



Time to Drop the Double Life

Zechariah 5:1-11

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From Weird to Weirder– Zachariah’s Late Night Visions

By this time, Zechariah has been up half the night getting one vision after another. The later it gets, the weirder it gets! This time he has a series of two related visions. In one he sees a giant flying scroll and in the other he sees a tiny woman in basket being carried away to Babylon by a couple of women who fly around with bird wings. Good grief! But don’t get stuck on the visual imagery. The language of visions in the Bible are rich in meaning. What we need to do, to get the message, is to unpack the meaning of the images and how they connect with the unfolding message of the Book of Zechariah. There is an incredibly powerful truth for each of us in these visions!

Interpretive Key: The Flying Scroll

The flying scroll represents the Word of God; specifically the Ten Commandments. This becomes obvious as the vision unfolds. The message is addressed to anyone who steals or who swears falsely. This involves at least two and perhaps three of the Ten Commandments (See Exodus 20:16-17 and 20:7). This scroll is also written on both sides, which was highly unusual. Once again, there is a direct parallel with the Ten Commandments, as they too were written on both sides of the stone tablets (see Exodus 32:15). We also find a curse in this vision. In Deuteronomy 27:26 we find these words: “Cursed be anyone who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’”

Interpretive Key: The Woman in the Basket

The woman in the basket is a little tougher to decipher! The word “basket” is literally, in Hebrew, an “ephah”. This is a unit of measure – about 5 gallons. This word also came to refer to the containers that measured and carried the goods that were transported throughout the ancient world. Inside the basket is a woman, who is identified as wickedness (and she must be a tiny woman since the basket only holds 5 gallons!). She is wickedness personified. This basket is being carried back to the land of Shinar, which is Babylon, where there is a house being built for it. This basket – evil incarnate – will be placed on a pedestal in a special house (of worship) in Babylon. The basket and the woman represent the worldly values of Babylon; values that God’s people had carried back with them to Jerusalem. God wants His people to see this evil for what it really is and be done with it.

Time to Drop the Double Life: The Message of Zechariah 5

It was tough times in Jerusalem. The economy was horrible. People were struggling to put food on the table. The pressure of the situation put all sorts of pressure on God’s people to compromise their values and to live a double life. On the one hand they were showing up to build the temple of the Lord. This was the spiritual side of their lives. But on the other hand, they were lying and cheating in their personal lives and in business in order to get ahead. In essence they were living a double life. But Zechariah learns that God is as concerned with how we live in the details of our daily life; our relationships, our business dealings, our honesty and our values, as He is with our acts of spiritual service. He calls them out! He gives them an intense warning! Is it possible for us to be cleansed by God’s grace (Zechariah 3) and then empowered by God’s Spirit (Zechariah 4), but then to undermine all of this by living a life of compromise with sin? Yes.

At the root of it all is the true allegiance of our hearts. These people had left Babylon physically, but somehow, the worldly values and ways of Babylon had remained in their hearts. The basket represents “commerce.” It represents the “stuff” this world has to offer. It represents worldly power and influence. It represents these things, as they become idols in our hearts. That is why the basket is taken back to Babylon, where, ironically they are building a “house” for it. Amazing! God’s people are building Him a house in Jerusalem; while in Babylon there is a house being built in which this “basket” will be placed on a

pedestal, implying it will be the center of worship in that place. Do you see the irony? God is telling us that we cannot effectively build for Him if at the same time we are secretly building a shrine in our hearts to the things of this world. God loves us too much to let us live a double life, to live a lie. That is what Zechariah 5 is all about. It calls to mind the words of Psalm 139:23-24: "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!"

Listen. Listen to the voice of God's Spirit speaking through His written word and speaking in the quiet of your own heart. The Lord cares enough for you to convict you of your sin. He does this not so that you will despair or be condemned. He does this so that you might come to Jesus in repentance, to receive forgiveness and to find the transformation of both your values and your conduct; so that they truly come in line with the Gospel. This is how we build. God wants to build in and through us. This work must take place in our own hearts; in our choices and our conduct, not just at church, but throughout our whole week and every dimension of our lives. This is the building that God wants to do in your life.

Say yes.