

**Blessed Hope Bible-Presbyterian Church**  
**Adult Sunday School**  
**11 March 2018**

**Visions of Zechariah**  
**Zechariah 5:5-11 (KJV)**

<sup>5</sup> Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what *is* this that goeth forth. <sup>6</sup> And I said, What *is* it? And he said, This *is* an ephah that goeth forth. He said moreover, This *is* their resemblance through all the earth. <sup>7</sup> And, behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead: and this *is* a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah. <sup>8</sup> And he said, This *is* wickedness. And he cast it into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof. <sup>9</sup> Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came out two women, and the wind *was* in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork: and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven. <sup>10</sup> Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? <sup>11</sup> And he said unto me, To build it an house in the land of Shinar: and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base.

**(1) VISION 7: AN EPHAH (1)**

*<sup>5</sup> Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth. <sup>6</sup> And I said, What is it? And he said, This is an ephah that goeth forth. He said moreover, This is their resemblance through all the earth. <sup>7</sup> And, behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead: and this is a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah. <sup>8</sup> And he said, This is wickedness. And he cast it into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof.*

An ephah was a measuring basket used for dry measure by the Jews. The ephah equaled three-fifths of a bushel or in metric measure, twenty- two litres. The ephah was a measure used often when preparing sacrificial offerings or food. Israel was to keep honest measures as a part of her righteousness. Micah observed her rebellious and unrighteous practices. Israel had shortened her ephah (Mic 6:10). The business practices of God’s people were to be based on true weights and measures in the marketplace. Is this your practice?

A young man had volunteered, and was expecting daily to be conscripted. One day his mother gave him an unpaid bill together with some money, and asked him to pay it. When he returned home at night, she said: “Did you pay that bill?” “I really don’t remember, mother; you know I’ve had so many things on my mind.” “But you said you did.” “Well,” he answered, “If I said I did, I did.”

He went away, and his mother took the bill herself to the shop. The young man had been in town all his life, and what opinion was held of him this will show. “I am quite sure,” she said, “that my son paid this some days ago. He has been busy since, and has quite forgotten about it; but he told me that he had, and says if he said then that he had, he is quite sure he did.” “Well,” said the man, “I forgot about it; but if he ever said he did, he did.” Was that not a grand character to have? His word was trusted!

Honesty is the best policy. But no man can be upright amid the various temptations of life unless he is honest for righteousness’ sake for it pleases his Lord. Dear friends, in the long run, character is better than capital.

Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom. Help me, Lord, to build an honest character that glorifies Your Name.

## **(2) VISION 7: AN EPHAH (2)**

A study showed that many American merchants, whose revenues outrank those of princes, owe their colossal fortunes principally to a character for integrity and ability. Integrity has been their guide. When you lay the foundations of character broad and deep, build them on a rock, and not on sand, the rains may then descend, the floods rise and the winds blow; but your house will stand. But establish a character for loose dealings, and lo! Some great tempest will sweep it away. Now consider the price that man has paid for his success. His advertisements are all deceptive; his cheap prices made possible by inferior products. Sow that wicked man's seed, and you will reap that wicked man's punishment. Cheat, lie, be unscrupulous in your assertions – let it not be named among Christians. Yours is a clear conscience, a pure mind, rectitude within and without. Do not envy the cheat and the wicked with their ill-gotten fortunes. He has paid his price; you do not choose to pay it.

The United States of America is the only nation in modern history founded by men who firmly believed God was supreme, both in government and in the lives of men. She has her beginning in the hearts of men and women who had been willing to suffer, lose all they had, and even leave the lands of their birth for the cause of the Gospel. God had greatly blessed America since 1776 and by 1940 it has become one of the world's most prosperous nations. But the God who had so greatly blessed the land was becoming less and less a part of that country's life. Daniel Webster, one of early America's great statesman-orators, had warned the nation against turning from God. He said, "If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity."

What about my country and my business?

Honesty is looking at painful truths in the face. Lord, help me to deal a truthful measure in my business.

## **(3) VISION 7: WOMAN SITTING AMIDST THE EPHAH**

**James 5:1-7 (KJV)** <sup>1</sup> Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. <sup>2</sup> Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. <sup>3</sup> Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. <sup>4</sup> Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. <sup>5</sup> Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. <sup>6</sup> Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you. <sup>7</sup> Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

The interpreting angel speaks to Zechariah, commanding him to lift up his eyes and see. The “*ephah*” that goes forth through all the earth represents business transactions, global commercialism. Zechariah saw a woman in the midst of the basket. There was a “*talent of lead*” that was lifted up. The word “*talent*” means “a circle” or “something round” (2 Sam 12:30). It was a unit weight usually in silver or gold. Here it means a round weight, serving as a cover to a bushel basket. The talent was the largest measure of weight and it was made of lead, the most common heavy metal which is employed in all commercial transactions for weighing out money. The prophet saw a talent of lead that is lifted up from its position as a cover on the ephah (v 8).

He beheld a most unexpected sight - one woman sitting comfortably in the middle of the ephah. The word “*sit*” has the idea of sitting quietly, contentedly, and remaining in a relaxed position, or “dwelling” comfortably in a place. The woman was apparently enjoying the luxury and wealth of commercialism. She evidently flourished in the center of godless commercialism and mammon-worship. Her sitting or dwelling in the midst of the ephah implied the woman’s intimate contact with worldly wealth and commerce, by which she was supported and in which she delighted. “*This is their resemblance throughout all the earth*” (v 6) speaks of the multiplying of this false measure everywhere. Is this not a picture of the godless rich men of the earth today? This woman is defined as “*wickedness*” (v 8). This is the word for “lawlessness,” there is no fear of God in their heart. This is the sad picture so precisely painted by James of the last days before the coming of the Lord.

God has given us commandments and rules as guidelines for living a victorious Christian life. Lord, You see into my very soul. Please help me to be honest with You. Let my every wicked thought be removed. Cleanse my heart, so that I can turn from the things that are an abomination in Your sight.

#### **(4) VISION 7: ECONOMIC BABYLON (1)**

The godless commercialism, the inordinate love of gain is seen by Apostle John in Revelation 18. The Satanic world system will make way for the establishment of Christ’s millennial kingdom. The time of judgment is nigh.

“I have been around for a while,” said Paul Volcker, 81, who was chairman of the U.S. central bank between 1979 and 1987. “I’ve seen a lot crises, but I’ve never seen anything quite like this. I think we almost inevitably face a considerable recession.” Volcker was speaking at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy on 14th October 2008. The U.S. has announced a series of measures to mitigate the effects of a credit crisis that has spread globally and sparked the biggest stock sell-off since 1933. The crisis that began in the U.S. housing market has become a global problem that requires a global solution, Volcker said. It underlines “disturbing and unsustainable” trends in the global economy, especially in America, he said.

The U.S. was spending more than it was capable of producing and, as a result, has a very large current account deficit with other countries - China in particular. Volcker said the current crisis was brought about in part by financial engineering, in which credit instruments were “sliced and diced” into complex derivatives and sold to so-called sophisticated investors who often did not understand them. Even the bankers selling the products did not have the needed expertise to analyze the risk.

This unrestrained selling of defective products to others is most heinous and unscrupulous. In the name of making money, anything goes. May Christians not be sucked into this system of greed and such dishonest transactions.

Only the Holy Spirit can restrain the sins of the spirit. Lord, may You be merciful to protect Your children.

#### **(5) VISION 7: ECONOMIC BABYLON (2)**

The current economic meltdown is the result of not applying the principle of integrity in business dealings. An ordinary American can buy a house for US\$1M and be given a loan of US\$1.2M. He spends the US\$200k. If interest is added, the loan amount can balloon to US\$1.6M. The assumption made by the lenders is that the value of the house will appreciate. When this did not happen, such debts were then restructured and sold to investors around the world. This is sheer wickedness, outright dishonesty. Singaporeans bought in to US\$500M of the collapsed Lehman Brothers.

Lehman Brothers was the fourth- largest investment bank in the United States. It was considered one of Wall Street's biggest dealers in fixed-interest trading and was heavily invested in securities linked to the US sub-prime mortgage market. In its June to August 2007 period, the bank said it would make write downs of \$700m as it adjusted the value of its investments in residential mortgages and commercial property. One year later, on this figure soared to \$7.8bn, which in one week resulted in Lehman reporting the largest net loss in its history. The bank also admitted that it still had \$54bn of exposure to hard- to-value mortgage-backed securities. As a result, Lehman saw its share price plummet more than 95%. Despite having access to cash reserves, worried investors pummeled the firm's shares in one week after talks to raise billions of dollars from outside investors ran into a brick wall. The selling of these mortgage-backed securities to many countries outside of America is a step of great dishonesty. When the Bible, prayer and the ten commandments were thrown out of many schools in America for more than 60 years, this is the result!

No kingdom of Israel can be restored (Acts 1:6) without the removal of the ephah of godless commercialism both from the millennial nations as well as from Israel herself.

If I am honest with myself, I shall be honest with others. Lord, help me not to be a partaker of Babylon's sins.

#### **(6) VISION 7: TWO WOMEN WITH WINGS**

*"...And he cast it into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof. Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came out two women, and the wind was in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork: and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven." (Zech 5:8b-9)*

In verses 8 and 9, Zechariah saw the casting of the lead over the mouth of the bushel basket. And he saw two women described as having *"the wind...in their wings...like the wings of stocks,"* as escaping, taking the ephah with them between themselves. Women with wings are associated with the woman characterized as wickedness and lawlessness in verse 7. They seemed to be protecting and sheltering the woman in the ephah from divine judgment which is about to overtake her. The lawless woman is transported *"between the earth and the heaven"* to *"the land of Shinar"* which is first described as Babel, where the people *"built a city and a tower, whose top reaches unto*

*heaven,*” and made themselves a name. There the woman in the ephah will continue her evil activities. Genesis 11 reveals that religious and spiritual corruption and confusion originate in Shinar in rebellion against God. It is interesting to note in Revelation 18:23 that her merchants were the great men of the earth, for by sorceries were all nations deceived. Could this possibly allude to America?

On 11th September 2001, when the twin towers of Wall Street were toppled, it was a warning from God, howbeit by the hand of terrorists, of divine judgment upon this godless commercialism. But the people persisted in building this worldly economic empire. In September 2008, we saw the collapse of world commercial systems similar to the Great Crash of 1929 that led ultimately to World War Two. Is momentum building up for World War Three?

Jesus must come again! Lord, help me to re-order my life from this evil system.