

God Remembered
Zechariah 5:1-4
Chapter 7
“Scroll of Judgment”

Sixth Vision: Flying Scroll

I looked up again and saw a flying scroll. “What do you see?” he asked me.

“I see a flying scroll.” I replied. “thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide.”

Then he said to me, “This is the curse that is going out over the whole land, for everyone who is a thief, contrary to what is written on one side, has gone unpunished, and everyone who swears falsely, contrary to what is written on the other side, has gone unpunished. I will send it out.” — this is the declaration of the Lord of Armies — “and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by my name. It will stay inside his house and destroy it along with its timbers and stones.”

Many today in Christian circles like to speak of God’s love, while ignoring His judgment. God is indeed a God of great love and grace (**1 John 7:21**). But this is not all that He is. He is perfectly righteous and holy. Therefore, He cannot and will not overlook the sins of this world. Those who sin will pay the penalty. And this was true in Zechariah’s day as well as for all time. The good news is that God has provided a way in which we may be forgiven though the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, Whose atoning death provided sufficient payment for all transgression.

In Zechariah’s vision of the flying scroll, we are reminded of the perfect justice of Almighty God upon those who would despise His Word. The scroll, of course, represents The Word of God, and its measurement of thirty by fifteen feet represents the holy place in the Tabernacle of Moses. So, in short, the scroll is a picture, if you will, of God’s perfect law descending from His holy tabernacle.

Many scholars have debated as to whether this vision was meant to convey a message to the exiles returning to Jerusalem or to some future generation. Others have speculated that it is a reminder of God’s previous righteous judgment upon Israel for her sins to serve as a warning as to the future, if Israel should return to her former penchant of idolatry and ungodliness. I, for one, believe that it is actually all three at once. It is a reminder of God’s former judgment given in the Babylonian exile, it is a warning to His beloved Israel not to return to its former sins, and it should serve as a reminder to us that God will execute His righteous judgment upon all who sin and fall short of His glory.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our LORD. **Romans 6:23**

The significance of the scroll “flying” in the vision would suggest that God’s judgment is not only coming from above, but is swift, as well as, all inclusive. God from on high sees all. Not only what we do, but actually the very intention of our hearts. Therefore, no one can escape His justice, save those who trust in The Son. Israel had been severely punished for her transgressions, and that punishment was righteous. Why? Because it was done in accordance with the perfect Law of God. Therefore, they were condemned by the very law that they had sworn to obey.

In the vision God points out two points of The Law by which the people were guilty; namely theft and swearing falsely. This does not mean that the people were innocent of all the other commandments, for James clearly tells us that if we break any point of The Law, then we are guilty of all.

For whoever keeps the entire law, and yet stumbles at one point, is guilty of breaking it all. For He who said, Do not commit adultery, also said, Do not murder. So if you do not commit adultery, but you commit murder, you are a lawbreaker.

James 2:10-11

The Word of God is clear. Those who transgress against God's Law will be judged by it. In fact, this is all that The Law is capable of doing. It cannot save. It is merely the standard by which we are condemned. And since it is powerless to save us, those who refuse God's only avenue of salvation will one day be judged according to The Law.

There will be affliction and distress for every human being who does evil, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace for everyone who does what is good, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek. For there is no favoritism with God. For all who sin without The Law will also perish without The Law, and all who sin under The Law will be judged by The Law.

Romans 2:9-12

For you see, according to The Scriptures, even those who were not exposed to The Law of Moses had a form of that law written into their consciences (**Romans 2:14-16**), so that when God's judgment upon them falls, they are without excuse.

Therefore, God will execute His judgment not only on the nation of Israel, but upon the entire world. The word in Hebrew that is translated in the CSB "*the entire land*" (**vs. 3**) is "*erets*", which usually refers to the whole earth and not just the land of Israel. Many scholars have debated as to whether this vision is only in regards to Israel or to the entire world. I, once again, believe that it applies to both. God will ultimately judge us all according to the standards written in His Law. And sadly, no one has ever been able to live up to that standard. Scripture has made it plain:

...as it is written: There is no one righteous, not even one.

Romans 3:10

God accused the people of "*theft*" (sinning against their neighbors) and "*swearing falsely in His Name*" (Misusing the Name of God). Of course, we understand exactly what the first one means. But I think sometimes we do not understand the second. God has commanded us not to take His Name in vain (**Exodus 20:7**). Many today think that this simply means that we are not to use God's Name in any form of a curse. But there is so very much more to it than that.

The word in Hebrew for vain (*shaw*) literally means "useless". In other words, we are to never think of God or His commands as meaningless or unimportant. So how exactly do we take God's Name in vain? When we have no reverence for Him. Our God deserves all the glory, honor, and praise that is due Him. And when we do not live in such a way as to rightly honor Him, then we take His Name in vain. So to say this is just about the casual use of a curse word is to do a gross injustice to the commandment.

The Israelites were very careful not to speak God's covenant Name (YHVH) aloud. And to this day, even when a devout Jew writes the word "God", they will spell it "G-D" so as not to even dare to write the entire word! But once again, this is a legalistic approach to the commandment, but not a spiritual one. The Israelites were sent into Babylonian captivity, because they had misused God's Holy Name. But how had they done this? By not taking His commands seriously. Remember what they had sworn to do when Moses gave them the commandments from Mount Sinai?

Moses went up the mountain to God, and The LORD called to him from the mountain: "This is what you must say to the house of Jacob and explain to the Israelites: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I carried you on eagles wings and brought you to Myself. Now if you will carefully listen to Me and keep my covenant, you will be My own possession out of all the peoples, although the whole earth is Mine, and you will be My kingdom of priests and My holy nation.' These are the words that you are to say to the Israelites." After Moses came back,

he summoned the elders of the people and set before them all these words that The LORD had commanded him. Then all the people responded together, "We will do all that The LORD has spoken." So Moses brought the people's words back to The LORD. **Exodus 19:3-8**

So you see, they swore that they would obey The LORD'S commands. But in the end, they did not. So they had sworn falsely in His Name. That is what it means when you take The LORD'S name in vain. It means that you do not treat Him or His commands with the reverence that is deserved. We treat His Name as meaningless. And that is what we do when we do not take His Word seriously! This is why we all needed a Savior to begin with. For none of us have followed The Law with perfection. Therefore, it is this very same Law that will condemn us. For in the end, that is all that The Law can do. But wait, there is good news!

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, because The Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what The Law could not do since it was weekend by the flesh, God did. He condemned sin in the flesh by sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh as a sin offering, in order that The Law's requirement would be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to The Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to The Spirit have their minds set on the things of The Spirit. Now the mindset of the flesh is death, but the mindset of The Spirit is life and peace. **Romans 8:1-6**

So when the scroll of the law flies over the houses of those who have chosen to ignore the Word of God, they will be consumed by God's wrath. But to those who have accepted God's gift of grace in Christ Jesus, we have the blood of The Passover Lamb upon the doorposts of our house, and we need not fear any condemnation of The Law. For God has lifted its curse from us and has redeemed us with His own blood. One day, this whole world (*erets*) will be judged, and the only hope available is the precious redeeming blood of Christ Jesus! The scroll of judgment is coming. On that day will you be cursed, or will you partake of the blessing that is found only in Christ?

There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other Name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved. **Acts 4:12**