

Truth for Today

The Bible teaching radio programme

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A look at Zechariah: Zechariah 14:1-21 - "His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives"

This is the last talk of our series on the Book of the Prophet Zechariah. In Zechariah 14, we come to the grand climax. Most of the chapters have considered confrontations between God's earthly people Israel, and the enemies of God amongst the Gentile nations. Only the personal intervention of Jehovah, the God of Israel, in the Person of Messiah can bring about their deliverance.

The Nation of Israel, because of their individual and national idolatry and rebellion against God, had forfeited their place at the head of the Nations, and have, since then, been dominated by one Gentile Nation after another. The Lord Jesus referred to this period as "*The Times of the Gentiles*" (Luke 21:24).

After The Rapture, when Jesus comes again, to fulfil His promise of John 14:3, there will commence a period of approximately and at least seven years, during the second half of which a time of unprecedented trouble and tribulation will be suffered by the Jews, particularly the small, truly godly element amongst them. Towards the end of that "*Time of Jacob's Trouble*" (Jeremiah 30:7) things will be at their blackest for the Jews. They will be buffeted from every direction. There will be few (but some) who are inclined to help them (Matthew 25:31-40).

The emphasis is on Jerusalem, as such, the centre of God's thoughts for the earth. The enemies of Israel, the Gentile nations, are seen to be surrounding the city. They will hem them in on three sides; to the south, to the east and to the north, ready to pounce. The Great Sea, the Mediterranean Sea as we know it, will be the fourth side on the west. There will be no possible avenue for escape.

Against this background, it is significant, that Zechariah 14:1 begins, "*Behold, the Day of the LORD cometh*". The term "*The Day of the LORD*" asserts the rights of God. It is a day of judgment, the administration of justice, righteousness, dealing with enemies. It bears the stamp of His personal authority. It will commence with the Lord's personal appearing in power and great glory. From that moment, strict justice will be applied, as necessary, in every circumstance, throughout the world to come, the thousand year reign of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Coming events cast their shadows before them; a good statement. How often in the past had God delivered His people when they could not extricate themselves. In their dire extremity, they had heard the voice of the prophet, the servant of the Lord, saying: "*Be not afraid ... the battle is not yours, but God's. ... Ye shall not need to fight in this battle; stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you*" (2 Chronicles 20:15-17). Here, in Zechariah 14:3, the message is, "*Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.*"

What were these nations doing? They thought they were exercising their own will. In reality, they were being used by God to accomplish His will against His own nation. Circumstantially, they were indeed doing their own will, gathered around Jerusalem, ready to swamp it. While they didn't realise it, it was truly the will of God they were accomplishing. More than once, God had used these Gentile nations as His disciplinary tools against His disobedient nation. They will now find that God comes against them and judges them, fighting against them in the day of battle.

Let us turn to Acts 4:26 and 28, which put into perspective much of what we read in the Book of the Prophet Zechariah. "*The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ ... to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.*"

Now that had been accomplished, the same God was going to judge them according to their own responsibility to Him for doing it. Psalm 76:10 tells us, "*Surely the wrath of man shall praise [God]: the remainder ... [He] shall restrain.*" He uses them to accomplish His own will, but He only allows them to go so far. He puts forth His restraining hand, and allows them to go no further. So here we have it. God had disciplined His people, and now He is about to discipline the tools He has used to do so.

How will Jesus both rescue His own people and destroy His and their enemies? Both will be achieved at The Appearing. Read the detail in Matthew 24:27-31 and Revelation 19:11-16. Here, Zechariah 14:4 states: "*His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east.*" Isaiah 52:7 says

prophetically of His days of public ministry, *"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace ... that publisheth salvation."* How often He must have stood on the mount of Olives, coming out of Jerusalem on the eastern side, going down into the vale of Kidron, then up the mount of Olives, then descending on the other side to His beloved Bethany, where He was rightly appreciated. Then, think of the prophetic words of Psalm 22:16, true uniquely of Him, *"they pierced my hands and my feet."* Those feet that had published good tidings! Those feet that had gone about doing good! (Acts 10:38). Those feet that had subsequently in resurrection stood on the summit of the mount of Olives, from which He had ascended out of the disciples sight! The next reference to those blessed feet is that actually, physically, geographically, personally, when He comes again, His feet shall touch and stand in that day on the mount of Olives and He shall manifest Himself in glory. How right it is that the place which was frequently His recourse; and the place from which He had then ascended, is the very spot to which He shall return.

What will take place then? Zechariah 14:4 goes on to tell us, *"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."* This is and will be a miracle. It will actually happen, physically. We might well draw moral, figurative lessons from these things, but it will indeed actually, literally happen.

A wonderful deliverance will thus be provided. Here in Zechariah 14:5 the people of God are told to *"flee to the valley of the mountains."* How are they going to know when to do it? When they see certain signs! We do know from Zechariah 14:2 that, during the battle, the city will be entered, terrible havoc will be wrought, the city taken, houses rifled, women ravished, half of the people taken into captivity. But a way of escape will be provided. The mount will be split in two. There will be a deep rift formed, east to west. The mountains will be folded back to the north and to the south. This will be the avenue of escape. Things will then be made real to them that they won't appreciate beforehand. We learn here the avenue of escape, and the identity of the Deliverer; the long-promised Messiah. We know His Name is Jesus.

Again, coming events cast their shadow before them. There was an earthquake in the days of King Uzziah. The link given in Zechariah 14:5 to Amos 1:1 is clear: *"ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, King of Judah"*

At the climax of the first advent of the Messiah, His personal resurrection, there was an earthquake (Matthew 28:2). Creation itself bore witness to the tremendous power of Messiah in resurrection, the energy that was released at His resurrection. This cataclysmic rift outlined in Zechariah 14:4 will again be brought about by the direct intervention of God. History will be seen to repeat itself at the climax of the second advent:

First, these persecuted earthly saints will be delivered and preserved through this terrible refining process.

Then, we get a pause, and another statement: *"The LORD my God shall come"*, Zechariah 14:5. Jehovah will manifest himself as the Messiah of Israel, Jesus as we know Him.

Then, thirdly, *"all the saints with Thee."* As Jude records in Jude 14 *"The Lord cometh, with ten thousands of His saints."* Also, in Colossians 3:4, *"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."*

What a lovely contrast. Earthly saints delivered. Heavenly saints manifested at the same event. Wonderful thing, that the Messiah, in delivering His earthly people, is seen to have His heavenly consort, His bride, with Him when He comes again.

After the battle is won, all the instruments of warfare will be destroyed. Each and all involved will be given their due reward; true justice, whether honour or condemnation. The wealth of all the heathen will be gathered together in great abundance, and distributed fairly and righteously. As Isaiah 32:1 says, *"A king shall reign in righteousness."* Indeed He will! Jesus Christ our Lord!

From Zechariah 14:6 onwards, we are given a catalogue of Millennial conditions. Predominately, *"in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one"*, Zechariah 14:9 No rivals, no competitors, no idols, no lesser gods. As 1 Timothy 2:5 says, *"there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."* There will be none to compete. We know that now. But there will arise those who try to compete, who attempt to usurp that which is due to God. In the Millennium there will be no difficulty, no delusion. No rivals will be permitted. There will be one Lord.

In Zechariah 14:12-15 another element comes in. In the Millennium, the kingdom proper, wherever and whenever sin rears its ugly head it will be instantly, summarily dealt with. *"The soul that sinneth it shall die"* we read in

Ezekiel 18:20. That is not primarily a gospel challenge. It is a statement of conditions in the world to come. If sin occurs it will be instantly dealt with.

The Millennium is not the time of the longsuffering of God. It is the time for justice. How many of us at the present time need to be grateful that we are not now in a day of righteousness, a day of justice. We are in the day of the longsuffering of God, that we might be saved.

The mercy of God is still available. But, Zechariah 10:4 told us, and Zechariah 14:9 reminds us, that one of the characters of the Messiah is that He will be the Exactor, the sole dictator, like Nebuchadnezzar, that head of gold in Daniel 2:38, of whom we read in Daniel 5:19: "*whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down.*" The Lord Jesus Christ, King of kings, Lord of lords will be in sole, total sway. Those who disobey or attempt to confront Him or oppose Him will receive strict, absolute justice. The Lord will put down His enemies, maintain order, rule righteously. The Millennium will bear the stamp of complete and utter justice.

In Zechariah 14:16, we come to another happy thing. The nation of Israel, properly reconstituted, expiated by blood, purified by water, set in the promised land, will be in the full bounty and blessing of God. But, there will also be a residue, scattered throughout the earth, of those amongst the Gentile nations who did not fall in this judicial execution that had transpired; probably this will include those who were kind and helpful to distressed Jews in their time of terrible persecution during the Great Tribulation. Every year, their representatives will come to Jerusalem, God's hub. They will pay the homage due to God. They will worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles. Psalm 66:3 tells us that there will, however, be those whose obedience will be feigned, put on, because they know the consequences if they decline. Their heart will not really be in it. They will pay homage, not because they want to, but because they've got to. Maybe that's the element that Satan rallies supporters from in that short season, referred to in Revelation 20:3, when the thousand years kingdom has expired, in the final rebellion against God. But here we have it. There will be those from each of the nations when the Feast of Tabernacles is not only celebrated, but actually fulfilled.

In the orderliness of scripture, Zechariah 12 comes before Zechariah 14. National repentance comes before national celebration. Leviticus 23 tells us that The Great Day of Atonement, when the nation of Israel has to afflict their souls, necessarily comes before the Feast of Tabernacles.

First, The Feast of Trumpets - the message goes out.

Then, The Great Day of Atonement - there are those who respond, who repent.

Finally, The Feast of Tabernacles, depicting God dwelling amongst them, He their God, they His people, and the ways of God will have been brought to their suited climax.

Zechariah 14:18-19 tell us that in the world to come, the Millennium, there will be an actual physical, material Temple in the city of Jerusalem. It is described in the later chapters of Ezekiel. God will not be thwarted. It is His desire to dwell amongst His people. Zechariah 14:16 says that there will be those who "*worship the King, the LORD of Hosts.*" Consistent with that, Zechariah 14:20 says, "*in that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD.*" And in Zechariah 14:21, "*... every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts...*"

In the kingdom, with one Lord, things shall be rightly regulated. Holiness will be the norm. Everything will be according to God. Complete purification and sanctification, not in a comparative sense relative to evil, the pollution and the uncleanness, but in the absolute sense. Holiness will be the norm because God is holy. Everything will be utterly, totally devoted to Him. No discordant sound. No distracting element at all. All the enemies will have been expelled, put out, put down for ever. God will settle down with His people and be their God, and they His people.

We know that all this is as a result of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. All these wonderful things about His power and His work are said here relative to Judah as a remnant and Israel as a nation. And He died to be my Saviour. As a Christian, I'm going to be with Him when He comes again. When God's ways come to finality, we Christians will be there as a result of grace, as with the nation of Israel. We won't deserve to be there; we never will. But we shall be there to see it in proper perspective because we will be there with Him who has brought it all about. He says so. Until then, let us be true to Him and spread the gospel of His grace to all who are willing to listen.

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