



ZECHARIAH, Being the People of God

Holiness unto the Lord

Lesson 14 Zechariah 14:1-21

INTRODUCTION

Chapters 9 through 11 comprised a single “burden” Zechariah received from God, and chapters 12 through 14 comprise the final “burden” Zechariah received and was inspired to write. To summarize what Zechariah has said leading up to the present chapter, in chapter 9 Zechariah prophesied the coming of the King-Messiah who would fight for and free His people. Chapter 10 presented the conditions during the reign, what we would call the Millennial reign in view of New Testament revelation, of the King-Messiah. Chapter 11 presented the Messiah as God’s Good Shepherd, whom the people would reject and value at 30 pieces of silver, and thus be relegated to a bad shepherd who would devour them. Whereas the rejection of Messiah in Chapter 11 looks to the first advent of Jesus, chapter 12 looks to His second advent and a time of national revival for Israel. Chapter 13 looks to the time of the Second Advent and the revival that is associated with Messiah’s return and explains the spiritual cleansing that will be poured out on the Jewish nation. And finally, in this final chapter of the book, very specific details are given of Messiah’s return, His victory over Israel’s enemies, and the holiness that will characterize His kingdom. This chapter complements Revelation 19, providing many details of Christ’s return not mentioned there. The book of Zechariah culminates with the kingdom where Messiah rules and holiness characterizes the entire world.

14:1 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

For the first time in the book, the phrase “*the day of the Lord*” is used. Elsewhere, some twenty times, Zechariah simply refers to it as “*that day*,” a reference to a future time when Messiah pours out blessings upon His people and judges the enemies of Israel. This verse continues the thought of 13:7-9 with the future time when two-thirds of Israel perishes and the other one-third is refined. In that time, Israel shall be spoiled, an indication that they will be overrun by Gentile invaders. We know from other passages that Anti-Christ will have appeared on the world scene and climbed to worldwide domination. He will also have made peace with Israel by a seven-year treaty, and then breached that treaty in the middle of the seven years. Meanwhile, some nations will move against him in rebellion and will bring their forces to Jerusalem where Anti-Christ will be (perhaps where his government will be centered at the time) (see Daniel 7:15-28, 9:20-27, 11:21-45; Revelation 6:1-2, 13:1-10, 16:12-16, 19:11-21).

14:2 For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

This gathering of the nations against Jerusalem is often what is referred to as the Battle of Armageddon. These nations believe they have come against Anti-Christ but, in fact, God has drawn them to one place to judge them. Passages like Revelation 16:12-16 and Joel 3 detail this gathering of the nations. The Holy City will be taken, the houses sacked for plunder, and the women raped. These are typical descriptions of warfare, both in the ancient world and now. There seems to be no atrocities that mankind is incapable of doing. The terrible deeds that will be done at this time are the reason that Jesus warned the Jewish people to flee the city without even taking time to gather their belongings after the abomination of desolation takes place (some sort of defiling of the Temple by Anti-Christ) (Matthew 24:15-22). The phrase “*go forth into captivity*” should be “*go forth into exile*.” The point is that about half the city will make its escape, but the other half will not. God’s hand in their escape is outlined in Revelation 12:12-17.

14:3 Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

The Lord Himself personally intervenes to fight against the invading armies. This, of course, speaks of Jesus' Second Advent or second triumphal entry. The first triumphal entry at Mt. Olivet was at the beginning of the Passion Week. As predicted in Zechariah 9, Jesus entered the city on a donkey, humble and having salvation. His victory was over sin and death. The second triumphal entry will also involve Mt. Olivet, and this time the victory will be over the nations that oppose God and His people, just as predicted in Zechariah 9:10. This victory is also detailed in Revelation 19:11-21. It is, in fact, Jesus the King of Kings and Lord of Lords who intervenes for His people "as when he fought in the day of battle." Probably the better translation, which makes sense of the context here, is "as when he fights in the day of battle." This is not a reference to some prior battle, but an emphasis on the Lord's personal participation in the battle to come. His return will come on the heels of the great national revival that is recorded in Zechariah 12.

14:4 And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

In Acts 1:11, the angels announced that Christ would return to Mt. Olivet in the same manner in which He left it. This passage records that event. Jesus will stand on Mt. Olivet and split the mountain so as to create a great valley. I believe this is the valley of Jehoshaphat (means "God judges") referenced in Joel 3:2, 12.

14:5 And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.

The newly created valley will allow for the escape of God's people. They shall flee as they did during the time of the earthquake in the days of King Uzziah, who reigned from 792-740 B.C. some two centuries earlier. At this time, God Himself will come to their aid with the "saints" (holy ones), probably a reference to both angels and resurrected people (1 Thessalonians 1:7, 3:13; Revelation 19:14). The city of Azal is an unknown location.

14:6 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: 7 But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.

There will be no light, and the moon and stars will not appear, just as Jesus warned in Matthew 24:29. This future day as presented here is consistent with other prophecies about the darkness, which may be the result of earthquakes and volcanic activity (Joel 2:30-31; Revelation 6:12, 8:12). This will be "one day" known only to the Lord, a unique day. While God knows precisely when these events will occur, it is not given unto men to know the precise time. Then with Messiah's return, light will be restored at the evening time.

14:8 And it shall be in that day, *that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.*

With Messiah's return, living waters shall flow from Jerusalem. In chapter 13, the Lord opened a spiritual fountain to His people, and now a physical one is opened. Essentially, two rivers are formed, one flowing toward the Mediterranean Sea and one toward the Dead Sea. We find further confirmation of this in Ezekiel 47:1-12. The result will be that the Dead Sea becomes living. The phrase "*in summer and in winter shall it be*" indicates the river flows year round. It is not sourced in melting snow from mountain tops, but from the Lord himself. This water source will, together with other changes to the topography, will result in a renewed, fertile land that flows with milk and honey.

14:9 And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

Jesus will be, as Revelation 19:16 states, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He will not simply be king of Jerusalem or Israel, but the world. He will become king by routing His enemies, which are all of the other kings in the world. This verse is reminiscent of the Shemah, Deuteronomy 6:4: "*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.*" In Mark 12:29, we read in response to the question about the greatest commandment: "*And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord.*" Recall that in chapter 13, which described the reign of Messiah that occurs at the time described in this verse, the land was cleansed of idolatry. Instead of people following after many gods, there is just one Lord. This fulfills Jesus' prayer in Matthew 6:9-10: "*...Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*"

14:10 All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and *from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses.*

Geba was six miles north of Jerusalem and Rimmon thirty-five miles southwest of Jerusalem. The entire topography of the area will be changed so that the area around Jerusalem becomes a plain, but Jerusalem itself will be elevated, consistent with Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah 2:2 and Micah 4:1-5. The landmarks mentioned are probably to emphasize Jerusalem's specific inclusion within this blessing. The first gate, Benjamin's gate, and the Tower of Hananeel, were probably all in the northeastern quadrant of the city. The corner gate was on Jerusalem's west wall close to the corner formed with the north wall. The king's winepresses were on the southern side of the city.

14:11 And *men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.*

People will dwell safe and secure in the city under Messiah's rule.

14:12 And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; *Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.*

In the Battle of Armageddon, Jesus will destroy His enemies with the sword that proceeded out of His mouth. (Revelation 19:21). The idea seems to be that Jesus, in His sovereignty and power, simply speaks their deaths and it happens. This verse explains precisely how it happens, namely that while the soldiers are standing, their flesh will rot away so quickly that it will be gone before their bodies hit the ground.

14:13 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour.

In the panic among the enemy troops, they will be confused and turn against one another. This is reminiscent of the battle fought by Gideon's army in Judges 7:22. This also fulfills Haggai 2:22: "*And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.*"

14:14 And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance.

This passage parallels Haggai 2:7: "*And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.*" Judah obtains a complete reversal of fortune. Instead of being the one plundered and defeated, it is the victor that gets the spoils of the Gentile nations. This reminds us of Israel spoiling Egypt during the time of the Exodus. Those who have come against God's people will pay with their lives and their material wealth.

14:15 And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague.

The plague will disable even the enemies' animals.

14:16 And it shall come to pass, *that* every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

Jesus will destroy His enemies, but there will be Gentile survivors. These will be the ones that have accepted Jesus as their Savior. In the kingdom under Jesus' rule, these Gentiles will take annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem to keep the feast of tabernacles. This seven day feast begins on the fifteenth day of Tishri with a day of holy convocation treated as a Sabbath day. Special offerings are required each day, and it is fundamentally celebrated by the people building and dwelling in booths or tabernacles to commemorate the forty years of wilderness wanderings with God's manifested presence from the Tabernacle. This was a time of rejoicing that followed the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), and it captured the idea of the people of God dwelling in God's presence with Him providing for them (Leviticus 23:33-36, 39-43; Exodus 23:14-17; Numbers 29:12-38; Deuteronomy 16:13-16, 31:9-13). What we have at this future time is a complete fulfillment of this Old Testament feast.

14:17 And it shall be, *that* whoso will not come up of *all* the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. **18** And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, *that have* no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. **19** This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

There will be no exceptions. Every Gentile nation will honor and worship the King of Kings, the Lord Jesus Christ, including the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Revelation 21:24 states: "*And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.*" If they refuse, they will meet with immediate temporal judgment. While it is difficult to imagine such a refusal, we know that near the end of the millennial period, Satan will be loosed and will deceive many and raise a rebellion against Jesus, which will be met with swift judgment (Revelation 20:7-10).

14:20 In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. **21** Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and see the therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

Simply put, Messiah's kingdom will be characterized by holiness. Even the bells of the horses shall read "*HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD.*" The pots for cooking the sacrifices will be holy just like the most special ones before the altar. Indeed, every vessel (or pot) in the land will be holy in that day. The word "*Canaanite*" is used for an unclean person. Every vessel and every person will be clean. The vision ends with God's people finally in a state of security and holiness in their land, a light to the Gentiles. This fulfilled God's promises to Abraham and David. It should be noted that the passage gives no indication of an end to this kingdom. As Daniel wrote: "*I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*" (Daniel 7:13-14). Being the people of God necessarily includes a life lived in view not only of the present, but the future glory of Jesus' reign on earth.