

# THE RIDER ON THE RED HORSE

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April 2, 2008

The symbolic scene depicted in Zechariah 1:8 contains the essence of the prophet's night visions and, indeed, of his entire prophecy. His overall theme, developed in visions, oracles, symbolic actions, sermons, and "burdens", is the restoration and consummation of God's kingdom. Analysis of the structure of the book shows it to be unified by a repeating sequence of three main topics. First and primary is the return and presence of God's Glory in the midst of his people as their strength and salvation. The other two are the promised consequences of the first: the second in the triadic pattern is the elimination of evil, the evil of oppression from without and perversion within; and the third is the redemptive establishment of the Zion community as an expression and embodiment of God's universal sovereignty.

Involved as principals in this historical drama are the Glory-Presence of the Lord, the satanic world, and the redeemed covenant community. These three appear in Zechariah 1:8 in the symbolic guise of the rider of the red horse, the deep, and the myrtles, respectively. Each of these becomes the focus in one of the three following, interpretive sections of the first night vision: the deep, in the report of the horsemen (1:9-11); the myrtles, in the Angel's intercession (1:12); and the Glory-Presence, in the Lord's response (1:13-17).

## I. Present as the Heavenly Warrior

*A. Messianic Angel of the Presence:* When the apostle John received his apocalyptic vision on Patmos, the opening revelation confronted him with the figure of the Son of Man in the transfigured brilliance of heaven's glory (Rev. 1:13-16). Similarly, Zechariah in his opening vision beheld the commanding presence of a man riding a red horse, a man who was the Angel of the Lord, the pre-incarnate revelation of the coming Christ. That this man and the messianic Angel are in fact one and the same individual is brought out clearly by the pointed identification of the "the Angel of Yahweh" in verse 11 as "the one stationed among the myrtles," the phrase already used twice to describe the man-figure (vv. 8 and 10). Moreover, like this man, the Angel is the one with immediate authority over the other horsemen.

A second angel appears in this and subsequent visions, repeatedly described by Zechariah as “the angel who was talking with me” (1:9, 13, 14, etc.). Such an interpreting angel was also sent to other recipients of apocalyptic visions (cf., e.g., Dan. 8:16ff.; Rev. 22:8ff.). But the Angel of the Lord is unique among the angels. He is the Lord of angels. In the course of Zechariah’s visions we find the same evidence of this Angel’s divine attributes and prerogatives that appears elsewhere in the Scriptures and has led to the general recognition of this figure as a form of theophany; more specifically, as a manifestation of the second person of the Godhead. One such indication of the divine identity of the Angel of Yahweh in the present context is the reference to him in verse 13 as simply “Yahweh”.

In this man-Angel the coming Messiah-Lord was revealing at the very outset of these visions his immediate presence with his people. He was there with them in their historical struggle, exercising his sovereign power in their behalf (cf. Isa. 63:9 and 43:2). That personal presence of the Lord of Glory in the midst of the covenant community on earth was the all-important reality. To make known the meaning of the presence and mission of this messianic Angel is what Zechariah’s visions are all about. They are an unveiling of the secret of the covenant, an apocalypse of the mystery of the divine Presence.

*B. Mounted Warrior:* The appearance of the divine Angel to Zechariah in this opening vision recalls his appearance to Joshua near Jericho at the beginning of the conquest of Canaan. Even in their literary form the accounts of the two appearances (Josh. 5:13 and Zech. 1:8) correspond closely. “5:13 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?” Joshua 5:13, 14. Like Zechariah, Joshua looks, and behold a man, standing over against him. The martial purpose of his presence, indicated by the drawn sword in his hand, was confirmed by his self-identification as commander of the army of Yahweh. His deity was revealed in his declaration that the place was sanctified by his presence (vv. 14, 15; cf. Ex. 3:5). Similarly, the divine man-Angel who confronted Zechariah was readily identifiable as an agent of God engaged in a military undertaking, mounted as he was on a red horse

among the other supernatural world-traversing horsemen. He was the commander of these heavenly troops. It was to him they reported after their reconnoitering of the nations prior to a campaign of judgment (Zech. 1:11; cf. the spying out of Canaan in Josh. 2:1ff. and 7:2ff.). Zechariah's subsequent visions would develop the theme, but already in the first vision it was evident from the mode of the initial appearance of the man-Angel that his mission was one of bringing God's judgment on the hostile world powers and so making a place for the kingdom of the saints of the Most High—precisely as was the case when he appeared to Joshua at the launching of the holy war to take possession of Canaan.

We should at least mention in this connection two other episodes involving the Angel of Yahweh with drawn sword in hand for possible further illumination of his appearance in Zechariah's first vision. Numbers 22:22ff. tells how shortly before the appearance to Joshua, before Israel had crossed the Jordan, the Angel took his stand opposing Balaam on his way to curse Israel. And 1 Chronicles 21:16 (cf. 2 Sam. 24:16ff.) relates that David looked and saw the Angel of Yahweh, standing between heaven and earth, his drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem, which he was in the process of destroying with the plague. Background for these angel-and-sword episodes is found in the cherubim associated with the flaming sword in their assignment of guarding from profanation the original holy land of Eden (Gen.3:24; cf. Job 37:11,12).

It is not only in Zechariah's opening vision that the Scriptures represent the Messiah as a mounted figure. Closest of the other instances to the imagery of Zechariah 1:8ff. is the representation of Christ as rider on a white horse in Revelation 19:11ff. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war." Rev. 19:11. (cf. Rev. 6:2). There too Christ, the richly diademed King of kings, commands other horsemen, the armies of heaven, as he proceeds to judgment-battle against the beast, false prophet, and kings of the earth. Blended there with the mounted warrior symbolism of Zechariah 1 is the man-and-sword imagery of Joshua 5, for out of the rider's mouth issues a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations (v. 15). Different historical hours are in view in the two passages, Revelation 19 envisaging the final eschatological conflict and Zechariah 1 an earlier stage, but the warrior-judge role of the messianic horseman is the same in both.

Of a piece with the representation of the mounted Messiah is the portrayal of Yahweh, the divine warrior, driving his victorious horses and chariots (Hab. 3:8). “The One mounted (or riding) on the clouds” is an epithet of Yahweh (Ps. 68:4[5]; cf. Isa. 19:1), as it was of the Canaanite storm god Baal. Yahweh is also depicted as riding or mounted on the cherub (Ps. 18:10[11]) and on the heavens (Dt. 33:26; Ps. 68:33[34])

Later in the book of Zechariah the messianic king once again appears as a mounted figure. This time, however, he rides a donkey rather than a horse (Zech. 9:9). “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.” Zech. 9:9. Resumed there is the patriarch Jacob’s testamentary blessing on Judah (Gen. 49:8-12), in which Shiloh, the coming one, tethers his donkey to the vine. A special designation for the donkey, shared by these two passages alone in the Old Testament, has been found to refer to a particular kind of animal that was used in the death-ritual by which ancient covenants were ratified.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, in the fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah 9 at the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (Mt. 21:4, 5), the donkey on which the Lord rode presaged the cross and the shedding of the blood of the new covenant. This donkey colt identified the lion of Judah as the Lamb of God. Summed up in the two images of the mounted Messiah in Zechariah 1 and 9, the rider of the red horse and the rider of the donkey colt, is the dual status of Jesus as covenant Lord and covenant Servant; his double advent for sacrificial atonement and the judicial conquest; his two-stage career of humiliation and exalted glory.

*C. Heaven’s Legions:* With the mounted man-Angel were other horse(men). Represented by this equine symbolism here, and again in the seventh vision (Zech. 6:1-8), are contingents of celestial beings. These heavenly hosts, who are seen surrounding the throne of God in visions of the divine court, take part in the deliberative assembly there, but they are also pictured as accompanying the King of Glory when he goes forth to battle on a day of the Lord.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Archives royales de Mari*, II, No. 37:5-14. An English translation of the text is available in J. B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (3rd edition, 1969), p. 482c.

Such attendant heavenly forces are mentioned in those passages where we have found Yahweh depicted as a mounted warrior. For example, at the beginning of the blessings of Moses in Deuteronomy 33, the Lord is said to have come with an army of myriads of holy ones as he advanced from Sinai to Canaan in his warfare in behalf of Israel (v. 2). Celebrating the same occasion, Psalm 68 numbers in the thousands of thousands the chariotry forces among whom the One of Sinai proceeded “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place” (v. 17). Zechariah himself, echoing this opening vision at the close of his book, foretells the final advent of the Lord God in judgment with all the holy ones “and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee” (14:5). Again, with specific reference to the parousia of Christ, biblical prophecy portrays the final judgment event as a coming of the Son of Man in the glory of the Father with all the holy angels (e.g., Mt. 16:27; 25:31; Mk. 8:38; Lk. 9:26; cf. Jude 14,15). As in Zechariah 1 and 6, equine imagery is used at times for these angelic forces elsewhere in the Bible. It may be merely implicit in references to chariotry or it may be explicit, as in the familiar episodes in the careers of Elijah and Elisha recorded in 2 Kings 2 and 6.

What Zechariah saw was a symbolic representation or actualizing of the divine epithet “Yahweh of hosts,” which is used repeatedly in the context of these night visions. The rider of the red horse was a personal manifestation of Yahweh in angelic mode and the horsemen belonged to the hosts of Yahweh’s angel legions (cf. Mt. 25:31; Rev. 12:7). The prevalent military connotation of the “Yahweh of hosts” title is not lost in this symbolic restatement, even though the mission of the horsemen is not one of battle. They are in fact engaged in world reconnaissance and it is likely the speed with which they executed their mission that is particularly emphasized by the imagery of horses. In Zechariah’s day, the far-flung Persian government was noted for its rapid communications via a system of horsemen stationed along the roads of the empire. Nevertheless, the role of the horsemen of Zechariah 1 is not just that of general government administration, for their rapid gathering of information concerning the nations was part of a judicial process to assess the ripeness of the world for judgment and to determine the hour for the Lord of hosts to go forth to war.

Three (or perhaps only two) groups of horses are mentioned, distinguished from each other by different colors. The size of each

group is not indicated. One group is chestnut-red, like the mount of the Angel of Yahweh. Another group is white. The other color-term, the second in the sequence of three, is usually thought to denote a lighter red and is rendered “bay” or “sorrel.” These are all natural colors for horses. They all shared the same task of world surveillance. It may well be, however, that the palette selection of red(s) and white was designed to create the impression of flames and light. A desire to produce such a bright, fiery image would then explain why black horses, which are found in the seventh vision, are absent from this first one. Also, the second color-term, *seruqqim*, evidently derives from a verbal root that is used for the shining of the sun. Now this term is possibly to be construed as in apposition to the first color. (Similarly, the term Muse, “strong ones”, is annexed to the four color-terms used for the chariot horses in Zech. 6:2,3). But whether it designates a distinct color group of horses separate from the other two or whether it is appositional to the first color and defines the red hue more precisely, it would highlight the fiery, brightly luminous appearance of these horses. This would not be the only place in biblical revelation where a bright hued color scheme was employed to produce the impression of flames of fire. Flame colored linen was used for the inside covering of the tabernacle (cf. Ex. 26:1, 31, 36). There too it was a matter of giving visual expression to the Name of God, Yahweh of hosts, in an earthly replica of the Glory-court of heaven, where the heavenly hosts were represented by cherubim figures, portrayed in the fiery curtains as well as in gleaming golden sculptured form above the ark. In the imagery of his first vision, Zechariah saw the same reality that was found in the tabernacle, that reproduction of the Glory-Spirit realm where Yahweh reigns on chariot throne as a flaming fire, amid ten thousand times ten thousand of holy ones (cf. Ezk. 1:4, 13; Dan. 7:9, 10).

Conveyed to Zechariah in this vision of the man-Angel with the other supernatural horse(men) was, therefore, the assurance of the earthly presence of the heavenly reality in its full panoply of power. The divine Presence, which Israel had in the past experienced as the visible Glory-epiphany, though not outwardly observable in Zechariah’s day, was nevertheless really present—the Lord of Angels and his holy retinue. Zechariah beheld this Presence in the Spirit.

## II. Present by the Deep

*A. Background Imagery of the Divine Warrior and the Deep.* If we follow the Massoretic tradition for the vocalization of the noun *mslh* in

Zechariah 1:8, there is no reason to translate it "ravine" or otherwise to depart from the regular meaning of *mesula*, or *mesola* (cf. *sula*, Isa. 44:27), namely, the depths of the sea, the watery deep. This is the meaning it has, for example, later in the Book of Zechariah itself (see 10:11, where the plural *mesulot* is used) and Psalm 68:22(23), the context of which is similar to Zechariah 1 in that it portrays the Lord as a riding figure (v. 5[6]) accompanied by a myriad of forces (v. 17[18]). For the rendering of the preposition (*beth*) as "by" in connection with a body of water, see, e.g., 1 Samuel 29:1 ("by the spring") and Ezekiel 10:15,20 ("by the river"), the latter being of special interest because there too we find the motif of a Glory-theophany by the waters. The LXX rendering of *mslh*, "(the mountains) of the shadows," would reflect a reading *mesilla*, from a root meaning "be dark." Zechariah saw the Lord of the angels of heaven standing between (or among) the myrtles by the deep. God's message of comfort and hope for his faithful was distilled in that cryptic, symbolic scene.

To unfold that message we examine first the association of the Glory-theophany of the divine horseman with the watery deep. The significance of this imagery may be determined by tracing it to its sources in earlier biblical revelation. Immediately obvious is the connection with the exodus event. There we find all the elements of Zechariah's scene, the equine figures as well as the Glory-theophany of God's cloud-chariot and, of course, the sea. The very term *mesola* is used in the Exodus 15 hymnic celebration of the victory of Yahweh, the divine warrior, who triumphed over the horse and rider and all the military might of Egypt. Yahweh hurled Pharaoh's horses and chariots into the sea, the depths covered them, they descended into the deeps (*mesolot*) like a stone (v. 5). *Mesula* (or equivalents) is also found in later reminiscences of the Lord's salvation triumph at the Egyptian sea (Neh. 9:11; cf. Ps. 68:22). It is also used for the watery depths when exodus imagery is applied to a later exodus-like redemptive event, as in the reference to "all the depths of the Nile (or river)" in Zechariah 10:11.

Closely linked to Israel's passage through the Egyptian sea was their crossing of the Jordan. These twin episodes under the leadership of Moses and his successor Joshua (Josh. 4:23) are blended in passages like Exodus 15:13-17; Psalm 114:3-5; and Habakkuk 3:8. We have cited the appearance of the man to Joshua (Josh. 5:13-15) as part of the tradition of Angel of the Lord

theophanies that illuminates the significance of the Angel-rider figure in Zechariah 1. Now we note another point of connection between that episode and Zechariah's vision in the fact that the depths of the Jordan just traversed by Israel (Josh. 3 and 4) formed the backdrop for the theophany of the commander of the Lord's hosts to Joshua (Josh. 4:19; 5:10).

Zechariah's imagery finds its explanation then in the exodus event and the exodus-like passage of the Jordan, each involving a theophany by the watery depths. The meaning of these events can in turn be more fully uncovered and thereby a more complete explanation of Zechariah's symbolism secured if we take the phenomenon of the Glory-theophany by the deep back beyond the exodus to the earliest instance of it, and then follow the development of this revelational motif forward in history to the exodus and on to Zechariah's era.

*B. The Deep in Creation:* Glory-theophany over the deep is first encountered in the creation record. After the declaration of the absolute beginning of the invisible heaven and the visible world in Genesis 1:1, the narrative focuses in verse 2 on the earth at an unstructured stage of unbounded deep and darkness and reveals there, hovering eagle-like above, the reality of the Glory of heaven's King, the Lord of heavenly hosts. This Glory-Presence is here called the Spirit of God, an identification attested elsewhere as well (cf., e.g., Gen. 3:8; Neh. 9:19, 20; Isa. 63:11-14; Hag. 2:5). By virtue of the presence of this Glory-Spirit the darkness and deep would become bounded and formed into ordered realms (the theme of the first three days of the creation account), and those realms would abound with creatures who were to rule over them (the theme of the second three days, which are arranged in matching sequence to the first triad of days, so that rulers occur parallel to their realms).

Acted upon by the Spirit of life (cf. Ps. 104:30; Ezk. 37:1-14), the lifeless primeval deep would become a double source of life, the fructifying rain reservoirs above (Ps. 104:13ff.) and the enlivening waters of springs and rivers below (Gen. 2:6; Ps. 104:10ff.). They would become the seas teeming with creatures (Ps. 104:25, 26). In Eden the dark, dead deep would be transformed into the river that watered the garden of God and the tree of life, the primal typological reality behind the biblical image of the river of life that flows from the throne of God (Ezk. 47:1ff.; Rev. 22:1,2).



Hence the presence of the King of Glory above the waters was a pre-indication that the dark deep would be subdued and filled, that the kingdom of God would emerge with royal earthlings made in the image of God and reigning in his name, commissioned, in imitation of their Creator, to the continuance of the kingdom program of subduing and filling the earth (Gen. 1:26-28). Moreover, because the Glory constituted a Spirit-temple and functioned as a heavenly paradigm as well as a divine power in creation, the presence of Glory gave promise that an ectypal likeness of the archetypal sanctuary would be reproduced in the visible world. Inchoate deep and darkness would be transformed into a cosmic temple for the enthronement-revelation of the divine Glory-light. More than that, a living temple of God-like spirits would be brought forth and fashioned into a holy habitation of the Lord of hosts. The Glory-Spirit over the waters was a revelation of the absolute sovereignty of the Creator-King, a guarantee that whatever the conditions that seemed unruly and contrary, they would be overcome and God's kingdom would be established and consummated in the form of a living and everlasting temple, the Omega-likeness of the Alpha Glory-Spirit.

*C. The Deep In The Deluge:* At the Noahic flood we once again find the theophanic Spirit present over the deep in a creation or, more specifically, a re-creation event. The narrative of the episode in Genesis 6-8 is so constructed that it reflects in various ways the form of the creation record in Genesis 1:1-2:3, so inviting the reader to see the Flood as another creation episode—as Peter did and so expounded it in 2 Peter 3:5-7.<sup>3</sup> Strikingly reproduced in the physical phenomena of the Flood was the process of the original creation. There was a return to the deep-and-darkness of Genesis 1:2 in the Flood's reversal of the separation and bounding of the waters above and below, described in day two of Genesis 1 (cf. Gen. 7:11f.). Then followed a recapitulation of the creation sequence of the abatement and bounding of the waters; the reappearance of the dry land and vegetation; and the ultimate re-emergence of animals and mankind in the re-created world, the heavens and earth that now are, as Peter calls it (2 Pet. 3:7). It is of particular interest that the biblical account of this re-creation event narrates it in a way that recalls the Spirit (*ruah*) of Genesis 1:2. Genesis 8:1 marks the turning point between the watery chaos produced by the flood and the reconstruction of the cosmos by observing that *ruah* (wind) was sent from God over the flooded earth. The theophanic presence of the Creator-Spirit of

Genesis 1:2 suggested by the word play on *ruah* in Genesis 8:1 is also disclosed by the episode of God's sealing the remnant in the ark (Gen. 7:16). This presence of the Spirit over the waters in the re-creation event of the Flood signified his lordship over the waters (cf. Ps. 29:10) and announced that he was ready to bring forth the new world-order out of chaos.

Further, re-creation since the Fall is necessarily by means of redemptive judgment; a work of destruction must clear the way for redemptive reconstruction. Re-creation involves de-creation (cf., e.g., Isa. 65:17; Dan. 7:11-14; Rev. 20:11-21:1; 21:4, 5). Hence, in the re-creation event of the Flood, the deluge waters from which God brought forth the new world were first employed by him for the de-creation of the old world.

The flood depths, though a return to the dark deep of Genesis 1:2, had additional symbolic nuances. The primeval deep was dead in the sense of without life forms, but the deluge deep was not just devoid of life, it was the destroyer of life. It was the realm of the dead. For those in the ark, the flood experience was a death passage, a death and burial. Hence God's mighty act with respect to the flood waters may be construed not simply in terms of re-creation but of resurrection. In subsequent biblical revelation the deep is a familiar synonym for death and Sheol. (A reflex of this in Canaanite mythology is the confusingly similar roles of the gods Death and Sea as adversaries of the hero-god Baal.) Psalms 18:4 and 69:1, 2, 14, 15 contain pleas for deliverance from death-Sheol envisaged as the breakers, torrents, and miry depths of the sea (cf. also Pss. 42:7; 88:6). In the New Testament application of Psalm 69 to Jesus, the overwhelming waters become a figure for Messiah's death-sufferings. Psalm 18 is especially relevant to the Zechariah 1:8 imagery because in response to the prayer of the psalmist for salvation from the breakers of death, Yahweh appears in Glory-theophany as a mounted warrior and snatches the suppliant from the deep waters (vv. 8-19). Again in the psalm of Jonah (Jon. 2:2ff.) the prophet's descent into the heart of the seas is described as an experience of Sheol, so that the Lord's deliverance of him was a bringing him up from the underworld. Accordingly, the New Testament applies this (as it did Psalm 69) to the death-burial-resurrection of Christ (Mt. 12:40). In the resurrection scene in Revelation 20:13, the sea is paralleled by death and Hades—each giving up the dead that were in it. And in the vision of the new heaven and earth in Revelation 21:1ff. this parallelism

recurs: the sea is no more (v. 1) and death shall be no more (v. 4). Present in Revelation 20 and 21 is the theophany of the glory of the God of the great white throne (Rev. 20:11) and heavenly sanctuary (Rev. 21:1-5, 11). Manifesting himself as the re-creator of the new heaven and earth, he shows himself, over against the sea of death, to be the God of resurrection power, who can break open the bars of the deep and swallow up the watery depths of death in victory.

The waters of the flood also functioned as God's instrument for the destruction of rebellious mankind and thereby for the deliverance of the covenant remnant from the oppression of the wicked. The mighty waters were the servant of the almighty Lord in his execution of redemptive judgment. In terms of judicial procedure, they were the ordeal waters by which a verdict of justification was rendered for the godly remnant and condemnation was declared and punishment executed against the ungodly. Accordingly, the theophanic Spirit over these waters was a revelation that the King of Glory was in sovereign control over the threatening situation, even making the destructive deep itself serve to accomplish his will as he took action in remembrance of his covenant promise (Gen. 8:1a). The heavenly Presence over the Flood waters proclaimed that the Creator was also the sovereign Judge of all the earth and the faithful Redeemer of his people.

Elsewhere in biblical revelation envisaging the final judgment ordeal by fire (2 Pet. 3:6, 7), the baptismal ordeal-waters of the Deluge (cf. 1 Pet. 3:20,21), become an ordeal stream of fire (Dan. 7:9-11). Like the river of life, the river of fire flows from God's throne, for the Glory-Spirit is the executor of the dual sanctions of the covenant, of both the blessing and the curse potential of the baptismal judgment ordeal (cf. Mt. 3:11). In the end-time, the stream of fire, the ordeal instrument, becomes the lake of fire, the realm of perdition, the second death (Rev. 20:14; 21:8). Thus the story of the appearance of the Glory-Spirit over the primeval waters leads in the course of biblical symbolism to a double eschatological reality, to both a river of life and fiery lake of death.

*D. The Deep in the Exodus:* This brings us back to Israel's exodus from Egypt, which, we may now observe, was a creation event, a redemptive re-creation, like the Flood. We can now appreciate the significance of the fact that it was at this historical juncture that the Glory-Spirit reappeared (cf. Ex. 14:21,22), to be in this new age a

continuing visible divine presence in the midst of the covenant people.

By thus manifesting himself in this Glory-Spirit theophany at the sea, the Lord identified himself as the God of the original creation—and of the diluvian re-creation—and gave notice that his present intention was to accomplish a kingdom-inaugurating re-creation.

Such is the reading of the situation in Deuteronomy 32:10, 11. In this song Moses interprets the exodus as a redemptive recapitulation of Genesis 1, and he does so precisely in terms of the presence of the Shekinah-Glory in the exodus history. For he employs the key features of Genesis 1:2 to describe Israel in the wilderness by the sea, under the ruling, guiding Glory-cloud. The intention to portray the exodus history as a replay of Genesis 1:2 is made clear by the use in Deuteronomy 32:10,11 of two rare words (the noun *tohu* and the verb *rahap*), found in the Pentateuch only in these two passages. In the Song of Moses, the wilderness becomes the new *tohu*, the waste land, equivalent to the primeval deep-and-darkness, and it is the Shekinah-cloud that is referred to as hovering (the verb *rahap*) over Israel in the wilderness-*tohu*.

As in the Flood narrative, so in the Exodus account we read of the *ruah* (wind, breath, spirit) as God's agent in dealing with the deep (Ex. 14:21; 15:8), again evoking the *ruah* (Spirit) of the original creation (Gen. 1:2). Once more there is a dividing of the waters so that the dry land appears, and once again there is the fashioning of a kingdom people who are established in a paradise land under a covenant of works. With respect to this divine work of redeeming Israel from Egypt and forming them into his holy kingdom, the Lord is subsequently identified in Scripture as Israel's Creator (Isa. 43:15) or Maker (Isa. 45:11; cf. Gen. 2:7).

Like the Deluge waters, the sea of the exodus was not only to undergo a creational kind of division and bounding, but was to be wielded by the Lord as an agent of judicial ordeal, as a weapon in an overwhelming judgment on the Egyptians. The coming of God in the Glory-cloud over that sea heralded, therefore, a work of destruction as well as of re-creation. It proclaimed the advent of a day of the Lord.

An additional turn is given to the meaning of the Egyptian sea in some biblical allusions to the exodus in that rather than viewing the waters as a means of judgment, as the waters of a baptismal ordeal, they use the sea as a figure for the objects of judgment. The sea, in

the guise of a monster of the deep, is made to represent the forces of Satan, pharaoh and his army, the enemy power that is vanquished by Yahweh. Appearing in his storm chariot of Glory to perform miracles of redemptive judgment for the salvation of his people, the divine warrior slays the dragon, Sea. "It was you [O God] who split open the sea by your power; you broke the heads of the monster in the waters. It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan" (Ps. 74:13, 14a [NIV]). "Was it not you who cut Rahab to pieces, who pierced that monster through? Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, who made a road in the depths of the sea so that the redeemed might cross over" (Isa. 51:9b, 10[NIV])?

In explanation of this development in the symbolism of the sea, there is the fact that at the exodus the sea stood as an obstacle in the way, threatening the existence of the fleeing Israelites. But it is also evident that the biblical authors are adapting the ancient mythological drama of a hero-god who vanquishes an evil deity depicted as draconic sea, and in the process creating the world or at least establishing world order and his own preeminence in the council of gods. Pagan myth thus comingled and perverted the truths of God's creation of the world and his subsequent overcoming of evil. When the biblical authors draw upon this imagery, they empty it of its mythological substance, employing it simply as a literary figure to portray the realities of God's warfare against Satan and his earthly allies in the course of redemptive history. Most familiar is the use of this imagery in the Book of Revelation to portray the conflict of Christ and Satan. Applying this dragon-sea figure to Egypt and its king exposes the satanic dimension of their hostility to the covenant people, while the imagery of Yahweh slaying the Leviathan suggests the re-creation aspect of the exodus event.

In tracing the complex development of the biblical symbolism of the deep, it has been found that the sea represents both death and the draconic adversary, Satan. This combination is understandable for there is a close connection between the devil and death. Scripture applies the same name, Belial, to both (cf. Ps. 18:4 and 2 Cor. 6:15) and refers to both as enemies of the Lord's people and as devourers of their victims. Satan is indeed said to be the one who has the power of death (Heb. 2:14).

Summing up thus far, revelation of Yahweh in Glory-theophany by or over the sea proclaims him creator and re-creator, judge of the world, victor over Satan, and redeemer of his people. Such a

Parousia-epiphany heralds a day of the Lord, the manifestation of God's supreme sovereignty over everything in heaven and earth, and the coming of his kingdom, crowned by his royal house and holy temple.

*E. Exile Visions of Theophany by The Deep:* These conclusions will find further substantiation as our attention is called to the fact that Zechariah's vision of theophany by the deep belongs to a cluster of such prophetic visions, all from the sixth century B.C. Zechariah's vision, received soon after the restoration began, was preceded by similar visions seen by Ezekiel and Daniel in the midst of exile. It was in his opening vision by the Kebar River, where Israelite exiles had been settled in the land of the Babylonians, that Ezekiel beheld the fiery, whirlwind-coming of the chariot-enthroned Glory (Ezk. 1:1ff.). By waters in the land of exile, Daniel too had visions of the divine Presence—by the Ulai near Susa (Dan. 8:2,16ff.) and on the bank of the Tigris (Dan. 10:4ff.; 12:5ff.).

This was a time when the world power dominated the covenant people, having attacked and overcome them and brought to an end the theocratic dynasty and kingdom. Israel's political status had in effect reverted to the situation when the Egyptians oppressed the Hebrews, before the establishment of the theocratic kingdom and the emergence of the messianic dynasty of David. It was natural that in this period of exile the symbolism of the sea as a figure for the contemporary kingdoms dominating the covenant community should come to the fore again in the imagery of prophetic vision. These kingdoms were viewed as monsters of the stormy deep, like Leviathan Egypt of old. Such was the form they assumed in Daniel's night vision (Dan. 7:2ff.). In the apocalyptic perspective of this vision (read in the light of its interpretive restatement in Rev. 13:1ff.) the world kingdom enterprise takes on the character of a counterfeit creation. Satan, standing by the waters, like the Glory-Spirit over the deep in Genesis 1, summons from the chaotic sea of the nations monstrous world kingdoms fashioned in his draconic likeness. The waters thus symbolize the satanic source of evil powers, hostile to the God of heaven and his people.

In this historical and literary context, the Kebar and Ulai and Tigris, the sites of the visions of Glory-theophany seen by Ezekiel and Daniel, are to be recognized as representing the kingdoms through which they flowed, those ungodly world powers that held sway over God's covenant land and people. And as for the appearance of the

theophanic Glory above these waters of exile, it sealed the promise of a new exodus deliverance and triumph like that achieved by the Shekinah-Presence at the waters of the Egyptian sea. The presence of Israel's God in majestic splendor above these foreign waters gave reassurance that he was King of kings, ruler of all nations, and that the proud world kingdoms would therefore be brought down under his judgment, while his redemptive kingdom, though now lowly, would surely gain the upper hand and be exalted at last.

Zechariah's vision of theophany by the deep is to be understood as of a piece with those seen by Ezekiel and Daniel shortly before. To a limited extent restoration from exile had taken place in Zechariah's day, but the political conditions were not fundamentally changed. Persia, the second beast power from the deep in Daniel 7, still ruled over the heritage of covenant promise. In addition to the shared imagery of theophany by the waters and the basic similarity of the historical situation, there are other correspondences between Zechariah's vision and those of Ezekiel and especially of Daniel, particularly the visions recorded in Daniel 10:4ff. and resumed in 12:5ff.

Some of those correspondences between the Zechariah and Daniel passages are matters of details in literary form, others concern the essential message. A date formula of similar construction introduces both visions (Zech. 1:7; Dan. 10:1, 4; cf. 8:1). Note also the more than minimal identification of the seers, and the reference to them by the rare pronoun *hallaz* (Zech. 2:4; Dan. 8:16). (Common to both is a revelatory process in which an interpreting angel assists the human recipient in the understanding of the vision [Zech. 1:9, 13, 14; Dan. 10:10ff.; cf. 8:16]. Compare too the similar affects of the visionary experience on the recipients [Zech. 4:1; Dan. 10:9, 10].) Of larger import, each theophany vision begins with the statement that the seer looked, and behold a man (Zech 1:8; Dan. 10:5; cf. Ezk. 1:26, 27). And that man in both cases is a manifestation of the divine Presence. In Daniel the man is identifiable with the figure called Michael your prince (Dan. 10:21) and Prince of the host, or Prince of princes (Dan. 8:11, 25), the same Prince of the host whose appearance to Joshua (Josh. 5:14) served as a model for the appearance to Zechariah of the man, the mounted leader of the celestial contingent. Moreover, in both visions this messianic Angel-Prince figure is involved in military engagement with the world kingdoms, in particular with Persia (Zech. 1:7,11; Dan. 10:13,20). Further, the correspondence extends to the

central burden of these visions, namely, their concern with the delay of God's decisive redemptive intervention. That eschatological concern, already intimated by the symbolic imagery of Zechariah's vision (particularly, the myrtles by the sea), is clearly voiced in the report of the horsemen and the intercession of the Angel (Zech. 1:11ff.), pointedly so in the plea, "How long?" (v. 12). Precisely this same concern over the duration of the world's oppression of the covenant community is sounded in Daniel's parallel vision, there again expressed in the plaintive "How long?" (Dan. 12:6).

It would be in the Lord's response to the Angel-rider's intercession at the end of Zechariah's first night vision that the ultimate triumph over the oppressive world power was reassuringly proclaimed. But the very presence of the messianic warrior by the sea, revealed in the opening symbolism of Zechariah 1:8, was already a sure token of the coming deliverance and victory.