

Zechariah 2:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof.

Analysis

Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof. Zechariah's inquiry reveals the man's purpose: measuring Jerusalem's rochbah (רֹכֶב, breadth/width) and orkhah (אָרֶכֶת, length). This architectural assessment determines building parameters—how large will restored Jerusalem be? Can it accommodate returning exiles? Will it rival pre-exilic glory?

The measuring activity represents human planning and assessment. In ancient Near Eastern construction, careful measurement preceded building—architects calculated dimensions, materials needed, workforce required. The man's measuring suggests methodical, practical preparation for Jerusalem's restoration. Yet God's subsequent intervention (v. 4-5) reveals that human measurements cannot contain divine purposes.

The question "what is the breadth...and...length" reflects natural human concern for tangible, measurable restoration. The exiles wanted to know: how much progress? How large? When complete? But God redirects focus from physical dimensions to His supernatural presence and protection. True restoration isn't measured in cubits but in divine glory dwelling among His people.

Historical Context

Pre-exilic Jerusalem covered approximately 125 acres within walls. After Babylon's destruction, much remained uninhabited rubble. Returned exiles numbered perhaps 50,000—far fewer than pre-exilic population. Would Jerusalem ever be rebuilt to former size and glory? The measuring man represents these practical concerns.

God's response (v. 4-5) promises Jerusalem inhabited as unwalled villages—so populous that walls cannot contain them, yet so protected that walls prove unnecessary because God Himself surrounds them. This prophecy had partial fulfillment in later Jewish population growth but points ultimately to the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:16), which has walls (for glory) but needs no sun or temple because God's presence fills it completely.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. When you assess spiritual progress or church health, do you focus on measurable metrics or on God's presence and glory?
2. How does this vision challenge the tendency to evaluate God's work solely by visible, quantifiable results?
3. What does the man's measuring activity teach about the legitimacy of planning and assessment while remaining open to God's exceeding purposes?

Interlinear Text

אָל יְיָ אָמַר הַל נָאָמַר וְאָמַר

Then said

H575

H859

I Whither goest

Then said

H413

H559

H1980

H559

לִמְדָ

unto me To measure

H4058

וְכַפֵּה הַלְּרָא וְתִירְשַׁלְמָאָת

H853

Jerusalem

H3389

to see

H7200

what

H4100

בְּחִבָּה הַ

is the breadth

H7341

וְכַפֵּה הַ

אֶרְכָּה:

what thereof and what is the length

H4100

H753

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 31:39 (Parallel theme): And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath.

Ezekiel 45:6 (Parallel theme): And ye shall appoint the possession of the city five thousand broad, and five and twenty thousand long, over against the oblation of the holy portion: it shall be for the whole house of Israel.

Revelation 11:1 (Parallel theme): And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

Zechariah 5:10 (Parallel theme): Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah?