



ZECHARIAH, Being the People of God

The Triumphant Return of the King

Lesson 12 Zechariah 12:1-14

12:1 The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.

Just as chapter 9 through 11 formed a single unit (a “burden of the word of the LORD”), chapters 12 through 14 also form a second unit presenting another burden. The theme is Israel’s future, the day of the Lord when Jesus returns. Whereas chapter 11 focused on Jesus’ first coming and His rejection (He was valued at 30 pieces of silver, a slave’s price), this chapter will focus on His second coming and His acceptance by Israel as Messiah. Zechariah emphasizes here in the first verse that it is God’s message, the God of Israel that created the universe, the planet earth, and mankind. What will unfold in these final chapters of the book is so incredible that it is hardly believable, unless of course, it is God speaking.

12:2 Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah *and* against Jerusalem.

Zechariah looks to a future time when Jerusalem, and indeed all of Judah, is under siege. To its attackers, Jerusalem will be a “cup of trembling.” The “cup” often pictures God’s wrath (e.g., Lamentations 4:21, Revelation 16:19). Here, it is God’s wrath against Israel’s enemies.

12:3 And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

This verse presents the first of six references in the chapter to “that day,” a shorthand for “the day of the Lord.” This phrase day of the Lord generally refers to a future time when Messiah returns, bringing judgment to His enemies and blessing to His people (see, e.g., Daniel 9:24-27, 12:1-7; Joel 3:1-3, 9-21; Zephaniah 3:6-17; Haggai 2:20-23). The shorthand “that day” is an extremely common phrase in the prophetic books of the Old Testament. In the day of the Lord, those who would try to take Jerusalem will find it a “burdensome stone,” that is, like a stone that is difficult to move. Global forces (“the people of the earth”) will gather their armies to destroy Jerusalem, but all those that try to move the stone will be destroyed. This gathering of the nations against Jerusalem is often referred to as the Battle of Armageddon (see Revelation 16:13-16). This battle occurs at the Lord’s return (see Revelation 19:11-21). The purpose of the invasion will be an uprising against Anti-Christ (introduced in the last chapter), whose headquarters is in Jerusalem (see Daniel 11:36-45) after he breaks the peace treaty he has with Israel and invades (see Daniel 9:24-27).

12:4 In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness.

God will open His eyes upon Judah, that is, take notice of what is happening and intervene. The Lord himself will deal directly with the invaders, confusing both the horses and the riders. Although it is certainly conceivable that the invaders might utilize a cavalry, most people today would imagine an invasion to utilize the modern weapons of warfare like tanks and aircraft. Whether or

not an actual cavalry will be used in the invasion, the point is that God will take them out. When Jesus first presented himself as king (the Triumphal Entry prophesied by Zechariah), He came in humility on a donkey. When He presents Himself as king the second time (indeed, “King of Kings”), he will be on a white horse of victory (Revelation 19:11 ff.) and Jesus will exercise severe judgment by His spoken word in power (“*out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword,*” Revelation 19:15). The last phrase, “*will smite every horse of the people with blindness,*” should not be understood as Jesus smiting the horses of the Jewish people, but of the Gentile invaders. This phrase is one of four synonymous phrases in the verse, namely that God will confuse the horses, confuse the riders, look upon Judea, and make the horses blind. This last phrase explains how God will confuse the horses.

12:5 And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem *shall be* my strength in the LORD of hosts their God.

The Jewish leadership (“*the governors*”) will recognize in their hearts that they are protected by none other than God Himself.

12:6 In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, *even* in Jerusalem.

The Jewish leaders will be empowered by God against their invaders. They will be like fire among dry wood or a fire among dry wheat as they devour their enemies. Jerusalem will be restored and made safe.

12:7 The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify *themselves* against Judah.

God will begin by liberating the outlying areas of Judah (“*the tents of Judah first*”) and then liberate Jerusalem itself. God will liberate in this order so that those in Jerusalem and those of the house of David do not become prideful. It is critical that all Jewish people recognize that their deliverance is from God and not of their own strength. As an aside, probably no one today can be sure of lineage through David, but it appears that at this future time some people may have knowledge of their lineage from David. In any event, the house of David would refer to the rulers of Israel at this future time.

12:8 In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David *shall be* as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.

God will personally defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem (more details will follow in chapter 14). God will also empower the Jewish soldiers so that the weakest among them will be as King David, the slayer of Goliath. The house of David (and therefore Jerusalem itself) will be “*as God*” in the sense of its strength. The invaders will fight with God himself.

12:9 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

All of the Gentile nations that attack Jerusalem will be destroyed by Messiah at the Battle of Armageddon.

12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they

shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn.

Contemporaneously with its supernatural deliverance from invading armies, there will be a spiritual deliverance as well. God is going to pour out on the Jewish people “*the spirit of grace and of supplications*,” probably a reference to spiritual deliverance by the Holy Spirit. “*Grace*” indicates favor and “*supplications*” is a reference to prayer. The result is national revival as people are convicted. The conviction is about Jesus Christ, whom they characteristically rejected as Messiah at His first coming. At the second coming, contemporaneously with Messiah’s supernatural deliverance of the Jewish people from the invaders, they will recognize Him as Messiah. That none other than Jesus is in view is undeniable here. The Jewish nation shall “*look upon me whom they have pierced*” (Jesus) and mourn. This is a picture of genuine repentance, a changing of mind about who Jesus is and a realization about what the nation did to Him on Calvary. This will not be mere emotionalism, but deep and sincere repentance as one would mourn the loss of an only son or one’s firstborn.

12:11 “In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. **12** And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; **13** The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; **14** All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.”

The repentance toward Jesus Christ will characterize Israel in this future time. There will be great mourning in Jerusalem just as there was over the good King Josiah when he was killed in battle with Pharaoh Neco in 609 B.C. (see 2 Kings 23:29-30; 2 Chronicles 35: 22-27). The entire nation shall mourn. The emphasis here is on how widespread and complete is the revival as the Jewish nation turns to Messiah. The revival includes everyone, from the ruling class (“*house of David*”), the prophets (“*house of Nathan*”), the priests (“*house of Levi*” and the “*family of Shimei*”), and every other family.

This is the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement (or Yom Kippur) of Leviticus 16. Recall that every year on the tenth day of the seventh month (Tishri), the people would celebrate this feast by “afflicting the soul” and participating in an elaborate ritual involving two goats. One goat was sacrificed for the sins of the nation (goat for Jehovah) and the other was released to carry away the sins from the people (the Azazel). In Hebrews, the writer explains that there is no longer a need for the people to continue this feast in the same way year after year because Jesus provided a sacrifice once that is sufficient for all time. Just as the sacrifice of the goat on the Day of Atonement only had value to those that afflicted their souls (repentance), so also Jesus’ sacrifice will not save the Jewish people until they mourn. The true Yom Kippur will occur in “*that day*.”

QUESTIONS

1. Read Romans 11:11 and describe how the events of Zechariah 12 fit in with the New Testament revelation of God’s grace to the Gentiles?
 2. What does this chapter teach us about a genuine salvation experience?
 3. From New Testament revelation (see specifically Revelation 11:3-13, 14:1-6), by what means are the Jewish people saved during the day of the Lord or Tribulation? Is that consistent/inconsistent with Zechariah 12?
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