lord of hosts", 7:12.

#3. This means that what are regularly referred to as "natural disasters", "catastrophic illnesses" and "failed states" should be reevaluated in the light of revealed truth. Specifically the relation between unrighteous behavior and the "wrath" of God.

#4. Scripture makes it manifest that RIGHTEOUS BEHAVIOR ALSO PRECEDES HARDSHIP and TRIALS BY WAY OF TESTING and PROOF (Acts 27, 28). Still such historical conditions are generated by Eternal Reality behind "the curtain".

#5. Human behavior was stipulated by the Almighty, 7:9, 10. "And just as He called and they would not listen, so they called and I would not listen, says the Lord of hosts", 7:13. Under those SPIRITUAL CONDITIONS, personal behavior becomes the most DANGEROUS PLANE OF TEMPORAL EXPERIENCE!

#6. "but I scattered them with a storm wind...", 7:14. The real PLANE OF DANGER is not the "objective" external world of possibilities! It is the PLANE OF PERSONAL BEHAVIOR!

#7. Believers do not adjust their behavior to circumstance; we adjust our behavior to the "Lord of hosts". "RATIONAL" BEHAVIOR IS NOT OUR QUEST (WITH ITS "RISK ABATEMENT"); IT IS PROOF OF FAITH THAT WE SEEK!

#8. Here are the words of His Excellency the King, who knows the behavioral plane of danger: "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell", Matthew 10:28.

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE. PART 17: SUPER AMPLITUDES and WORLD MAGNITUDES, 8;1-8.

#1. The extreme promises of God (v.1-5) may appear to be very unlikely, highly improbable to the people of God. "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'If it is too difficult in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, will it also be too difficult in My sight?'" declares the Lord of hosts, 8:6.

#2. Zechariah presents to the reader a contest between THE SUPER AMPLITUDES OF POWER HELD BY THE REALITY BEHIND THE CURTAIN and THE WORLD MAGNITUDES OF THE TEMPORAL ORDER.

#3. The prophet's language makes an insistent declaration: THERE IS NO VIABLE CONTEST BETWEEN THE TWO. This is the key test of faith.

#4. Israel (exemplified by many others) was historically reluctant, certainly skeptical about complete trust in THE STIPULATED SUPER AMPLITUDES and were equally devoted to their experience of WORLD MAGNITUDES. And all of these, common responses to today's faith challenges.

#5. "...I am exceedingly jealous for Zion, yes, with great wrath I am jealous for her", 8:2. The Almighty arrests our attention by that exacting statement. All of His emotion is put behind His use of THE SUPER AMPLITUDES OF POWER. The Lord of hosts wishes believers to know that what He promised He will fulfill.

#6. "...I will return to Zion", He will not be impeded. "...and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem", His will always prevails. "...Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth...the mountain of the Lord...will be called the Holy Mountain", the character of the nation will look again to THE SUPER AMPLITUDES, 8:3.

#7. Secure domesticity will be the norm, 8:4, 5.

#8. "...Behold, I am going to save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west", 8:7. THE SUPER AMPLITUDES BEHIND THE CURTAIN ARE DETERMINANT; an irresistible force in time and circumstance.

#9. "And I will bring them back...they shall be My people...I will be their God in truth and righteousness", 8:8.

#10. The Lord of hosts calls us to believe, really believe in THE SUPER AMPLITUDES and in His willingness to use them! So where shall we stand?!

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE. PART 18:
PERSONAL BEHAVIOR and THE RULING CONTEXT, 8:9-13.

#1. People, in terms of behavior, usually conform to whatever is considered (believed to be) THE RULING CONTEXT.

#2. "...Let your hands be strong, you who are listening in these days to those words from the mouth of the prophets...", 8:9. "...Do not fear; let your hands be strong", 8:13.

#3. PERSONAL BEHAVIOR IS A RESPONSE, THOUGHT TO BE CORRECT, TO THE DETERMINING CONTEXT. This means that personal behavior is reactionary in nature. Therefore, personal behavior cannot, authentically, be causal.

#4. There are two contenders for the title of RULING CONTEXT: One is "the Lord of hosts" and all that goes with Him. Strong, constant behavior ("Let your hands be strong") is the response to or the reaction to the INVISIBLE RULING CONTEXT.

#5. The other contender is THE QUITE VISIBLE TEMPORAL ORDER, TREATED AS THE VISIBLE CONTROLLING CONTEXT.

#6. "...I set all men one against another", 8:10. The Almighty as RULING CONTEXT, had turned against His own people and generated social instability. "...there was no peace because of his enemies...". Unrest, anxiety and discouragement had become the "normal", "signs of the times". But it was not the "we must accept that's the way things are" situation. Those social conditions HAD NOT BEEN GENERATED BY HISTORY BUT BY THE UNDETECTABLE CONTEXT OF "THE LORD OF HOSTS".

#7. "But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days, declares the Lord of hosts", 8:11. On this basis, one concedes that all of scripture is to be considered RULING, CONTROLLING CONTEXTUAL DECLARATIONS!

#8. The point: One cannot run afoul of THE RULING INVISIBLE CONTEXT, WITHOUT TEMPORAL/MATERIAL CONSEQUENCES! And that explains history. The Marxists/socialists/progressives are wrong.

#9. It is considered to be mentally healthy to adapt to changing times. However, believers have NO interest in that; we conform to the RULING CONTEXT OF "THE LORD OF HOSTS".

#10. That context is ever present, exigent and dynamic. "...I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these things", 8:12. The RULING CONTEXT CHANGES HISTORICAL CONDITIONS AT WILL. "...O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you that you may become a blessing", 8:13. Where shall we locate the power of change? In ourselves or in God?

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 19: THE LOVE OF REVEALED TRUTH, 8:14-19.

#1. The entire human race does exist and always has existed in a SUPERNATURAL STATE OF THE POLARITY OF OPPOSITES. This polarity is defined by WHAT THE LORD HATES (8:17) and BY WHAT HE LOVES, 8:19).

#2. The oft used term "tension" is insufficient to capture this depth of reality.

#3. THE POLARITY OF OPPOSITES characterizes the human relation to God and to revelation. "...Just as I proposed to do harm to you when your fathers provoked Me to wrath...and I have not relented", 8:14. "So I have again proposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Do not fear!", 8:15.

#4. The Lord of hosts deals in just such polar opposites and we must respect this fact of temporal/material experience. The polarity of judgment is causally related to the polarity of behavior.

#5. "These are the things which you should do: speak the truth to one another; judge with truth and judgment for peace in your gates", 8:16. This SUPERNATURAL POLARITY demands the exercise of choice. No manipulation of behavior carries one far enough. No "interpretation" or "understanding" of one's behavior will be enough.

#6. The Lord of hosts looks for unmitigated polarity in thought, speech and behavior. GRADUALISM IS NOT IN HIS LANGUAGE MANIFOLD! "Also let none of you devise evil in your heart against another, and do not love perjury; for all these are what I hate, declares the Lord", 8:17. These words, in fact, call for A RUTHLESS SELF-DISCIPLINE, GROUNDED UPON THE TRUTH OF SUPERNATURAL POLARITY.

#7. "...So love truth and peace", 8:19. THE LOVE OF REVEALED TRUTH PRECIPITATES A HATRED FOR SIN and FOR FAITH FAILURE. Therefore, POLARITY is the active manifestation of the love of the Word of God.

#8. Without the revealed dynamic of POLARITY, there is little or no motivation to prevent pride of place going to spiritual lassitude.

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 20: BELIEF: THE REAPPRAISAL OF SPIRITUAL REALITY, 8:20-23.

#1. The "Lord of hosts" foresaw the EVENTUAL appearance of an AGE OF BELIEF. "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'It will yet be that peoples will come even the inhabitants of many cities'", 8:20.

#2. Those "peoples" will come from beyond the frontiers of Israel and Judah. Belief is not a local nor geographic phenomenon. Belief will have pan-temporal influence. It will draw people together around a common axis: THE REAPPRAISAL OF SPIRITUAL REALITY.

#3. Belief is a union of meaning between the Word of God and things. "The inhabitants of one will go to another saying, 'Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts'; I will also go", 8:21. One does not "entreat" that which one believes does not exist. The God of the Jews will be recognized as not only extant, but also the source of INVALUABLE KNOWLEDGE and THE HISTORICAL ACTOR OF IRRESISTIBLE POWER. These "peoples" will displace trust in human wisdom and human experience. Among them, received traditions and habits of reasoning will be eclipsed by true belief.

#4. This remarkable historical condition will be achieved by THE SPIRITUAL REALITY BEHIND THE CURTAIN. "So many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the Lord", 8:22.

#5. The NOW is no true indication of the FUTURE. THE REAPPRAISAL OF SPIRITUAL REALITY CHANGES THE CHARACTER OF TIME and CIRCUMSTANCE. This obtains in the personal instance as well as the aggregate. "The favor of the Lord" changes all things. In the Age of Belief, that will be a staple of thought, speech and behavior.

#6. "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you"', 8:23. The Jews had a SUPERNATURAL PURPOSE; to live in obedience to the Word of God and to build their lives upon the REALITY BEHIND THE CURTAIN. Then as now, believers function to SYMBOLIZE the greater REALITY. So that the "peoples" will have to admit "God is with you".

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 21: REVELATION: THE LIVING APPLICATION, 9:1-10.

#1. The Word of God, the Bible, revelation is not "history". This language manifold is not confined to the past. The prophet puts the case that Scripture is CONSTANTLY APPLIED TO TIME and CIRCUMSTANCE BY THE LORD and THAT IT HAS A "RESTING PLACE" (temporal), 9:1.

#2. "The burden of the word of the Lord is against the land of Hadrach, with Damascus as its resting place (for the eyes of men, especially of all the tribes of Israel are toward the Lord)", 9:1.

#3. THE APPLICATION OF "THE BURDEN OF THE WORD OF THE LORD" to time has as consort the power of God. Situation and circumstance are ranged as effects. The burden of the Word is inextricably linked to the power of God.

#4. Readers of the Bible must be preoccupied with the PHENOMENON OF ITS SUPERNATURAL APPLICATION THROUGHOUT TIME. The Word of God is constantly being applied to time, life and circumstance by the Almighty Himself!

#5. Indicated nations, propelled by acquisition of wealth (9:2, 3), will be "dispossess(ed)" and "consumed with fire", 9:4: THE WORD APPLIED.

#6. Indicated nations would be dismayed. "Ashkelon" would be "afraid", "Gaza will writhe in pain", "Ekron" would be "confounded", a king would "perish", 9:5. THE WORD APPLIED.

#7. SUPERNATURAL APPLICATION OF THE BURDEN is three fold; (a) it assigns meaning, (b) brings to bear judgment and (c) renovates the state of soul, making a "remnant for our God", 9:6, 7. THE WORD APPLIED.

#8. Every day the Almighty APPLIES HIS WORDS TO ALL OF MANKIND, GENERATION AFTER GENERATION. Because there is LIVING APPLICATION, then, there is the fear of God, there is hope of redemption and there is sustained meaning. THE WORD APPLIED.

#9. We draw strength from THE WORD APPLIED. "But I will camp around My house" and "no oppressor will pass over them anymore", that is a LIVING APPLICATION, 9:8.

#10. When Jesus rode into town "Humble and mounted on a donkey" (9:9) He became THE LIVING APPLICATION OF THE WORD OF GOD; "King", "just", "endowed with salvation".

#11. SUPERNATURAL POWER IS THE LIVING APPLICATION. Trust is built on this principle; "I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim (Israel)", "the horse from Jerusalem", "the bow of war will be cut off", 9:10.

Complete "dominion" is the Lord's and, Revelation, the word of God has A LIVING APPLICATION BY THE ALMIGHTY TO MATERIAL EXISTENCE, AT EVERY MOMENT, EVERY DAY and "FROM SEA TO SEA"... "FROM THE RIVER TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH". THE WORD APPLIED!

The Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 22: THE BLOOD COVENANT and "IN OVER YOUR HEAD", 9:11-17.

#1. One might call it CHRISTIAN REALISM, to admit to one's self that believers, while in the world, are "in well over their heads". There are THE FOREVER CIRCUMSTANCES, always raging and always ranging beyond human personal control. These conditions can be of the most grievous kind.

#2. So the question is: How shall a believer think or what shall he/she believe while in the jaws of such taxing situations, regardless of their fields of consequence.

#3. "As for you also, because of the blood of My covenant with you, I have set your prisoners free from the waterless pit", 9:11.

#4. The prophet reports that THE POWER OF GOD IS IN THE SERVICE OF THE "BLOOD COVENANT" WITH THE LORD'S PEOPLE.

#5. "...Set your prisoners free", 9:11, "...restore double to you", 9:12, "...I will bend Judah", 9:13, "...will stir up your sons", 9:13, "...make you like a warrior's sword", 9:13, "...His arrow will go forth", "will march in the storm", 9:14, "...defend them", 9:15, "...Lord God will save them", 9:16.

#6. THESE ARE SOME OF THE VAST ENUMERATED POWERS OF GOD TIED TO THE BLOOD COVENANT WITH US! The stressful, disturbing "waterless pit(s)" of our time on earth DO NOT EXCLUDE HOPE NOR PRECLUDE THE REDEMPTION OF THE POWER OF GOD!

#7. A remarkable recognition: THE "BLOOD COVENANT" BETWEEN THE ALMIGHTY and THE BELIEVER MUST BE THE STRONGEST and MOST POWERFUL RELATION IN ALL THE WORLD, IN ALL OF TIME!

#8. This necessarily means that in every "waterless pit" pushed into our experience, none of them hold power over the force of the "blood covenant".

#9. The "blood covenant" stipulates the grammar of our thought, speech and behavior. We are "...the flock of His people; for they are as the stones of a crown, sparkling in His land", 9:16.

#10. WE, THEREFORE, DO NOT GIVE UP, GIVE IN NOR BACK DOWN! Let us frame our prayers, so command our behavior, in the "waterless pit" and so firmly issue language from within "the blood covenant" that holds us all to "THE LORD OF HOSTS".

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 23: THE SUPERNATURAL ACCELERATION, 10:1-12.

#1. The true nature of the temporal order is that there is a direct relation between God and the material dimension. This direct relation guarantees A SUPERNATURAL ACCELERATION OF ALL THINGS TEMPORAL.

#2. Zechariah puts this case: THE SUPERNATURAL ACCELERATION (SPRINGING TO ACTION WITH POWER BEYOND THE NATURAL) IS IMPOSED UPON MAN and NATURE. In consequence of which, existential measurements and norms are rendered moot (not determinant).

#3. THE ACCELERATION ordains a VISITATION: "...For the Lord of hosts has visited His flock, the house of Judah, and He will make them like His majestic horse in battle", 10:3. "They will be as mighty men, treading down the enemy...And they will fight, for the Lord will be with them...",

10:5. "I will strengthen the house of Judah...", 10:6. "Ephraim (the people of God) will be like a mighty man...10:7.

#4. THE ACCELERATION would make things happen that under natural factors alone, could not. "And they pass through the sea of distress and He will strike the waves in the sea, so that all of the depths of the Nile will dry up...", 10:11.

#5. ESCAPE and REDEMPTION FROM CIRCUMSTANCE and HISTORICAL CONDITIONS IS SUPERNATURAL. This text impinges upon rationalism and its relation to naturalism.

#6. SUPERNATURAL ACCELERATION has a stipulated structure: "Ask rain from the Lord at the time of the spring rain--The Lord who makes the storm clouds; and He will give them showers of rain, vegetation in the field to each man", 10:1.

#7.

A. THE SPIRITUAL ESTIMATION OF TIME and CIRCUMSTANCE ("ask rain from the Lord"). This is THE PRAYER FOR SUPERNATURAL ACCELERATION. Everything depends upon God. Faith increases dependence upon God. THE GREATER THE FAITH, THE GREATER THE WILLFUL DEPENDENCE. The more one is willing to risk.

B. SUPERNATURAL ACCELERATION OF NATURE ("Lord makes the storm clouds"). "The Lord" forces an acceleration of nature originating from behind "the curtain". For this, there is no natural explanation!

C. SUPERNATURAL OUTCOMES ("He will give them showers of rain"). Natural outcomes are bypassed in the preference for and trust in SUPERNATURAL ACCELERATION!

#8. The prophet lays before us a SUPERNATURAL CAUSE TO EFFECT CONTINUUM; OUR CONVEYANCE OF FAITH THROUGH TIME and CIRCUMSTANCE! IF WE ARE STRONG ENOUGH!

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 24: THE GOD OF PITILESS JUDGMENT, 11:1-6.

#1. This text tells us as much about the nature of God as it does about the effects of divine anger upon human offenders.

#2. Such textual statements are projected as warnings from God regarding human behavior. The human race must have reliable, truthful knowledge about the God with whom we deal.

#3. PITILESS JUDGMENT: "For I will no longer have pity on the inhabitants of the land...", 11:6. His protective canopy was removed from the people. It was not just events that caught up with the people; it was the Almighty that had caught up with them! In this universe so drawn to sin, such an end is inevitable.

#4. PITILESS POSITIONING: "Thus says the Lord my God, 'Pasture the flock doomed to slaughter'", 11:4. The Lord positioned "the people of the land" for death, destruction and dissolution. They were maneuvered by the Lord to receive the mortal blow. Pasturing appears normal, but they would have misunderstood until--the "slaughter".

#5. PITILESS CONSUMPTION OF STRATEGIC RESOURCES: "Open your doors, O Lebanon, ...fire...on your cedars", 11:1. "Wail, O cypress...the cedar has fallen", 11:2. Of "Bashan...the impenetrable forest has come down", 11:2. Under the regime of PITILESS JUDGMENT all advantages melt away. Previous strengths dissipate. Still Judah learned nothing.

#6. PITILESS RUIN: "There is a sound of the shepherd's wail, for their glory is ruined", 11:3. Internal functions cease to exist. They remain in name only, fragmentation triumphs. Coherence dissolved away. "The pride of the Jordan is ruined". All previous accomplishments were undone and for what? Human will.

#7. PITILESS AMORALITY: "...And their own shepherds have no pity on them", 11:5. Amorality (no distinction between right/wrong behavior) takes over. Thought, speech and behavior recognize no higher standard than fleshly appetites.

#8. "Unconditional Love" is a myth. Judah fell into the hands of the Lord of PITILESS JUDGMENT. Personal and collective ruin followed.

#9. Many human conditions are untreatable because they are manifestations of PITILESS JUDGMENT!

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 25: THE BREAKAGE, 11:7-17.

#1: The prophet had two staffs (staves). One called "Favor" and the other called "Union", 11:7. With those he "pastured the flock". Those terms refer to temporal effects imposed by the real King of Judah and Israel, who dwells behind the curtain.

#2. "Favor" and "Union" were SUPERNATURAL CONDITIONS bestowed upon the people of God and they were strictly relative to the will of the Lord and to the obedience of "the flock", 11:7.

#3. However, both supernatural "Favor" and supernatural "Union" were immediately subject to BREAKAGE by the Almighty Himself. "I took my staff Favor and cut it in pieces, to break my covenant which I had made with all the peoples", 11:10. And--"Then I cut in pieces my second staff Union, to break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel", 11:14.

#4. No prophet, inherently, had that kind of power; it must refer to something else. This is THE BREAKAGE of the all-important relation between God and His people. THE BREAKAGE changed

the historical conditions of "the peoples". They became, by divine decree, "the flock doomed to slaughter", "the afflicted", 11:7. The horror of SPIRITUAL ABANDONMENT!

#5. With the SUPERNATURAL STAVES broken, then existential conditions overtook the land. "Then I said, 'I will not pasture you. What is to die, let it die, and what is to be annihilated, let it be annihilated; and let those who are left eat one another's flesh'", 11:9.

#6. The gravity of the situation finally came to bear upon their consciousness. A dramatic and equally traumatic change had occurred; fostered by their behavior yet directly caused by the Eternal. "So it was broken on that day, AND THUS the afflicted of the flock who were watching me realized that it was the word of the Lord", 11:11.

#7. The people severed their relation to the prophet for "thirty shekels of silver", 11:12. Imagine putting a temporal price tag on the reality of God! "Then the Lord said to me, 'Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them...'", 11:13.

#8. THE BREAKAGE OF THE COVENANT BETWEEN GOD and MAN WAS THE INCALCULABLE DISASTER!

#9. The Almighty turned the people over to "foolish shepherd(s)", 11:15--"who will not care for the perishing", not "seek the scattered", would not "heal the broken, or sustain the one standing, but will devour the flesh of the fat sheep and tear off their hoofs", 11:16.

#10. Behold a people devoid of any understanding of the GREATER REALITY, behind the curtain. "Woe to the worthless shepherd who leaves the flock", 11:17! The soul of a nation died. The church defends and depends upon THE BLOOD COVENANT. We cannot afford THE BREAKAGE. Thirty shekels cannot cover the loss!

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 26: SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION, 12-14.

#1. "The burden of the word of the Lord concerning Israel. Thus declares the Lord who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him", 12:1. The "burden", generated in heaven by the Almighty, will come to bear upon time and men in an arresting and affecting way. We shall refer to this causal intervention as SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION.

#2. Just as all punctuation separates an undifferentiated string of words into meaningful segments, so does the will of "the Lord" separate history, life and the stream of human experience into meaningful circumstances.

#3. In other words, prophecy PUNCTUATES HISTORY. The One who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundations of time and puts the spirit of man within him, PUNCTUATES THE HUMAN

TIME LINE. It is this causal action of God that brings SUPERNATURAL MEANING INTO and ONTO HUMAN CIRCUMSTANCES. And such PUNCTUATION is His prerogative.

#4. All punctuation is backward looking. In grammatical punctuation every inserted punctuation mark forces a look at what had just preceded its placement. So SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION causes REASSESSMENT OF THE HUMAN TIME LINE, OF HISTORY and HISTORICAL CONDITIONS.

#5. Under the conditions of SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION no rational limitation can be imposed upon the revealed truth nor its meaning. The prophet Zechariah insists that history is not self-governing and this book rejects the Marxist idea that time and history are somehow self-conscious.

#6. There are no supposed laws of history acting independently of SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION. In a universe dominated by the One who "lays" its foundation, then SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION makes time vehicular: Time, life and history are conveyors of Eternal will and manifest the power of God.

#7. We all live in a universe of things, circumstances and historical conditions subject to SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION! This fact will affect what we are prepared to believe and how we reason.

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 27: SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION, 12-14.

#1. "Behold I am going to make Jerusalem a cup", 12:2; "...I will make Jerusalem a stone..." 12:3; "In that day...I will strike every horse...", 12:4; "...I will make the clans of Judah like a firepot...", 12:6; "The Lord also will save the tents of Judah...", 12:7; "In that day the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem...", 12:8; "...I will set about to destroy...", 12:9. "I will pour out...", 12:10.

#2. The Almighty announces to Zechariah as He did in all the biblical prophets His intention, His power and His purpose to PUNCTUATE THE HUMAN TIME LINE.

#3. That timeline would never be the same. Those are occasions forever marked by SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION! Christians must depend, in biblical faith, upon the powers of SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION in order to live upon the foundation of revealed truth in the temporal order.

#4. The biblical series of resurrections, the appearance of revelation (Word of God) in the time dimension, all of the biblical miracles, biblical doctrines, prayer (prayer can only be personal), personal behavior and other things are all forms of that PUNCTUATION. They are performed directly by the Lord into human circumstance or were, by revealed truth, able to inspire believers to BEHAVIORAL PUNCTUATION OF CIRCUMSTANCE.

#5. Moses stood his ground against the Egyptian state. The apostles preached SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION into the world and by their personal behavior punctuated the universe of human experience.

#6. Biblically, it is irrefutable that SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION creates forms of personal experience for us that PUNCTUATE our existence in time. Hardships and sacrifice PUNCTUATED the life of Joseph that preceded the Lord's salvation of the house of Jacob. David's life was so PUNCTUATED that He was made King of Israel. The Ten Commandments are just such a SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION of the time line.

#7. Faithfulness is the measurement of one's recognition of the acute power of SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION. Faithlessness despises and discredits any thought that God breaks into the NATURAL CONTINUUM. And that accounts for the common human habit toward THE RATIONALIZATION OF SCRIPTURE!

#8. When SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION treats us harshly we acknowledge it for what it is and we know it is the hand of the Lord. Depression may come but it is overruled by revealed truth. And that is another SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION!

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 28: SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION, 12-14.

#1. The Book of Zechariah is by its origin of construction and by its nature, therefore, A SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION INTO TIME, LIFE and HISTORY! This text is intended to PUNCTUATE the horizons of personal thought, speech and behavior.

#2. Awareness of this fact necessarily generalizes to the entirety of the Bible. The whole of biblical truth, is in fact, a SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION of human understanding. The Bible represents a causal intervention into human natural language.

#3. This means that the revealed biblical language manifold is a distinct use of linguistic representations. The Bible functions as an insertion of SUPERNATURAL MEANING into the human setting.

#4. "In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity", 13:1. Consequences for fallenness can be reversed by the powers of SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION. Hope, therefore, abounds even and especially in times of distress!

#5. SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION is always and directly opposed by those who abhor any insertion of revealed controlled language into human affairs. "It will come about in that

day...that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they will no longer be remembered; and I will also remove the prophets and the unclean spirit from the land", 13:2.

#6. Idolatry is a human invention of convenience; it is men who generate the mythic relevance of the idol. The actual idol is man himself. Idolatry is a ploy to constrain the temporal reach of SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION.

#7. Any attempted obstruction of SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION is a capital offense. "...You shall not live, for you have spoken falsely in the name of the Lord...", 13:3.

#8. Attempted suppression of SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION is a form of deception, 13:4. SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION redirects the entirety of personal temporal existence.

#9. "...Refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people', and they will say, 'The Lord is my God'", 13:9.

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 29: SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION, 12-14.

#1. SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION, then, confronts the full range of material reality and every believer's personal historical conditions. The ancient Israelites rarely projected substantial faith in this ABSOLUTE ASPECT of the relation of God to time.

#2. Weak and non-existent faith incline to confidence in the realm of an unbreachable natural continuum. That materialized as Peter walked upon the water, Matthew 14.

#3. Biblical faith requires a functioning trust in the SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION into the NATURAL CONTINUUM. "...but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city", 14:2; "You will flee by the valley of the mountains...yes you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!", 14:5. SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION creates SUPERNATURAL PATHWAYS through our fractious circumstances, situations and states of being! Pathways that do not naturally occur, 14:4. The phenomenon of SUPERNATURAL PATHWAYS is forced into the temporal dimension. "In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives...and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south", 14:4.

#4. Chapter 14:9-19 warns of the sometimes terrifying force of SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION into the NATURAL CONTINUUM.

#5. Dissolution of the strength of the Lord's enemies is brought about by SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION. "It will come about in that day that a great panic from the Lord will fall on

them; and they will seize one another's hand, and the hand of one will be lifted against the hand of another", 14:13.

#6. This is SOCIAL INCOHERENCE pushed into an entire sociology, lacking natural causation and without any natural explanation.

From the Book of Zechariah. THE LORD DRAWS BACK THE CURTAIN--A LITTLE.
PART 30: SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION, 12-14.

#1. "In that day there will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, 'HOLY TO THE LORD'. And the cooking pots in the Lord's house will be like the bowls before the altar. Every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to the Lord of hosts; and all who sacrifice will come and take of them and boil in them. And there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts in that day", 14:20, 21.

#2. The Almighty is always involved in time to consolidate together all who belong to the Eternal kingdom founded upon SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION.

#3. Such people, drawn from the entirety of the human race across all of time and expanse are pronounced "HOLY TO THE LORD".

#4. Holiness is a spiritual standing before the Lord, stipulated into force by His grace and thoroughly unmerited by men. Apparently, the "Lord of hosts" willingly extends the standing of holiness to even common articles of use by the faithful.

#5. The "Canaanite" represents uncleanness of thought, speech and behavior. Alien perceptions of time and God (those not based on revelation) are to be discredited and expunged from the kingdom of Heaven.

#6. Those in the church are understood for their personal quest to seek holiness of life and devotion of service to the Lord. THOSE WHO ARE "HOLY" TRY TO LIVE ABOVE and BEYOND TIME and CIRCUMSTANCE.

#7. Holiness is A POST-MATERIAL KIND OF LIFE (as if one were already in Heaven). Not asceticism this, it is the pursuit of all things godly. And holiness of life is the exact representation of SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION.

#8. Like all of the prophets, Zechariah, holds open a hope, a kind of life, a solution to "sin and impurity" and a door to SUPERNATURAL PUNCTUATION!