

# Zechariah

## IGNATIUS CATHOLIC STUDY BIBLE QUESTIONS

### Welcome

*“You are approaching the ‘word of God’. But for thousands of years, ... the Word of God has been approaching you.”*

The following guide is provided to enhance your reading of the Book of Zechariah using the *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*. If you are new to this resource or to reading the Bible, we recommend you read the general Introduction before you begin. It explains what it means that Scripture is the Word of God as well as how we understand and interpret it as Catholics. It also introduces the special features of the Study Bible and tells how they can enrich your reading and study. Additionally, the *Introduction to Reading the Prophets*—especially the section on Zechariah—will provide valuable context for your reading.

A simple rhythm of prayer followed by reading and reflection is offered below to guide you through the book one chapter at a time. Questions draw attention to key footnotes and word studies to lead you into a deeper understanding of what you read and then prompt you to consider how to apply what you have learned. For a deeper dive, take advantage of additional features as you go: not just the other footnotes but also cross-references to Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* that are provided above the footnotes as well as any maps, charts, or essays that are not touched on in the questions.

Don't miss these helpful icons as you read! They highlight footnotes that pertain to the Church's criteria for interpreting Scripture (see CCC 112–14):



### Be attentive to the content and unity of Scripture

Notes marked with a Bible icon connect Old Testament passages and New Testament mysteries, fostering appreciation for God's unified plan.



### Read Scripture in light of the Church's living tradition

This icon marks notes drawn from the Holy Spirit's guidance of Church teaching and the spiritual senses of scripture. Here you'll find official teaching as well as interpretations from Fathers, Doctors, and saints of the Church.



### Be attentive to the “analogy of faith”

Explore notes marked with an icon of keys to learn how the mysteries of faith, revealed in Scripture and defined by the Church, clarify and connect with one another in a unified, coherent way.

May God bless you as you read his word!

of God,\* did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,<sup>7</sup> but emptied himself,<sup>†</sup> taking the form of a servant,<sup>‡</sup> being born in the likeness of men.<sup>§</sup> And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.<sup>¶</sup> Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name,<sup>||</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,<sup>|||</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**Shinin**  
12 Therefore, obeyed, so now much more in salvation with f work in you, bo pleasure.  
14 Do all thi tioning,<sup>15</sup> that y children of God crooked and per

2:9–11: Rom 10:9; 14:9; Eph 1:20–21. 2:13: 1 Cor 15:10. 2

**2:7 emptied himself:** The Greek verb *kenōō* means “empty out” or “render void”. The idea is, not that Christ divested himself of divinity when he united himself with humanity, but that he restricted his rightful exercise of certain divine abilities during his earthly life and accepted certain limitations of the human condition. In effect, the Son of God made himself poor in order to make us rich with his grace (2 Cor 8:9) (CCC 472). • Christ emptied himself by compressing the glory of his Godhead within our smallness. What he always was remained perfect and incomprehensible, but what he assumed was in proportion to the measure of our nature (St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Apollinarius*).

**2:8 death on a cross:** The ultimate indignity. Death by crucifixion was the most awful and degrading form of criminal execution in the ancient world. The Romans reserved it for slaves and insurrectionists. See note on Mk 15:24.

**2:9 exalted him:** By raising him from the dead, enthroning him in heaven, and clothing his humanity with divine glory. A similar destiny awaits all who humble themselves as Jesus did (3:21; Lk 14:11).

**2:10 every knee should bow:** An allusion to the divine oath in Is 45:23. • Yahweh swore that all peoples, to the very end of the earth, would acknowledge his Lordship and bow before him in homage. Paul moves Christ into the center of this prophecy as the divine Lord destined to be revered by all. **heaven ... earth ... under the earth:** The three principal realms in the world view of ancient Israel (Ex 20:4). Homage will come from all creatures great and small—the angels and saints above, the family of man and beasts spread over the earth, and the dead and the demons of the underworld.

**2:11 confess:** I.e., acknowledge. Included in this open dec

serious that we pur sense of awe at ser the prospect of sinn Encouragement con readers that God's g desire (intention) at 21; CCC 308) (CC “work”, he address and trembling”, he good deeds were th not boast of your g within you (St. Augu **2:15 pervers** • Deuterono poetic lawsuit that and ingratitude du

*A Thing to Harpagmos (G in the Greek O Occurrences of “robbery”. Its considerable d the leading vi (1) Some, like “something sea*

## Prepare

Read the Introduction to Zechariah, paying particular attention to the *Historical Background*, the *Message of the Prophet*, and the *Christian Perspective* on it. What one thing stands out to you, that you would like to remember?

Read the Outline of Zechariah to get an overview of the book. What are its major divisions?

## Pray

Use the following questions to guide your reading of Zechariah, going at a pace that is comfortable to you. Before you begin each new section, pray simply for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit:

*Come, Holy Spirit, open my heart to hear and receive these words as what they truly are, the Word of God. Enlighten my understanding and give me grace to put what I read into practice in my life. Amen.*

## Read and Reflect

Read and reflect on Zechariah as follows:

- Pray before you read
- Read a section of biblical text by itself
- Read the text again, referring to the notes that accompany the text
- For deeper understanding and to aid in applying what you read, answer the questions that follow. The references at the top of each numbered question correspond to particular notes.

At the end of each chapter, review what you have written and linger where you feel drawn, asking the Lord to speak to your heart and into your life. What do you hear? Respond in prayer and ask his help to live what you hear in your attitudes and actions this week.

# STUDY QUESTIONS

## Chapter 1

### *For understanding*

1. **1:3.** Whom is the Lord addressing, and what are they urged to learn? What does the language of repentance include? With what will the Lord of Hosts return to his people? According to St. Augustine, how are free will and divine grace simultaneously affirmed? What did the Council of Trent cite this passage to affirm and, at the same time, acknowledge?
2. **1:7–17.** In this first vision, what does Zechariah see, and what do they report? What is the message?
3. **1:8.** How is the man riding a red horse identified in 1:11? What is his role, and what presumably are the other three riders? To what does “he was standing” refer? What color is sorrel?
4. **1:12.** As a round number, what period does seventy years approximate? What was happening during this period? How do the seventy years of Zechariah’s vision coincide with the “seventy years” of Judah’s subjugation to Babylon that Jeremiah prophesied?
5. **1:18–21.** What does the second vision, where Zechariah sees four horns toppled by four smiths, signify? Whom does the prophet have in mind? Of what are horns the symbols in the Bible, and what does the number four signify?

### *For application*

1. **1:3.** While it is possible for the Lord to “return” to a person who does not return to him, what usual condition must be met before the Lord acts? Why must the penitent first return to the Lord?
2. **1:11.** Read the note for this verse. What is the best time to seek the Lord? Is there a time limit on seeking him (cf. Is 55:6) or a time when it is too late?
3. **1:14.** Skip ahead to the note for 8:2 regarding the meaning of God’s jealousy. How jealous is he for your salvation? What do you think he will do to ensure it? What is the only thing that could prevent it?
4. **1:18–19.** As symbols of strength, what horns threaten God’s people today? How might the prayer to St. Michael serve as an effective intercessory prayer? What does the prayer say that St. Michael’s role is, and with what power does he operate?

## Chapter 2

### *For understanding*

1. **2:1–5.** In this third vision, what does the man whom Zechariah sees set out to do? What three things, however, does Zechariah learn? What is the message?
2. **2:6–13.** Whom does Zechariah address? What are they urged to do? What will the regathering of exiles to Zion also be for the Gentiles?
3. **2:11.** What does the invitation to the nations to join themselves to the Lord imply? What will the Gentiles become? Although prior to messianic times, only Israel was called the Lord’s special people, what did the prophets foresee? What oath will this fulfill? How does Paul picture the Gentiles entering the Lord’s covenant? What will fulfillment of the prophecy verify?
4. **2:13.** While silence is an act of reverential awe and adoration, what sense or anticipation can it also indicate? What is the Lord’s holy dwelling, and of what is it the unseen counterpart?

### *For application*

1. **2:4–5.** In ancient times, what defenses did a village without walls have? When you face temptation, what defenses do you have? In times of doubt or temptation, how quickly do you remember to take advantage of those defenses?
2. **2:8.** What does this verse imply about how precious you are to the Lord? As for yourself, what does it mean for you to regard the Lord’s teaching as the apple of your eye (cf. Prov 7:2)? What is the connection between these two viewpoints?
3. **2:10.** Rev 21:3 says that the dwelling of God is among mankind. In how many ways is God present among his people? What practical difference does it make that God dwells in you?

## Chapter 3

### *For understanding*

1. **3:1–10.** In this fourth vision, whom does Zechariah see standing trial in the heavenly court? By whom is he being prosecuted, and by whom defended? Following the removal of his filthy garments, for what does the prophet then call? What does the redressing of the high priest, who represents his people before the Lord, reveal? What does purification from the defilements of the past create?
2. **3:1.** Who is Joshua? Through whom is his priestly line traced? How did early Christians often view him? On whose behalf does the angel of the Lord speak? What does the title Satan mean? What does the heavenly trial scene suggest about him, and what does he appear to be? How does Christian tradition identify this figure? Of what does Satan accuse Joshua? When does the Book of Revelation allude to this vision?
3. **3:4.** What passage does the reclothing of Joshua signify? What is the “clean turban”? According to St. Gregory of Nyssa, how does Zechariah prophesy clearly of Jesus, and what does his prophecy teach us? According to St. Justin Martyr, why was this revelation given to believers in Christ the high priest?
4. **3:8.** For whom is “my servant” an honorary epithet? Who is the Branch, and what will he do? With whom is he often identified? However, why does he not fit the description of a coming one who will rule upon a “throne”? How is Zerubabel better viewed? How will the Branch be like Solomon?

### *For application*

1. **3:1.** According to Rev 12:10, the “accuser of our brethren” accuses them “day and night before our God”. Of what does he accuse them? Of what does he typically accuse you, and how often? How do you resist him?
2. **3:5.** What are some of the vestments that priests wear when celebrating Mass or the Divine Liturgy? How are the vestments worn by a bishop different from those of a priest? Why is the bishop’s miter removed when he prays (cf. 1 Cor 11:14) but worn when he preaches?
3. **3:7.** Read the note for this verse. In a modern church building, what does the sanctuary area represent, especially if emphasized by the presence of an iconostasis? During liturgies, who has access to that area? What attitude toward the sanctuary is most appropriate for the rest of the congregation?
4. **3:9.** Why is Jesus called the cornerstone, and of what (cf. Eph 2:20)? According to Rev 21, what forms the foundations of the new Jerusalem? What is written on them, and how are they decorated? What do these metaphors signify about the Church?

## Chapter 4

### *For understanding*

1. **4:1–14.** In this fifth vision, what does Zechariah see? What do the lampstand, its supply of oil, and the seven flames represent? With the help of the angel to interpret its meaning, what is the message?
2. **4:3.** What do the two olive trees represent? What work did these two persons oversee years earlier? Because olive oil was used to anoint Israel’s kings and priests, what else do the olive trees represent? How does the Book of Revelation use this image of two olive trees?
3. **4:6.** Who was Zerubbabel? Why did Zerubbabel need the source of divine wisdom and strength, the Spirit? When else were the abilities required for building the Tabernacle and its furnishings likewise supplied by “the Spirit of God”?
4. **4:7.** What will God enable Zerubbabel to do? In what way, perhaps, are these challenges to rebuilding pictured? What does the top stone appear to be, and what does it represent?

### *For application*

1. **4:6.** Why cannot a person lift himself from the ground by his own bootstrap? What is the gravity that holds the human race to this life only? What abilities are necessary for grace and salvation to come, and who provides them?
2. **4:9.** Which is harder, to begin a project or to complete it? What did St. Paul mean when he accused the Galatian church of beginning in the Spirit but ending in the flesh (Gal 3:3)? How should one complete the Christian life?
3. **4:10.** Read the note for this verse, particularly the last sentence. How does the eye function as the “lamp of the body” (Mt 6:22)? How does the health of the eye affect how one experiences the world? In other words, how does what comes from within the self illuminate the way one sees reality?

## Chapter 5

### *For understanding*

1. **5:1–4.** In this sixth vision, what does the giant flying scroll bring that Zechariah sees? How big is it? What is the scroll? Who are cut off from the land, and what happens to their homes? What is the message for the postexilic community?
2. **5:3.** Of which commandment is theft a violation? How is one cut off? How is taking false oaths a violation of the second commandment? What do the two transgressions noted in this verse stand for?
3. **5:5–11.** In this seventh vision, what does Zechariah see? What does the woman represent? How is she now being sent back to Babylon? Since an ephah is too small to contain a living person, what may the woman be? Again, what is the message?
4. **5:9.** What is the wind? What does the wording seem to recall? What class of animal is the stork?

### *For application*

1. **5:4.** According to the note for vv. 1–4, how does the curse from covenant violations abide in a house and cause its decay? If a family is trained, by example or intent, to steal or lie even under oath, what are the prospects for its members' growth in virtue? Instead, what is more likely to happen?
2. **5:8.** If you had to draw an image of Wickedness, what would it look like? If you had to draw one of Virtue, what would it look like? Which images in Christian art most represent these two figures to you? Why?

## Chapter 6

### *For understanding*

1. **6:1–8.** In this eighth vision, what does Zechariah see? How are the chariots drawn, and what directions do they take? Who are the charioteers, and what is the patrolling assignment of the chariot with red horses? What is the message? What parallels do Zechariah's first and last visions, which form a bracket around the rest, exhibit?
2. **6:2–3.** What do the four colors of the horses distinguish, and what is their symbolism? When and how does the Book of Revelation draw from this vision?
3. **6:11.** To what does the term for crown in question refer? On whose head is one crown placed? Where is the other placed, and until when? What crown is Joshua, who already wore a priestly crown on his linen turban, now given? Wearing two crowns, whom does he prefigure? How is this expectation fulfilled in Jesus? How is the link with Joshua strengthened?
4. **6:12.** By whom is the Branch also foreshadowed? When would Zerubbabel, who laid the foundations of the Temple years earlier, complete it? What role would the governorship of Zerubbabel prefigure, and what would his work on the Temple also prefigure?

### *For application*

1. **6:5.** Read the note for this verse. Assuming the four winds, or spirits, are angels, which angels are given most responsibility for human beings? What does the Church teach about "guardian angels" (CCC 336)? What relationship might such angels have with unbelievers?
2. **6:8.** The note for this verse says that the Hebrew word for "spirit" can also mean anger. What is the connection between spirit and anger? What, for example, would make anger turn hot or cold? What would set one's anger at rest?
3. **6:13.** What was the relationship between the civil and the religious authorities in ancient times? What is the relationship between church and state in our country now? What do you think would be the ideal relationship between the two?
4. **6:15.** How is diversity understood in the popular culture? What is the Christian understanding of diversity as it applies to the kingdom of God?

## Chapter 7

### *For understanding*

1. **7:3.** Where were the priests being consulted, and in what "house of the Lord" were they located? What is the fifth month of the calendar, and when does it occur? What was significant about this month? Why did surviving Jews establish an annual tradition of fasting in the fifth month? What question is the delegation now asking?

2. **7:5.** What is the seventh month of the calendar, and when does it occur? What did fasting in the seventh month (besides the Day of Atonement) commemorate? Why is fasting in remembrance of Jerusalem's demise criticized, and what was the real problem?
3. **7:8–14.** With what is this oracle concerned? What has the Lord expected of his covenant people, both before the Exile and afterward? What is more important than fasting to commemorate tragic events? What was it that led to the desolation and dispersion of Judah in the first place? According to St. John Chrysostom, if those addressed by the prophet acquired no benefit from fasting without doing other good works or driving evil intentions against their neighbor out of their hearts, what is expected of Christians?
4. **7:11.** What does turning a stubborn shoulder mean?

*For application*

1. **7:3.** Suppose you once committed yourself to a regimen of self-discipline but now feel disappointed in the results. According to the rules of Ignatian discernment, should you give it up or hold to it? What considerations should go into making a decision?
2. **7:5.** People fast for many reasons. What are some of them? When fasting is done following a religious calendar, what are some selfish motives for keeping to the practice? What are some better motives for fasting, whether according to a calendar or voluntarily?
3. **7:9–10.** How can the actions commanded in this verse equate to a type of fast? As promised in Is 58:6–9, what will be the results?
4. **7:11.** How do small children use body language to signal that they do not want to listen to correction? What about adults? What bodily signals might indicate willingness to receive correction, even if it is not welcome? What bodily movements can signal humility before the Lord?

## Chapter 8

*For understanding*

1. **8:1–23.** Regarding the question about fasting in 7:3, what will become of times of fasting and mourning that memorialize the fall of Jerusalem? How does the Lord plan to reverse this national disaster by doing “good” to Judah and Jerusalem in place of the “evil” he sent in the past? At one level, what does the restoration of Zion signal; and at another, what new chapter does it open?
2. **8:16.** How does the Greek LXX translate this verse? From whom does Zechariah likewise call for truthful speech? Why does Paul cite a Greek translation of this passage? What takes place at the city gates?
3. **8:20–23.** With what is this vision concerned? In an earlier vision, what did Zechariah see Gentiles doing? In a later one, how does he picture them?
4. **8:23.** What are “those days”? What does this oracle envision? What will the nations come to see, and what will it prompt them to do? With what affirmation did Jesus likely have this passage in mind?

*For application*

1. **8:6.** How often has it seemed impossible to you that the Lord should come into your life? What did you think was the chief obstacle preventing him? If that impossibility has been removed, how did it come about?
2. **8:8.** The note for this verse indicates that the “covenant formula” is repeated often in Scripture. What makes it more than just a formula? How often do you repeat it (or its equivalent) to yourself?
3. **8:9–13.** In your service to the Church, what need of encouragement do you have that your “hands be strong”? What challenges do you face? What resources do you have? How would reflecting on Ps 127:1–2 provide encouragement?
4. **8:23.** Who is your spiritual role model? What inspires you to imitate—or at least spiritually accompany—him? What would inspire others to use you as a spiritual role model?

## Chapter 9

*For understanding*

1. **9:1–8.** With what are these verses concerned? In which direction does the path of conquest move? Within which territory did these cities and nations lie? What allusion do some detect, and how certain is it?

2. **9:9–10.** With what event is the coming of the Davidic Messiah, who rides into Jerusalem on a young donkey, compared? What does he bring to Israel, and how far does his dominion extend? What hope does it fulfill? What rebirth does this event signal?
3. **9:9.** Who is the daughter of Zion? To which king does this verse refer? How does the picture of the messianic king mounted on a donkey contrast with that of a typical conqueror? In what do the evangelists Matthew and John both see a fulfillment of this prophecy? According to St. Caesarius of Arles, who are the donkey and its colt?
4. **9:11.** Who is addressed by the feminine singular pronoun “you” in the oracle? What is the “blood of my covenant”? What reference do some detect? What is “the waterless pit”? By contrast, how is the land of Israel watered? What promise has Christian tradition seen in this verse?

*For application*

1. **9:9.** The poet John Donne once complained that he could not remain faithful to God unless God did him violence. How does Jesus normally conquer the human heart? What tactics would he most likely use to ensure its fidelity?
2. **9:10.** St. Paul proclaimed that Jesus’ coming brought peace to “you who were far off” and to those who were near (Eph 2:17). Who is the “you” in that passage, and who are those who were near? What did that peace accomplish? How does it affect you, personally?
3. **9:11.** What does the blood of the new covenant accomplish? What release does it promise?

## Chapter 10

*For understanding*

1. **10:1.** When were prayers for abundant rainfall before the next harvest season typically made? What do the rains symbolize here? What does the Lord promise? When did spring rains shower the land?
2. **10:2.** What are teraphim? Who are the diviners? Who are the dreamers? To what does the want of a shepherd refer? To what need is the prophet pointing? When do the Gospels echo the language of this and similar passages?
3. **10:3.** Which shepherds are referred to here? During what period did Jeremiah and Ezekiel also pronounce God’s judgment on the wicked shepherds of Judah? To what animal does the word “leaders” literally refer?
4. **10:6—11:3.** What does the Lord pledge to do? To what regions did he scatter the northern and the southern tribes? What will he do with them in the future?

*For application*

1. **10:3.** What is a bellwether? Who are the leaders who act as bellwethers for our culture? To what ideals are they leading us? By contrast, who should be the bellwethers for the Christian people? How do the saints fill that role for believers?
2. **10:5.** In Revelation, Jesus is pictured as a warrior king (Rev 19:11–16). Against what enemy is he leading the fight? If he is a warrior in battle, what are his followers supposed to be? How does the battle affect you?
3. **10:11.** Why is the Exodus event so often alluded to in psalms, prophecies, and other writings in the OT? To which event is the NT equivalent? What promise does it hold out to mankind?

## Chapter 11

*For understanding*

1. **11:4–17.** Although this is one of the most difficult sections of Zechariah to interpret, what is the basic storyline? What do the two staffs represent? Although he is a good and reforming shepherd, how do the sheep regard him, and what do the sheep merchants pay him? What does the prophet do with the money? How does he signify that God’s blessings have been nullified toward his rebellious people? Finally, whom does the Lord recruit the prophet a second time to prefigure? How do many scholars read the episode?
2. **11:7.** Given the names of the two staffs, what does each signify? In what may the symbolism be rooted? After the Lord made a covenant of kingship with David (2 Sam 7:12–19), giving him dominion over the tribes of Israel and even over neighboring peoples in the region, what happened?
3. **11:12.** Of what is thirty shekels of silver the price? What does casting away the coins signify? When does Matthew see a messianic fulfillment of this episode? For the evangelist, how does the prophet prefigure Jesus and foreshadow Judas?

4. **11:16.** For whom is the shepherd who does not care for the sheep a fitting punishment? What is the identity of this figure? Who do some view him to be?

*For application*

1. **11:7–10, 14.** Consider the unity among Christians that Jesus desired for his Church (Jn 17:11). How did it come to be broken? How can reunion come about? When do you think unity will be achieved?
2. **11:8.** Why are reforming leaders often detested by those whom they lead, even when they recognize that conditions need reform? In the lives of the saints, how many examples can you think of where their efforts at reform were rejected? If a bishop or pope wanted to restore strict adherence to the ascetic disciplines formerly required by Church law, how would you respond?
3. **11:16.** In the three letters of John in the NT, how often is the Antichrist mentioned? Who did John think the Antichrist is? How would the worthless shepherd in this verse, if active today, qualify as an Antichrist?

## Chapter 12

*For understanding*

1. **12:1—14:21.** What kind of visions are these? What will be the scope of the kingdom of God? Where will its epicenter be?
2. **12:2.** With what is the cup of reeling filled? Of what is the drunken stupor that results from drinking it a form? What is envisioned as happening to Jerusalem? According to the Book of Revelation, which draws from this and similar oracles (especially Ezek 38–39), when will history near its end? What do “the camp of the saints and the beloved city” appear to be?
3. **12:10.** For what do the prophets use the language of pouring out, as of a liquid? What is a “spirit of compassion” or “of grace”? What is a spirit of supplication? Who is the “one whom they have pierced”? Either way, what will happen when the city realizes its mistake? To what did some ancient Jews connect this verse? According to the NT, what messianic fulfillment does the oracle have? What did a first-born son stand to inherit? In the NT, of whom is Jesus the first-born, and what does he inherit? According to St. Augustine, how will those on both the right and the left view Christ’s risen body?
4. **12:11.** Where is Hadadrimmon? How did Josiah die, and how was his untimely death lamented? To what do others relate the name Hadadrimmon? What is Megiddo, and of what is it the scene in biblical times?

*For application*

1. **12:2–3.** When has the Church ever been at peace? Who are some of the major persecutors, and what has their rate of success been in destroying her? Which global forces are now arrayed against her? How should the Church prepare for whatever onslaught is coming?
2. **12:5.** From where does the Church derive her strength? How does she communicate that strength to her members?
3. **12:8.** When David encountered Goliath, by what armor was he protected (1 Sam 17:38–40)? When you encounter the forces of evil in the world, by what armor are you protected? Of the cardinal virtues, which is most needed when you confront spiritual and other enemies?
4. **12:10.** Of the four narratives of Jesus’ Passion in the NT, which elicits the greatest response from you? What is the nature of that response? How often does contemplation of a crucifix move you to mourn over sins, especially your own?

## Chapter 13

*For understanding*

1. **13:1.** What is “that day”? What does the opened fountain signify? According to St. Jerome, to what does this fountain refer?
2. **Word Study: Pierce (13:3).** What is the meaning of the Hebrew verb *dāqar*, and how often does it appear in the Hebrew OT? Though in one case it is used metaphorically for a person who is stricken with sharp pangs of hunger, what does it otherwise indicate? What is envisioned when the parents of a false prophet put him to death by piercing him through? What two interpretations are provided for the use of this verb when the Book of Zechariah foresees the inhabitants of Jerusalem mourning a figure “they have pierced”? Which one is followed by the NT?

3. **13:7.** How is the sword personified? How is “my shepherd” often identified, and what weighs against this interpretation? Insofar as kings are regularly portrayed as shepherds in the Bible, what is a better way to view this figure? How will the shepherd-king be struck down, and with what result? With what intent did Jesus cite this passage? While he thus appears to have read this verse as a messianic prophecy, how do some maintain that Jesus invoked the passage as a proverb or maxim?
4. **13:9.** For what are refining fires of trial and suffering intended? What does the variation on the traditional “covenant formula” reaffirm?

*For application*

1. **13:2–6.** What is the role of a prophet? What kinds of false prophecy arise within the Church? What did Paul recommend regarding the charism of prophecy (1 Cor 14:1–5)? From where does genuine prophecy come (2 Pet 1:21)?
2. **13:7.** What efforts have been made in recent years to undermine faith in the divinity of Jesus? What has caused many who profess Christianity to doubt or even deny Jesus’ divinity? How can this shattering of faith be reversed?
3. **13:8–9.** How does persecution of the Church function like a refining process? What should be the outcome? If the Lord allows persecution to refine the faith of the small number of those whose faith stands the test, what hope do those majority have whose faith fails it?

## Chapter 14

*For understanding*

1. **14:1–21.** On which city is this apocalyptic vision of the coming kingdom of God centered? How does the sequence of the prophecy move? What does this vision have to do with Jesus’ Olivet Discourse in the Synoptic Gospels? How does its picture of the new Jerusalem also influence John’s description of the heavenly Jerusalem in Rev 21–22?
2. **14:2.** Of what event is a future conquest of Jerusalem reminiscent? What conquest of the city seems to be in view? According to Eusebius of Caesarea, what did Zechariah, writing after the return from Babylon, prophesy?
3. **14:6.** What does “neither cold nor frost” promise? What does “not day and not night” mean? As Isaiah describes it, from where will this endless light come?
4. **14:8.** How will living water flow from the fountain that the Lord will open in Jerusalem? Who else witnesses these life-giving waters gushing out from the Lord’s Temple? When does Jesus evoke this prophetic hope? What are the eastern and the western seas? Unlike what will the water continue to flow in summer? According to St. Ephrem the Syrian, how does the law of salvation flow, and what are the living waters?
5. **14:16.** How are “all the nations” identified earlier in the book? Rendering the “obedience of faith”, what will they do? What is the “feast of booths”, and what did it commemorate? How was it also known? During the festival, for what did participants pray? How is Gentile observance of Tabernacles a fulfillment of its deepest meaning?

*For application*

1. **14:5.** In times of active persecution, Jesus recommended flight, if possible (Mt 10:23). To what parts of the world have refugees from religious persecution, such as Iraqi Christians, fled? Where would you go, if the need of escape arose?
2. **14:8.** Why is desire for God compared to water in the desert (e.g., Ps 63:1)? How is a person like a tree growing near a constantly flowing river (cf. Ps 1:3)? How has your thirst for God been slaked by the Holy Spirit?
3. **14:6–11.** Here and elsewhere (e.g., Rev 21:10–26), Scripture depicts heaven as a city. If your experience of cities is less than positive, what alternative image would you prefer? What features would make you want to go there? How would the promise of God’s immediate presence complete the image?
4. **14:21.** In Mark’s account of the cleansing of the Temple (Mk 11:15–17), after Jesus overturns the tables of the money changers, why does he forbid anyone to carry anything through the Temple area? Applying this text spiritually, what stuff do you tend to carry with you through the house of God? Of what does he want you to let go?