

# CHAPTER 2

In this chapter we have,

- I.** Another vision which the prophet saw, not for his own entertainment, but for his satisfaction and the edification of those to whom he was sent (v. 1, 2).
- II.** A sermon upon it, in the rest of the chapter,
  - 1.** By way of explication of the vision, showing it to be a prediction of the replenishing of Jerusalem and of its safety and honour (v. 3-5).
  - 2.** By way of application. Here is,
    - (1.)** A use of exhortation to the Jews that were yet in Babylon, pressing them to hasten their return to their own land, (v. 6-9).
    - (2.)** A use of consolation to those that were returned, in reference to the many difficulties they had to struggle with (v. 10-12).
    - (3.)** A use of caution to all not to prescribe to God, or limit him, but patiently to wait for him (v. 13).

## <311>ZECHARIAH 2:1-5

### THE VISION OF THE MEASURING LINE

This prophet was ordered, in God's name, to assure the people (<311>Zechariah 1:16) that *a line should be stretched forth upon Jerusalem*. Now here we have that promise illustrated and confirmed, that the prophet might deliver that part of his message to the people with the more clearness and assurance.

**I.** He sees, in a vision, a man going to measure Jerusalem (v. 1, 2): *He lifted up his eyes again, and looked*. God had shown him that which was very encouraging to him, (<311>Zechariah 1:20), and therefore now he *lifted up his eyes again and looked*. Note, The comfortable sights which by faith we have had of God's goodness made to pass before us should engage us to lift up our eyes again, and to search further into the discoveries made to us of the divine grace; for there is still more to be seen. In the close of the

foregoing chapter he had seen Jerusalem's enemies baffled and broken, so that now he begins to hope she shall not be ruined. But that is not enough to make her happy, and therefore that is not all that is promised. Here is more carpenter's work to be done. When David had resolved to *cut off the horns of the wicked* he engaged likewise that the *horns of the righteous* should be *exalted*, <sup><150></sup>Psalm 75:10. And so does the *Son of David* here; for he is *the man*, even *the man Christ Jesus*, whom the prophet sees *with a measuring line in his hand*; for he is the master builder of his church (<sup><308></sup>Hebrews 3:3), and he builds exactly by line and level. Zechariah took the boldness to ask him *whither he was going* and what he designed to do with that measuring line. And he readily told him that he was going to *measure Jerusalem*, to take a particular account of the dimensions of it each way, that it might be computed what was necessary for the making of a wall about it, and that it might appear, by comparing its dimensions with the vast numbers that should inhabit it, what additions were necessary to be made for the receiving and containing of them; when multitudes flock to Jerusalem (<sup><204></sup>Isaiah 60:4) it is time for her to *enlarge the place of her tent*, <sup><250></sup>Isaiah 54:2. Note, God takes notice of the extent of his church, and will take care that, when ever so many guests are brought in to the wedding supper, still there *shall be room*, <sup><142></sup>Luke 14:22. *In the New Jerusalem, my Father's house above, there are many mansions.*

**II.** He is informed that this vision means well to Jerusalem, that the measuring line he saw was not a *line of confusion* (as that <sup><231></sup>Isaiah 34:11), not a line to mete out for destruction, as when God *purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion he stretched out a line* (<sup><218></sup>Lamentations 2:8); but it is as when he *divided the inheritance by line*, <sup><155></sup>Psalm 78:55. The *angel that talked with the prophet went forth*, as he designed, *to measure Jerusalem*, but *another angel went out to meet him*, to desire that he would first explain this vision to the prophet, that it might not occasion him any uneasy speculations: *Run, and speak to this young man* (for, it seems, the prophet entered upon his prophecy when he was young, yet no man ought to despise his youth when God thus highly honoured it); he is a young man, not experienced, and may be ready to fear the worst; therefore bid him hope the best; tell him that Jerusalem shall be both safe and great,

**1.** As safe and great as numbers of men can make it (v. 4): *Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls*; the inhabitants of it shall increase, and multiply, and replenish it to admiration, so that it shall extend itself far beyond the present dimensions which now there is an account taken of.

The walls of a city, as they defend it, so they straiten and confine it, and keep its inhabitants from multiplying beyond such a pitch; but Jerusalem, even when it is walled, to keep off the enemy, shall be inhabited *as towns without walls*. The city shall be in a manner lost in the suburbs, as London is, where the out-parishes are more populous than those within the walls. So shall it be with Jerusalem; it shall be extended as freely as if it had no walls at all, and yet shall be as safe as if it had the strongest walls, such a *multitude of men* (which are the best walls of a city) *shall there be therein*, and of *cattle too*, to be not only food, but wealth too, for those men. Note, The increase of the numbers of a people is a great blessing, is a fruit of God's blessing on them and an earnest of further blessings, <sup><ACT></sup>Psalm 107:38. *They are multiplied, for he blesses them.*

2. As safe and great as the presence of God can make it, v. 5.

(1.) It shall be safe, for God himself will be a *wall of fire round about it*. Jerusalem had no walls about it at this time, but lay naked and exposed; formerly, when it had walls, the enemies not only broke through them, but broke them down; but now God will be unto her a wall of fire. Some think it alludes to shepherds that made fires about their flocks, or travellers that made fires about their tents in desert places, to frighten wild beasts from them. God will not only *make a hedge* about them as he did about Job (<sup><REV></sup>Job 1:10), not only make walls and bulwarks about them, <sup><REV></sup>Isaiah 26:1 (those may be battered down), not only be as the mountains round about them, <sup><ACT></sup>Psalm 125:2 (mountains may be got over), but he will be a wall of fire round them, which cannot be broken through, nor scaled, nor undermined, nor the foundations of it sapped, nor can it be attempted, or approached, without danger to the assailants. God will not only make a wall of fire about her, but he will himself be such a wall; for *our God is a consuming fire* to his and his church's enemies. He is a wall of fire, not on one side only, but round about on every side.

(2.) It shall be great, for God himself *will be the glory in the midst of it*. His temple, his altar, shall be set up and attended there, and his institutions observed, and there then shall the tokens of his special presence and favour be, which will be the glory in the midst of them, will make them truly admirable in the eyes of all about them. God will have honour from them, and put honour upon them. Note, Those that have God for their God have him for their glory; those that have him in the midst of them have glory in the midst of them, and thence the church is said to be *all glorious*

*within*. And those persons and places that have God to be the glory in the midst of them have him for a wall of fire round about them, for *upon all that glory there is, and shall be, a defence*, <sup><2016></sup>Isaiah 4:5. Now all this was fulfilled in part in Jerusalem, which in process of time became a very flourishing city, and made a very great figure in those parts of the world, much beyond what could have been expected, considering how low it was brought and how long it was ere it recovered itself; but it was to have its full accomplishment in the gospel-church, which is extended far, as towns without walls, by the admission of the Gentiles into it, and which has God, the Son of God, for its prince and protector.

## <2016>ZECHARIAH 2:6-9

### ZION INVITED TO LIBERTY

One would have thought that Cyrus's proclamation, which gave liberty to the captive Jews to return to their own land, would suffice to bring them all back, and that, as when Pharaoh gave them leave to quit Egypt and their house of bondage there, they would not leave a hoof behind; but it seems it had not that effect. There were about 40,000 whose spirits God stirred up to go, and they went; but many, perhaps the greater part, staid behind. The land of their captivity was to most of them the land of their nativity; they had taken root there, had gained a settlement, and many of them a very comfortable one; some perhaps had got estates and preferments there, and they did not think they could better themselves by returning to their own land. *Patria est ubicunque bene est — My country is every spot where I feel myself happy*. They had no great affection to their own land, and apprehended the difficulties in their way to it insuperable. This proceeded from a bad cause — a distrust of the power and promise of God, a love of ease and worldly wealth, and an indifference to the religion of their country and to the God of Israel himself; and it had a bad effect, for it was a tacit censure of those as foolish, rash, and given to change, that did return, and a weakening of their hands in the work of God. Such as these could not sing (Psalm 137) in their captivity, for they had *forgotten thee, O Jerusalem!* and were so far from preferring thee before their chief joy that they preferred any joy before thee. Here is therefore another proclamation issued out by the God of Israel, strictly charging and commanding all his free-born subjects, wherever they were dispersed,

speedily to return into their own land and render themselves at their respective posts there. They are loudly summoned (v. 6): *Ho! ho! come forth, and flee from the land of the north, saith the Lord.* This fitly follows upon the promise of the rebuilding and enlarging of Jerusalem. If God will build it for them and their comfort, they must come and inhabit it for him and his glory, and not continue sneaking in Babylon. Note, The promises and privileges with which God's people are blessed should engage us, whatever it cost us, to join ourselves to them and *cast in our lot among them.* When Zion is enlarged, to make room for all God's Israel, it is the greatest madness imaginable for any of them to stay in Babylon. The captivity of a sinful state is by no means to be continued in, though a man be ever so easy upon temporal accounts. No: *Come forth and flee* with all speed, and lose no time. *Escape for thy life; look not behind thee.* To induce them to hasten their return, let them consider,

**1.** They are now dispersed, and are concerned to incorporate themselves for their mutual common defence (v. 6): *"I have spread you abroad as the four winds of heaven, sent some into one corner of the world and some into another; this has been your condition a long time, and therefore you should now think of coming together again, to help one another."* God owns that his scattering them was in wrath, and therefore they must take this invitation as a token of God's being willing to be reconciled to them again, so that they kicked at his kindness in refusing to accept the call.

**2.** They are now in bondage, and are concerned to assert their own liberty; and therefore, *"Deliver thyself, O Zion! flee from the oppressor, and make the best of thy way. Let us see some such bold efforts and struggles to help thyself as become the generous gracious seed of Abraham."* v. 7. Note, When Christ has proclaimed that deliverance to the captives which he has himself wrought out it then concerns each of us to *deliver ourselves, to loose ourselves from the bands of our necks* (~~251~~ Isaiah 52:2), and, since we are under grace, to resolve that *sin shall not have dominion over us*, Zion herself is here said to  *dwell with the daughter of Babylon*, because many of the *precious sons of Zion* dwelt there, and where the people of God are there the church of God is, for it is not tied to places. Now it is not fit that Zion should dwell with the daughter of Babylon; what communion can light have with darkness? Zion will be in danger of partaking with the daughter of Babylon both *in her sins* and *in her plagues*; and therefore, *"Come out of her, my people,* ~~680~~ Revelation 18:4. *Deliver thyself, O Zion!* by a speedy return to thy own land, and do not destroy thyself by

continuing in that polluted devoted land.” Those that would be found among the generation of God's children must *save themselves from the untoward generation* of this world; it was St. Peter's charge to his new converts, <sup><412></sup>Acts 2:40.

**3.** They have seemed to be forsaken and forgotten of God, but God will now make it to appear that he espouses their cause and will plead it with jealousy, v. 8,9. It was a discouragement to those who remained in Babylon to hear of the difficulties and oppositions which their brethren met with that had returned, by which they were still in danger of being crushed and overpowered. “And we might as well sit still” (think they) “as rise up and fall.” In answer to this objection, the *angel that talked with the prophet* (that is, Jesus Christ) tells him what he had commission to do for their protection and the perfecting of their salvation, and herein he has an eye to the great redemption which, in the fulness of time, he was to be the author of. Christ, who is Jehovah, and the *Lord of hosts*, of all the hosts of heaven and earth, in both which he has a sovereign power, *says, He* (that is, the Father) *has sent me*. Note, What Jesus has done, and does, for his church against his enemies, he was sent and commissioned by the Father to do. With great satisfaction he often speaks of *the Father that sent him*.

**(1.)** He is sent *after the glory*. After the glorious beginning of their deliverance he is sent to perfect it, for he is the finisher of that work which he is the author of. Christ is sent, in the first place, to the nation and people of the Jews, *to whom pertained the glory*, <sup><490></sup>Romans 9:4. And he was himself the *glory of his people Israel*. But *after the glory*, after his care of them, he is *sent to the nations, to be a light to lighten the Gentiles*, by the power of his gospel to captivate them, and bring them, and every high thought among them, into obedience to himself.

**(2.)** He is *sent to the nations that spoiled them*, to take vengeance on them for the wrongs done to Zion, when the year of his redeemed comes and the *year of recompences for the controversy of Zion*, <sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 34:8. He is sent to *shake his hand upon them*, to lift up his mighty hand against them and to lay upon them his heavy hand, to *bruise them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel*, <sup><499></sup>Psalms 2:9. Some think it intimates how easily God can subdue and humble them with the turn of his hand; it is but shaking his hand over them and the work is done. *They shall be a spoil to their servants*, shall be enslaved to those whom they had enslaved, and be plundered by those whom they had plundered. In Esther's

time this was fulfilled, when the *Jews had rule over those that hated them* (<sup><390></sup>Esther 9:1), and often in the time of the Maccabees. The promise is further fulfilled in Christ's victory over our spiritual enemies, his *spoiling principalities and powers and making a show of them openly*, <sup><305></sup>Colossians 2:15. And it is still in force to the gospel-church. Christ will reckon with all that are enemies to it, and sooner or later will make them *his footstool*, <sup><330></sup>Psalm 110:1; <sup><360></sup>Revelation 3:9.

**(3.)** What he will do for his church shall be an evident proof of God's tender care of it and affection to it: *He that touches you touches the apple of his eye*. This is a high expression of God's love to his church. By his resentment of the injuries done to her it appears how dear she is to him, how he interests himself in all her interests, and takes what is done against her, not only as done against himself, but as done against the very apple of his eye, the tenderest part, which nature has made very fine, has put a double guard upon, and taught us to be in a special manner careful of, and which the least touch is a great offence to. This encourages the people of God to pray with David (<sup><375></sup>Psalm 17:8), *Keep me as the apple of thy eye*; and engages them to do as Solomon directs (<sup><300></sup>Proverbs 7:2), to *keep his law as the apple of their eye*. Some understand it thus: “*He that touches you touches the apple of his own eye*; whoever do you any injury will prove, in the issue, to have done the greatest injury to themselves.”

**(4.)** It shall be an evident proof of Christ's mission: *You shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me* to be the protector of his church, that the promises made to the church are yea and amen in him. Christ's victory over our spiritual enemies proves that the Father sent him and was with him.

## <sup><320></sup>ZECHARIAH 2:10-13

### ZION'S PROSPERITY PREDICTED

Here is, I. Joy proclaimed to the church of God, to the *daughter of Zion*, that had separated herself from the *daughter of Babylon*. The Jews that had returned were in distress and danger, their enemies in the neighbourhood were spiteful against them, their friends that remained in Babylon were cool towards them, shy of them, and declined coming in to their assistance; and yet they are directed to *sing*, and to *rejoice* even in

tribulation. Note, Those that have recovered their purity, and integrity, and spiritual liberty, though they have not yet recovered their outward prosperity, have reason to sing and rejoice, to give glory to God and take comfort to themselves.

**I.** God will have a people among them. If their brethren in Babylon will not come to them, those of other nations shall, and shall replenish Jerusalem and the cities of Judah: *Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day* that are now at a distance from him and strangers to him. The Jewish nation, after the captivity, multiplied very much, by the accession of proselytes to it, that were naturalized, and were entitled to all the privileges of native Israelites, and perhaps they were equal in number; and therefore Paul mentions it as an honour to him which many Jews had not, that he was of *the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews,* <sup>5105</sup>Philippians 3:5. And this was an earnest of the bringing in of the Gentiles into the christian church and in that this and other similar promises were to have their full accomplishment. It was therefore strange that that should be so great an offence to the Jews, as we find it was in the apostles' times, which was promised them as a blessing in the prophets' times — that *many nations should be joined to the Lord*. And, as there had been one law, so should there be one gospel *for the stranger and for those born in the land*; whatever nation they come from, when they *join themselves to the Lord, they shall be my people*, as dear to God as ever Israel had been. Note, God will own those for his people who with purpose of heart join themselves to him; and, when many do so, we ought to look upon them, not with a jealous eye, but with a joyful one. Angels rejoice, and therefore so should the daughter of Zion, when many nations are joined to the Lord.

**II.** They shall have his presence among them: *Sing and rejoice, for I come*. Those to whom God comes have reason to rejoice, for he will be to them their chief joy. God will come, not to make them a visit only, but to reside with them and preside over them: *I will dwell in the midst of thee* (v. 10), and it is repeated (v. 11), because it was to have a double accomplishment,

**1.** In the dedication of the temple, in their regularly observing all God's institutions there and God's owning them therein. Those have God *dwelling in the midst of them* that have his ordinances administered in their purity, and a divine power going along with them; with these tokens



of God's presence the Jewish church was blessed, after this, as much as ever.

**2.** In the incarnation of Christ. He that here promises to dwell among them is that *Lord whom the Lord of hosts has sent* (v. 11), and therefore must be the *Lord Jesus*, who came and dwelt in the midst of the Jewish nation, the eternal *Word*, that was *made flesh, and dwelt among us*. This was the great honour reserved for that nation in its last days; the promise of it effectually secured their continuance till it was accomplished. They could not be destroyed while that blessing was in them; and the prospect of it, according to the promise, was the great support and comfort of those who *looked for redemption in Jerusalem*. It is promised that when Christ comes and dwells among them *they shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent him*; all that were Israelites indeed were made to know it; sufficient proofs were given of it by the miracles Christ wrought, so that they might have known it, and yet there were those that perished in ignorance and unbelief, that would not know it, for, *if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory*.

**III.** They shall have all their ancient dignities and privileges restored to them again, v. 12.

- 1.** Canaan shall be a holy land again, not polluted by sin as it had been formerly, not profaned by the enemies as it had been of late; it shall be an enclosure again, and not laid in common.
- 2.** Judah shall be in this holy land, shall inhabit it, and enjoy the comfort of it, and no longer be lost and scattered in Babylon.
- 3.** Judah shall be God's portion, which he will delight in, which shall be dear to him, by which he will be served, and in which he will be glorified. *The Lord's portion is his people*.
- 4.** God will *inherit Judah* again as *his portion*, will claim his interest, and recover the possession out of the hands of those that had invaded his right. He will protect his people and govern them as a man does his inheritance, and will be at home among them.
- 5.** He will *choose Jerusalem again*, as he had chosen it formerly, to *put his name there*; he will renew and confirm the choice, and continue it a chosen place, till it must resign its honours to the Jerusalem that is from

above. Though the election seemed to be set aside for a while, yet it *shall obtain*.

**II.** Here is silence proclaimed to all the world besides, v. 13. The daughter of Zion must sing, but *all flesh must be silent*. Observe here,

**1.** A very awful description of God's appearances for the relief of his people. He is *raised up out of his holy habitation*; as a man out of sleep (<sup><342></sup>Psalm 44:23; 78:65), or as a man entering with resolution upon a business that he will go through with. Heaven is his holy habitation above; thence we must expect him to appear, <sup><230></sup>Isaiah 64:1. His temple is so in this lower world; thence from *between the cherubim* he will *shine forth*, <sup><300></sup>Psalm 80:1. He is about to do something unusual, unexpected, and very surprising, and to plead his people's cause, which had long seemed neglected.

**2.** A seasonable caution and direction at such a time: *Be silent, O all flesh! before the Lord* — before Christ and his grace (let not flesh object against the methods he takes) — before God and his providence; the enemies of the church shall be silenced; all iniquity shall stop her mouth. The friends of the church also must be silent. Leave it to God to take his own way, and neither prescribe to him what he should do nor quarrel with him whatever he does. *Be still, and know that he is God. Stand still, and see his salvation*. See <sup><320></sup>Habakkuk 2:20; <sup><300></sup>Zephaniah 1:7. Silently acquiesce in his holy will, and patiently wait the issue, as those who are assured that when God is *raised up out of his holy habitation* he will not retreat, nor sit down again, till he has accomplished his whole work.