

# ZECHARIAH

## WRITER

In Ezra 5:1 and 6:14, Zechariah is mentioned with Haggai as a prophet to those who had returned to Palestine after the Babylonian captivity. There are 27 Zechariahs mentioned in the Bible. The Zechariah of this book was a priest of God and prophet to the returnees. Zechariah's name means "he whom the Lord remembers."

Zechariah was the son of Berechiah who was the son of Iddo (1:1). Ezra referred to him as the son of Iddo (Er 5:1; 6:14). Berechiah, Zechariah's father, died before Iddo, Zechariah's grandfather. And thus the account of Ezra focuses on Zechariah assuming the priestly heritage of his grandfather, rather than his father.

Iddo was a Levitical priest who returned from Babylonian captivity with the first returnees under the leadership of Zerubbabel (Ne 12:1,4,7). It may have been that Zechariah succeeded his grandfather in leadership of the Davidic priestly course (Ne 12:1-16). However, neither he nor Haggai took any leadership role among the returnees until after they had been in the land for eighteen years. Only then were they called by God to the ministry of prophecy. Zechariah was evidently a young man upon his initial arrival in the land with his family (2:4), and thus was used by God only when he was of age to fulfill the role of a prophet. Coming out of the captivity, he had hope for the people for the future.

## DATE

The prophecies of chapters 1–8 are dated in the text, and thus were delivered from 520 to 518 B.C. (1:1,7; 7:1). There is no dating of the contents of chapters 9–14. It may have been that Zechariah wrote these chapters many years after the initial eight chapters. From the content of the final chapters, it appears that they were written during the end of Zechariah's ministry in order to prepare the Jews for the international turmoil of which they would be victims until the coming of the Branch, the Messiah. The turmoil would come as nations struggled over possession of Palestine.

## BOOK

Almost all Bible students credit Zechariah for writing chapters 1–8. Because of the content of chapters 9–14, it is assumed that some other author, or authors, wrote these chapters. However, there is little textual evidence to support this view, and thus we would assume the position of the Jews that Zechariah wrote all the book. The last section of the book was simply written during the latter years of Zechariah's

ministry, and thus the content of the last section of the book was different, as well as the writing style.

Zechariah was gifted in writing in a poetical style. Much of the book was so written in Hebrew, and thus the book joins the literary works of Hebrew poetry. Zechariah was given the privilege of seeing many visions, and thus through poetry he revealed the will of God to the people whom God sought to stir up to complete the rebuilding of the temple (Er 5:1,2; 6:14). In chapters 9–14 he wanted to prepare the Jews for the struggles that they would endure during the interbiblical period. He also wanted to give them hope that the Messiah would bring peace among those who became a part of the kingdom reign of the Messiah.

There is a great deal of metaphorical symbolism in this book. As Daniel, Zechariah often conveyed his message through apocalyptic figures in order to reveal events in the history of the Jewish community until the termination of national Israel in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The Bible student should thus be cautious about attaching literal interpretations on much of the content of the book, especially the content of chapters 9–14. Literalizing the content of apocalyptic literature has led many Bible students to conclude some erroneous teachings from Zechariah. Since many metaphors are used by Zechariah to communicate his message, one should be cautious about literalizing the metaphors in order to speculate some end-of-time theology that was never revealed to Zechariah. It is best to approach this book by first understanding the message figuratively, unless a context demands a literal interpretation.

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### **Encouragement To Rebuild The Temple (1:1 – 8:23)**

**Outline:** (1) Call to repentance (1:1-6), (2) Visions of Zechariah (1:7 – 6:8), (3) Crowning of the King (6:9-15), (4) Questions concerning fasting (7:1 – 8:23)

#### **Chapter 1 CALL TO REPENTANCE**

**1:1-6 Darius:** The first eight chapters are dated in the second year of the Medo-Persian King Darius, or 520 B.C. This was two months after Haggai began his prophetic ministry in Palestine (Hg 1:1). **Angry with your fathers:** The

fathers of the returnees were very rebellious against the will of God. God reminded the audience of Zechariah that He was angry with the rebellion of their fathers, and subsequently He sent them away into captivity. **Return to Me:** Haggai prophesied that those to whom he prophesied had become indifferent to the rebuilding of the temple. Zechariah seems to indicate that there was more to the matter than simply neglect and indifference. It seems that they had become spiritually indifferent and lazy. **Do not be as your fathers:** Before the captivity, the fathers of those who returned lived in arrogant rebellion to the will of God

(7:7,12). They would not listen to the prophets who lived before the captivity. The prophets who lived before the captivity had written their message to the fathers who lived during the twilight years of Israel while they were still in the land. Those of the generation of Zechariah could read these prophets. But their reading of the prophets seemed to generate little interest in the work that they must do, that is, rebuild the temple. **Evil way ... evil deeds:** Their evil way and deeds were that they were doing nothing toward the restoration of the ceremonies of the law. The example of their fathers was a warning that they should not do the same. The fathers reaped the consequences of their rebellion. In the case of the returnees, they are exhorted to repent and return to the will of God.

### VISIONS OF ZECHARIAH

**1:7-11** It was a time when the people began to question whether Jerusalem would be glorified again. There was lethargy among the people concerning their responsibility to rebuild, but at the same time, they had difficulty in interpreting the time to go to work. The task of both Haggai and Zechariah was to move the people into action. In this vision, Zechariah was given a vision of a troop of horsemen in one of the glens near Jerusalem. These were the scouts of God who had been patrolling the earth. They brought back the report that the world was at peace. The message of the vision was that it was time for prosperity to be restored to Jerusalem and Judah. **Red ... Speckled and white:** We are not told

what significance there may have been in the color of the horses. The primary message was that the horsemen reported on every part of the earth. What was reported by the angels was that the world was at peace, while Jerusalem and Judah were still in misery.

**1:12-17** *These seventy years:* The seventy years of captivity that was revealed through Jeremiah were coming to a close (See Jr 25:11,12; Hg 1:2). The mercy of God was to return to Jerusalem and the temple would be rebuilt within the city. God here speaks to the angel, who in turn delivers the message that it was time for Him to act, and thus time for the people to go to work in rebuilding. **Zealous for Jerusalem:** When God is zealous for His people, they prosper (See Is 42:13; 59:17; Ez 36:5,6; 38:19). He was thus stirred for His people. **Increased the calamity:** The unbelieving nations whom God used to punish Jerusalem had done more than they should have in bringing an end to national Israel and destroying the city (See Is 10:5,6; Hk 1:5,6). They went too far in the sense of trying to terminate the existence of Jews from history. But now it was time for a message that would reassure the people concerning their mission to rebuild what the unbelieving nations had destroyed. The Israel of God was to be identified again as a people who were in a covenant relationship with God. **My house will be built:** As the tabernacle, the temple was an indication of the presence of God among His people with whom He had established a covenant. Its rebuilding was a sign that God was again with His

people in the land from which He had driven them. Once the people set their hands to rebuilding the temple, it was completed four years later in the sixth year of Darius (Er 6:15). **A Measuring line:** This was a figure representing the rebuilding of the city, which it was seventy years later by Nehemiah (Ne 6:15). **My cities:** God's promise to be with them in rebuilding extended beyond the rebuilding of Jerusalem. His promise was to be with them throughout their rebuilding of the cities of the land. The fulfillment of this prophecy took place throughout several years of rebuilding, specifically during the era of the Hasmonean rulers of Israel. **Will again comfort:** This is the first indication in Zechariah concerning the Messianic era that was to come. All that is stated in this first vision was to reassure the returnees that the temple and city must be rebuilt in preparation for the coming Messianic age.

**1:18-21 Four horns:** The horns were symbols of that which brings destruction. The horns were symbols of four empires that had already inflicted great harm on the people of God. Though it is difficult to determine who the four horns represent, they would at least figuratively refer to all unbelieving nations that formerly afflicted Israel. The nations of Egypt, Syria, Assyria and Babylon had gone beyond measure in inflicting harm on Israel. Jerusalem and the temple were eventually destroyed by those who afflicted the Israelites. The afflicting nations made every attempt to terminate the existence of the Jewish race from history.

**Four craftsmen:** The people who had afflicted God's people would be terrified by the craftsmen. The horns inflicted ruin on the people and Jerusalem. However, the craftsmen would inflict panic in the hearts of Israel's enemies. They would do so by rebuilding of the temple and city, and the identification of Israel as a race of people with whom God had a special covenant relationship. The rebuilding of the temple and city would signify to the unbelieving world that God had fulfilled the prophecies concerning the reestablishment of His people in the land. While all those who had inflicted harm on Israel were gone as nations, Israel was being reestablished as a nation at the time of Zechariah's ministry.

## Chapter 2

**2:1-5** This second vision adds to the significance of the first. The first vision was a promise that the city would be rebuilt. This vision is of a young man who goes forth to measure the limits to which the city will be built. In this vision, the one with the measuring line was thinking of measuring Jerusalem according to its former state of existence. He was mistaken, for the past Jerusalem would not determine the limits of the new. Thus an angel was set forth in order to tell the one with the measuring line that the new Jerusalem would have no boundaries. It would be an unwalled city with God as its protector. **Without walls:** Walls were built around cities by men in order to protect themselves from attacking armies. But in the reconstructed new Jerusalem, God would be the wall of His people.

They would not need to fear any nation that would attempt to destroy them. The vision goes beyond the physical Jerusalem that was rebuilt by the returnees. Zechariah carried their minds into the future, to the new Jerusalem of the Messianic age (See G1 4:26). Reference was to the house of God, the church, that would be populated with people from all nations of the world (Rv 7:9). This spiritual Jerusalem would never be destroyed by the nations as the physical Jerusalem was by the Babylonians (See Dn 2:44; 7:13,14).

**2:6-9** At the conclusion of the vision, there are two appeals. The first was to the exiles who were still in Babylon (vss 6-9), and the second was to the exiles who inhabited Jerusalem and Judah (vss 10-13). ***Come forth:*** There were still a great number of Jews living in the land of their former captors. This is an appeal to them to come out of the land of the north, the land of their captors. It is an appeal that they too return to the land in order to identify again the Israel of God. ***I have spread you:*** When the Jews were taken into the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, they were scattered from Ethiopia to India (See Et 1:1; 3:8,12-14; 8:5,9). God thus called for these captives to return in order to reside under His protection in the land of Palestine. The reason for God's plea that they return was to make sure that a remnant of all twelve tribes of Israel take up residence in Palestine in order to identify again the Israel of God. In order that the prophecies to the fathers be fulfilled concerning the Blessing, a remnant of all

twelve tribes of Israel had to be reestablished in the land (See comments Gn 12:1-3).

**2:10-13** The second appeal was to Zion. God would come in order to dwell among His people. The presence of the temple was God's symbol to the nations that He was dwelling among His people. However, the statements in this context took the Jews' minds to something that was greater than the temple. Reference was to the church of God's people in which He dwells through the Spirit. ***Many nations will be joined to the Lord:*** The context goes beyond the restoration of physical Israel. Reference was to the Messianic age, to the church unto which all nations would be invited (See comments Rm 9:22-26; Ep 2:11-22; 1 Pt 2:9,10). ***The Lord ... will choose Jerusalem again:*** There was a literal choosing again of physical Jerusalem. The choosing of literal Jerusalem indicated to the nations that God had again selected and returned His heritage from among the nations. However, the words of Zechariah take us beyond a reference to the repentant remnant of the Jews who returned to Palestine. Zechariah looked to the time when God would choose out of this world those of all nations who would compose the new Jerusalem, the church of our Lord. They would be chosen out of the world through their obedience to the gospel (See comments 1 Th 2:13; 2 Th 2:14). The new Jerusalem would be composed of the called who would eventually be called out of this world for eternal dwelling (See comments Ep 1).

### Chapter 3

**3:1-5** In order for the former visions to be fulfilled, God's people in Judah had to be cleansed. God had promised that He would dwell with His people. But before this could happen, the people had to be cleansed. Since the priests had formerly allowed the apostasy of the Israelite nation to take place (Ez 22:26), then the cleansing of the nation started with the cleansing of Joshua, the high priest. In this scene of the visions, Joshua is the representative for the people. **Satan:** Satan is the accuser of all men (Jb 1:6-12; 2:1-6; Rv 12:10). He is such because all men are sinners (Rm 3:9,10,23). **Plucked out of the fire:** God's people had been plucked out of captivity and returned to the land. God would not allow Satan to accuse them any longer (See Rm 8:33). Since God had plucked His people out of the nations to which they had been scattered because of captivity, He would not allow them to go back into captivity. **Filthy garments:** Joshua's clothes illustrated the guilt of their sin (See Is 4:4; 64:6). By God's grace, however, he was given new and luxurious garments to wear. His people would be adorned as a bride before the bridegroom. **Turban:** See Ex 28:36-38.

**3:6-10** The ministry of Joshua as the high priest stood for more than his representation of the people before God, and through whom God would minister to the people. He and his companions, the priests, were prophetic of the Branch that was to come. Joshua and the priests, therefore, were a wondrous sign of that which was to come. They thus must be

obedient to the commandments of God (Dt 8:6; 10:12; Ps 128:1). They must maintain their work as priests for the people until the coming of the Branch. They must manifest a spirit of obedience. **Right of access:** If Joshua and his fellow priests maintained their function, they would have the right to stand with those who stood before God. **My Servant:** Isaiah often referred to the Messiah as the Servant of God (Is 42:1; 49:6; 52:13; 53:11). The Messiah to come would be the humble and obedient servant to the spiritual needs of humanity (At 3:13,26; 4:27,30; 8:30-35; 1 Pt 2:21-25). **The Branch:** See comments 6:12,13. Without the article, the literal translation of the Hebrew word would be "shoot" or "sprout." The Branch would sprout forth from Israel. He would become the cornerstone in the future upon which God would build His people (See comments Mt 16:18,19; 1 Pt 2:4,5). The Branch would offer Himself and cleanse iniquity from the people. He would stand before God as the advocate of the people (1 Jn 2:1). **Stone:** The foundation stone had been laid for the rebuilding of the temple. Prophetically, the foundation stone was representative of God's building of His spiritual temple, the church, that would be built by the Messiah (See comments Mt 16:18,19; compare Is 28:16). **Seven eyes:** Reference is to the complete awareness of God throughout the world in order to providentially care for His people and carry out His eternal purpose through His people. **Engrave:** God would do all that was necessary in order to beautify His work for a place of

honor. **Remove the iniquity:** The immediate reference would be to the day of atonement that would be conducted once a year when the temple was completed (See Lv 16:21,30,34). However, in this context, reference goes beyond the day of atonement, to the complete atonement made by the Christ to come (Hb 9:26). Once the offering of the Eternal Lamb of God was made, the day of atonement would no longer exist among the people of God. **In that day ... invite ... his neighbor:** The Messianic age would be the time when the mission of the Jews would change. They would go forth to invite others to the blessings of the Branch (See comments Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15,16; compare comments Is 3:1-3).

#### Chapter 4

**4:1-7** This vision manifested the significance of Zerubbabel as the civil leader of the people. **Awakened me:** Zechariah had evidently fallen into a deep meditation concerning the meaning of the previous visions (See comments 1 Pt 1:10-12). **Lampstand:** See Ex 37:17-24. This was representative of the restored Jewish community. **Seven lamps:** The lamps, or lights, of the lampstand were the eyes of the omnipresent God who was aware of His people and their welfare. **Two olive trees:** These two olive trees continually supplied oil to the lampstand in order that the seven lights continue to burn. These two olive trees represented Zerubbabel, the civil leader, and Joshua, the religious leader. These two represented the offices of civil and religious leadership among the people.

Zerubbabel and Joshua were God's representatives among the Jews in order that their offices continue until the coming of the Branch. **Word ... to Zerubbabel:** This message to a civil leader should be remembered by those who would lead. Zerubbabel must remember that his leadership should not be by the power of his abilities and position. His leadership must be based in what the Spirit of God supplies. Successful leadership of God's people is based on the power of a Spirit-filled man who has submitted himself to the will of God (See comments At 6:1-5). **O great mountain:** All the fears and opposition that had come upon the people in rebuilding the temple and city would be overcome by the power of the Spirit working through the spiritual leadership of Zerubbabel. (Concerning the opposition the Jews faced when they returned to the land, see comments Er and Ne). **Bring forth the capstone:** When they finished the task of building the temple by laying the capstone, then they would realize that it was God who empowered them to complete the work. God's work in our lives is often not recognized until after we have struggled through trials. **Grace:** Through the grace of God, they were able to complete the task. Therefore, they would give credit to God for the work. They would recognize that they could not have accomplished the task of rebuilding both the temple and the walls of the city of Jerusalem without the help of God.

**4:8-10** **You will know:** When the work was completed, they would then realize that God had spoken through Ze-

chariah. **Who has despised:** All those who doubted in the beginning of the construction would rejoice when the temple was completed. Their faith in God's work through them would grow as a result of their completion of the temple. As we look back on the things that God has done for us, we have confidence to continue with those things in which we are presently involved. We are assured that God is working in our lives even as we labor every day. God works through His people in order to bring about the desired end that will bring glory to His name (Ph 1:6).

**4:11-14 Two anointed ones:** This would be Joshua who was representative of the high priests (3:1,3,9) and Zerubbabel, who would be representative of the civil rulers (4:7,10).

## Chapter 5

**5:1-4** The two visions of this chapter are in reference to the purging of sin from the community of God. The flying scroll pictures the judgment of God upon individuals who steal and swear falsely (perjurers) by the name of God. The woman in the basket pictures the purging of the culture of wickedness from the community. **Flying scroll:** The scroll originated from God, and thus judgment was coming forth from God upon the thieves and liars. **Cubits:** The measurement of the scroll may have symbolized the many curses that were written on it. However, since the measurements here correspond to the size of the holy place in the tabernacle, the symbolism may be that men cannot measure the extent and

results of their own sin. The measure of men's sins must be according to the measurements of God (Compare 1 Sm 2:3; see comments Rm 7:7-12). **The whole land:** Since the Jews were given the oracles of God (Rm 3:2), then they would be judged by the Old Testament law (Compare Rm 2:12-15). **Will be cut off:** The land will be cleansed of every thief and perjurer. The message of the vision was that no house should be overlooked in the purging of thieves and liars from the land. The judgment would remain on the house in which it entered until there was repentance, and thus cleansing.

**5:5-11 Woman in a basket:** The term "ephah" was used in older translations for basket, but the meaning is in reference to the container, not the weight. **Woman who sits inside the basket:** In the vision, the symbol of a woman in the basket represented the wickedness of the land. She is wickedness personified. She is contained in the basket, and then figuratively transported to Babylon (Shinar) by the symbol of two other women. **Two women:** It was the work of the women to use baskets in their daily living. Thus the angel uses women as the symbolic characters that would carry out the actions of the vision. Reference here is not to angels. It was the angel who was telling the vision to Zechariah. The symbolism was to women whose task it was to carry the basket of wickedness to Babylon. The woman in the basket is the personification of sin, and thus sin is taken out of the land. Sin was taken from the land of God's people to the land that was representative of sin and idolatry. In

the Messianic age of the church, sin would be banished from God's people through the cleansing blood of Jesus (See comments Rm 8:1-4; 1 Jn 1:9).

### Chapter 6

**6:1-8** This is the eighth and last vision. It is a vision of judgment that is poured out against Babylon. **Four chariots:** These great war chariots came with strength from between possibly Mount Zion and Mount Olives. The chariots were symbolic of divine judgment that was poured out on the world. **Red:** There is no certainty concerning the symbolic significance concerning the colors of the horses. **Four spirits:** These are four angels of God who are sent forth to the four corners of the earth (See Ps 104:4; Hb 1:7). **The north country:** The black horses were sent to the north country, the direction from which all invading armies formerly came into Palestine. Reference in this vision was to Babylon. The chariot with the white horses was sent with the chariot that was drawn by the black horses. **The south country:** The dappled gray horses were sent to Egypt. It is not mentioned as to where the red horses were sent. Some believe that the horses of verse 7 were the red horses that were sent throughout the earth. **Appeased My spirit:** The word "spirit" is here used to represent the wrath of God (See Pv 16:32). When God's judgment had come upon Babylon, then His wrath was appeased. Once Babylon had been punished for her calamity that she had brought on God's people, then justice had been served.

### CROWNING OF THE KING

**6:9-15** A delegation of Jews had recently come from Babylon. Zechariah was asked to receive the gift from this delegation. He was to use the gold and silver to fashion a crown that would be used in a coronation ceremony for the office of the high priest. The coronation would be for Joshua, whose function as a high priest would be indicative of the work of the Branch who would come. Joshua's coronation, and the placing of the crown on his head, would in effect make him both priest and king. Since the coronation of Joshua would empower him as such, then the coronation was prophetic of what was to transpire in verses 12 & 13. **The Man whose name is the Branch:** In verses 12 & 13 God revealed a very significant prophecy concerning the Messianic age that was yet to come in the history of Israel. In this prophecy Zechariah stated that the Messiah would be a priest while he ruled on His throne. The prophecy was of Jesus who would fulfill it in every detail. In Hebrews 4:14, the Hebrew writer stated that we now have a great high priest who has passed into the heavens (Hb 5:6; see 7:17,21-28). The New Testament clearly states that Jesus is now that priest. Therefore, the prophecy of Zechariah was fulfilled when Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father. In Hebrews 4:14, the verb "has passed" is a Greek perfect participle. It thus expresses action that was completed in the past, but with emphasis on the continued result of that past action. Therefore, Jesus became our high priest when He ascended to the right hand of

the Father in heaven. Hebrews 8:1 states that Jesus is now our high priest who is at the right hand of God in heaven. Jesus is still at the right hand of the Father. He is still there today functioning as our High Priest. Jesus continues with this “*unchangeable priesthood*” unto this day (See Hb 7:3,23,24). Zechariah’s prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus. When Jesus ascended to the Father, He became our high priest on His heavenly throne. He thus reigns as King and functions as a high priest on David’s throne in heaven. In the context of the present priesthood of Jesus on His throne in heaven, Hebrews 8:4 is a very significant statement. “*For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law.*” Jesus cannot be a priest on this earth. If He were to return to reside on the earth, He would have to give up His high priesthood. Zechariah prophesied that Jesus would be a high priest on His throne (Zc 6:13). The Hebrew writer stated that Jesus cannot be a priest on this earth. The correlation between the prophecy of Zechariah and its fulfillment is in the fact that Jesus cannot be a priest on earth, and thus reign on this earth as a king. Consider the prophecy of Zechariah 6:12,13 and Hebrews 8:4 from another perspective. Zechariah prophesied that the Branch (Jesus) would be a priest on His throne. The Hebrew writer stated that Jesus is now our high priest, which priesthood is from heaven (See Hb 4:14; 8:1). Therefore, the throne upon which Jesus is our high priest is in heaven. The ruling of Jesus upon His throne that was

prophesied by Zechariah, is now taking place, but it is taking place in heaven. It was never meant to take place on this earth. Thus in the future Jesus is not coming in order to become our high priest on this earth. Neither is He coming in order to be a king on this earth. He is coming to take home those He has redeemed (See comments 1 Th 4:13-18).

## Chapter 7 QUESTIONS CONCERNING FASTING

**7:1-3** This event transpired about two years after the visions. ***Chisleu:*** This was the Babylonian name for the period of time that corresponds to the time of our November/December. The occasion for these events was the arrival in Jerusalem of a representative group of the existing exiles who came to inquire of the Lord and to ask concerning the continuation of the fast in the fifth month. This fasting had taken place throughout the captivity. ***The prophets:*** Haggai and Zechariah. ***Weep ... abstain:*** Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed in 586 B.C. by the Babylonians. Before its destruction, the captives initiated a fast in the fifth month in reference to the peril that Jerusalem faced and eventually endured (2 Kg 25:8,9). Since the temple was now in the process of reconstruction, the question was naturally asked if they should terminate their fasts for its reconstruction.

**7:4-7** ***Seventh month:*** This was a fasting called for by the people because of the assassination of Gedaliah who had been appointed governor of Palestine by Nebuchadnezzar (See 2 Kg 25:25; Jr

41:1-10). The fasts of both the fifth and seventh months were fasts that were instituted by the people, not God. The fasts, therefore, were based on their own desires, for both represented fasts in reference to the loss of their city and their rulers. The fasts were not over the loss of their faithfulness to God. Their fast had nothing to do with repentance. **Former prophets:** Instead of fasting in repentance to take heed to the call of the prophets to repent, they were fasting over something that they had lost. **When Jerusalem was inhabited:** They should have been fasting while Jerusalem was still standing in order that they turn to God. They did not start the fasting until it was too late.

**7:8-14** In answer to those who had come to inquire concerning the time of fasting, Zechariah reminded them of the spiritual condition and attitudes of those who lived before the captivity. God reveals this message through Zechariah in order that they not fall after the same spirit of disobedience that was characteristic of their fathers. **Execute true justice:** God had demanded of those before the exile that they practice justice, mercy and compassion (Am 5:24; Hs 6:6). In verse 10 God reminded them of the wicked social oppression of widows, orphans and the poor (See Mc 3:1-3). **Turned a stubborn shoulder:** Because of their defiant attitude toward God, and their desire to maintain their luxurious life-style on the backs of the poor, they showed disrespect to God's prophets who condemned such wicked behavior. They turned their backs on those who preached

the truth concerning their wicked society (See At 7:51). They were hard headed because of their hard hearts. So because of their defiant spirit, God unleashed His judgments upon them as a whirlwind. He scattered them among the nations in order that they be disciplined. With the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, He made the land of Palestine desolate of Israelites.

## Chapter 8

**8:1-8** The material of this chapter is a continued answer to the delegation that came asking concerning the fasts (7:1-3). The people recognized that there were many Jews still living in the land of their captors. The local returnees were discouraged. There was local hostility toward them. Added to their discouragement was a drought in the land (Hg 1:11). This message here was one of hope. It was a message of hope both for the local returnees, as well as for those who were still in the lands of their former captors. **I was zealous:** God had not forgotten His people in captivity, though He had scattered them throughout the nations because of their apostasy. But because of His zealous commitment to His people, He worked in the affairs of the nations in order that they be restored to the land. **City of truth:** As the message of Zechariah went forth to those who were still in the lands of their captors, they needed to hear that God had returned with favor on Jerusalem. The message needed to go out that truth, not the lies of the past, had been restored to the society of God's people. **The mountain:** The people must

understand that God returned to the city to the point that He would bless those who returned. **Old men:** There would be no more captivity. People could return and grow old in the land. **Full of boys and girls:** Normal life was restored. The land was now a place where one could bring up a family and carry on with normal life. **Marvellous in the eyes of the remnant:** It may have been unbelievable that God would restore the land to a small remnant of discouraged Jews. But God could do such, for it was no great thing for God to work such sociological miracles among men. It was a small matter for God to work among the nations in order to bring about His eternal purpose in Israel. **I will save:** The remnant had to understand that the restoration of the people to the land was the work of God. He wanted them to come from the regions to which they had been taken captive in order to repopulate the land. God wanted Israel to be reestablished in order to fulfill the promises He had made to the fathers.

**8:9-13 Let your hands be strong:** The people needed to overcome their discouragement. They needed to understand that God was again working among them in order to accomplish His eternal purposes. Those who listened to the prophets concerning the rebuilding of the temple, and were now discouraged, needed to resume the work. They needed to cease fearing the opposition of the Samaritans in the land who had discouraged their work (Er 4:4). **As in the former days:** In the former days before the captivity, God disciplined the people through

famine and pestilence because of their rebellion. God brought calamity on the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel in order to stimulate repentance. But now that they had repented and returned to the land, God would bless all that they would do. As a people, He would prosper their labors in their fields. The rebuilding of the temple was a sign of their identity among the nations, and thus God wanted them to continue with the reconstruction efforts.

**8:14-17 As I thought to punish:** God punished their forefathers because they had digressed into a society of injustice and oppression among themselves. However, God promised that He would bless them for restoring justice and mercy. In this text He describes the fundamental social practices that must be restored and maintained. These are eternal ethics that must prevail through any society.

**8:18-23** This would be the climax of God's answer to the delegation that came asking questions concerning the continuation of the fasts (See 7:2,3). God's answer was that they needed to terminate their fasts that they had instituted over the former calamity of Israel. Their fasts needed to change to joyous feasts for all that God was doing among them. **Many people ... will come to seek the Lord:** The joyous social atmosphere should be so great among the returnees that it would attract people from all nations to come and be a part of such a joyous group of people. The joyous character of God's people should be so great that it attracts others to be a part of the

community of God (See comments Jn 13:34,35; 1 Pt 3:15). The joy of believers should motivate others to worship God (Compare 2 Co 4:15). As a rejoicing spirit encouraged those of Zechariah's generation to come and worship the Lord, so Christians should always rejoice in the Lord for the same reason (See comments Ph 4:4).

### **Prophetic History Of God's People (9:1 – 14:21)**

**Outline:** (1) The burden of Judah's enemies (9:1 – 11:17), (2) The burden of Judah (12:1 – 13:9), (3) The triumphal Jerusalem (14:1-21)

## **Chapter 9 THE BURDEN OF JUDAH'S ENEMIES**

Chapters 9-14 would be the natural final note of encouragement to the returnees. Throughout the former prophets who ministered before the captivity, God pronounced that great calamity would come upon those nations who aided in the calamities that befell God's people. God thus pronounced on them the judgment of annihilation as nations. All except Egypt, would cease to exist. In order to encourage Zechariah's generation, they needed to be reminded of the prophecies concerning the punishment of the nations about which the former prophets spoke, for Zechariah's generation was experiencing the fulfillment of the prophecies. They received great encouragement from the following prophecies that were stated many years before as they, in their lifetime, experienced the fulfillment of

those prophecies. The events that had taken place among the nations, and would transpire throughout the history of the restored Israel, would culminate in the coming of the Branch and the establishment of the kingdom reign of King Jesus when He ascended to the right hand of God (See comments Dn 2:44; 7:13,14). Once King Jesus was seated at the right hand of God in order to reign over all things, then God would bring physical Israel to a close with the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. The remainder of Zechariah's messages in the latter part of his life deal with revelations concerning the end of the Jewish age in Christ.

**9:1-8** These messages came to Zechariah in his latter years. The temple had been rebuilt and Jerusalem reconstructed. Now that the symbols of the identity of Israel were reestablished in the land, it was a time to remind the people that God had fulfilled His former prophecies concerning the demise of the nations around them. The Jews would again suffer amidst conflicts that would rage between the people of Tyre and Syria to the north, and Askelon, Gaza and Ekron to the south. But they would not suffer because of their sin. They must understand that God was still working in the international affairs of the nations, and thus they would eventually be victorious in the consummation of Israel in the coming of the Messiah (See comments Dn). They must endure as victims of the international turmoil that would exist among the nations until the coming of the Messiah. What the Jews of Zechariah's day did not understand, was

that the fulfillment of the promises to the Jewish people would lead to peace in the new Jerusalem. However, the peace would come as a result of the loss of those things they considered most precious concerning their identity as Jews. The land promised to Abraham would come to an end (Gn 12:1-3). The inhabitants of the new Jerusalem, the church, would no longer be concerned about possessions of land (See comments At 4:32-37). All prophecies concerning Israel being a great physical nation as the stars of heaven would have been fulfilled by the time the Messiah came. Thus the Jews would no longer need to maintain genealogies in order to maintain their family inheritances of the land. All physical aspects for maintaining the identity of God's people would vanish away as the new Jerusalem would be identified by one's personal and spiritual relationship with God. The identity of God's people through land possession, genealogy, temples and cities would all pass away in Christ (See comments Jn 4:21-24). **Damascus:** God was watching the movements of Syria. **Tyre:** Though Tyre would seek to enrich her coffers with gold and silver, God would strike her with destruction. This happened at the hands of Alexander the Great who destroyed the city after a seven-month siege against it. **Ashkelon ... Gaza ... Ekron:** These cities and region were south of Tyre and Sidon. They were on the route of Alexander the Great as he moved along the western coast of Palestine to Egypt. These cities were easily conquered by the Greeks as the Grecian Empire spread

south, and then to the east in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. From 336 to 323 B.C., Alexander the Great moved across the ancient world, conquering one nation after another. In his conquest of nations, he was unwittingly preparing the way for the propagation of the message of the Messiah, for Alexander spread the Greek language throughout the regions he conquered. Through the medium of the Greek language, the New Testament documents would be written and circulated throughout the ancient world. **Take away his blood:** In being converted to the faith of Israel, they would no longer ritualistically eat blood. **He will be for our God:** Those who would remain of the Philistines would become proselytes to the Jew's faith. **Ekron as a Jebusite:** This Philistine city would convert to the extent that it would be as Jerusalem (Jebus), a center of faith. The Jewish historian, Josephus, affirmed that this happened in history. **I will camp around My house:** While the surrounding cities and nations would be decimated through international conflicts during the interbiblical period, God reassured His people that they would be protected by Him. Though they would reside in the land that was occupied by foreign nations, they as a people would not be scattered throughout the world as they were during the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities.

#### **9:9-10 Your King is coming to you:**

In view of the pronounced fulfillment of this statement in Luke 19:37-40, there can be no question that this was a prophecy of the coming of King Jesus. All that transpired from the time of Zechariah and

throughout the interbiblical period, led up to the glorious Messianic age. ***Riding on a donkey:*** The Messiah would not come as a warrior king riding upon a horse for war, which was typical of physical kingdoms of this world. He would be riding humbly upon a donkey, the animal that was used in times of peace. He would ride on a beast of burden, bearing the sins of the world. ***I will cut off the chariot:*** He would be the Prince of Peace, for within His kingdom there would be no military warfare (Is 2:4). His kingdom of peace would include all Israel from Ephraim, the northern kingdom, to Jerusalem, representing the southern kingdom of Israel. Peace would extend from the Mediterranean Sea to the Dead Sea, from the Euphrates River into all the world (See comments Is 9:5-9).

**9:11-13 *Blood of the covenant:*** Israel had lived in captivity in previous years. If it were not for the blood of the covenant that would come through the Messiah, they would have been left to destruction. But she was delivered as prisoners, and thus returned to the stronghold of God's protection. ***Against your sons, O Greece:*** Throughout the interbiblical period the Jews would suffer from the expansion of the Greek Empire under the leadership of Alexander the Great. After his death, Alexander's four generals would take possession of his kingdom. The Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucidae to the north of Palestine would struggle against one another, with the Jews caught in the middle of the conflict (See intro. to Dn). As the prophet Daniel gave hope to the Jews who were

caught in the middle of these international affairs, Zechariah here reveals his encouraging hope for the people of God. The Messiah would come forth and consume the nations, including Greece (See comments Dn 2 & 7).

**9:14-17** Verse 13 introduces us to the content of verses 14-17. ***The Lord will be seen over them:*** Victory is promised, but the victory is of God. God used His people to accomplish the victory, for from the Jews would come the Messiah who would reign over all things (See comments Ep 1:20-23). At the time of Zechariah, the international turmoil that would affect the Jews in Palestine had already started. Sardis was burned by the Greeks in 499 B.C. The battle of Marathon occurred in 490 B.C. The victory of the Greeks over Xerxes of Persia at Salamis, Plataea and Mycale occurred in 480/479 B.C. The Greek Empire was in its early beginnings, and eventually would come to its climax as an empire under the kingship of Alexander the Great. When Alexander died, the conflict over Palestine would continue through the rivalry between the Ptolemies and the Seleucidae. Antiochus Epiphanes would rise among the Seleucidae, and inflict great suffering on the Jews. However, during the period of the Hasmoneans, the Maccabean leaders, especially, Judas, would rid Judah of the Seleucides and cleanse the altar in Jerusalem (See comments in intro. to Dn). ***God will save them:*** What is important to remember from the prophecy of Zechariah, is the fact that God was working in all these affairs in order to bring His people

to the coming of the Messiah. God would defend His people. The enemies of the Jews would be subdued.

### Chapter 10

**10:1-5** In view of the preceding survival of God's people throughout the tempestuous years of conflict, they are encouraged to ask of God who would bless them in the land. They are thus encouraged to ask of God for the rain that would give increase to their crops. **Idols ... vanity:** In their past history, their idol worship led them astray as they depended on themselves in requesting help from those idol gods that they had created after their own imagination. **Diviners have seen a lie:** Their lack of trust and knowledge of God led them to trust in those people who knew nothing about that which existed beyond the minds of men. They thus spoke lies to the people when they claimed to be speaking for some supernatural existence or being that they had only imagined. **Anger ... against the shepherds:** Not only were the people led astray because of their desire to follow after false prophets and diviners, but also because the rulers and kings led them astray (See comments Ez 34). **His majestic horse:** Judah was the victory horse of God through which He would be victorious. The Maccabean leaders came out of Judah in order to deliver the Jews from the oppression of Antiochus Epiphanes. But the statements of prophecy in this context probably have Messianic reference to the Branch of Judah who would come forth from Judah in order to reign

over all things (Gn 49:10; 1 Co 15:25; Ph 2:5-11; 1 Tm 6:15).

**10:6-12 I will bring them again:** At the time of Zechariah's ministry, Bible interpreters must keep in mind that there were still Jews who would return to the land of Palestine from their captivity. The first group of exiles returned in 536 B.C. There was another group that came back in 497 B.C. And finally, a third group returned in 444 B.C. The return of exiles, therefore, took place over a period of 142 years (See comments Er & Ne). Zechariah's statements in this context were to encourage the continued return of the exiles to the land in preparation for the Messiah to come. **I will whistle for them:** God would whistle for them as a shepherd whistles for his flock to come (See Is 7:18). **I have redeemed them:** God worked among the nations in order to raise up Cyrus of the Medo-Persian Empire, who allowed the first group of exiles to return in 536 B.C. There were other exiles to come. They would come back from the lands of captivity even after the death of Zechariah. We would assume, therefore, that these statements were made by Zechariah in order to encourage more of the exiles to return to the land of their possession. **Pass through the sea:** In their return, they would not be hindered, for they would pass through all obstacles as the nation of Israel passed through the Red Sea in their flight from Egyptian captivity (Is 11:15,16). The Euphrates River would not hinder their coming from former territories of the Assyrian Empire.

## Chapter 11

**11:1-3** We would assume that in the midst of great prophecies concerning the restoration of the Jews to the land of Palestine and the coming of the Messiah, that there would also be prophecies concerning the termination of God's use of the Israelite nation in order to bring the Messiah and Savior into the world. The termination of national Israel took place in Christ (See comments Gl 3:23-26). Once Israel was brought to Christ, then the Old Testament law and national Israel were taken away (See comments Gl 3:21-25). In Zechariah's time, God encouraged the rebuilding of the temple. But the temple also would come to an end when its use by God ended. The Messianic age was a glorious hope for Israel, but we would expect that God would forewarn His people concerning the end of the Old Testament covenant and law with Israel once it was fulfilled (See comments Jr 31:31-34; Mt 5:17,18). This chapter, therefore, is a prophecy that would be opposite the picture of hope that was given in chapter 10 with the glorious coming of the Messiah. The picture here is of tragedy. It is a picture of the tragedy of those who rejected the Messiah. While chapter 10 focused on the blessings of the coming Messiah, this chapter focuses on the tragic consequences of rejecting the Messiah when He came. There would be destruction again of the temple and Jerusalem. The blessing of the termination of Israel in Christ would to the national Jews be a tragedy. The symbols for these coming events are taken from the calamities that befell Israel in their

apostasy in the past. As with the destruction that came from the north through the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions and devastation of the land, so there would be a time when destruction would again come from the north. The occasion for destruction that is prophesied in this context would come upon those who would reject the Messiah. The prophecy is thus of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 by the Roman Empire (See comments Mt 24).

**11:4-6** *Their own shepherds:* The problem that prevailed during the period leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple before 586 B.C. would again prevail in Israel. The leaders of Israel would again lead the people astray (See comments Ez 34; Mk 7:1-9). Zechariah is here called on to be an allegorical reference to the Good Shepherd who was to come. The Good Shepherd would lead the people to God. However, there would come those shepherds who would lead the people astray after themselves (Compare Jr 23:1-8; Ez 34; 37:24-28). *Do not pity them:* The scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees of Jesus' time had little concern for the people. They were concerned only with their own prosperity and power (See comments Lk 16:18). The irony was in the fact that those who were to lead and deliver the people to the Good Shepherd were those who would eventually restrain the sheep from going to the Good Shepherd. *I will not deliver them:* God would not deliver the defiant out of the hands of the Romans. He had delivered the captives out of their Babylonian captivity, but He

would not deliver those who rejected the Messiah. He would give them over to doom because of their rejection of King Jesus, just as He had given Israel over to the Assyrians and Babylonians.

**11:7-9 Grace ... Unity:** The allegory continues with Zechariah being the obedient shepherd of the doomed flock. The staff named Grace symbolized the favor that God extended toward His people. The one named Unity symbolized the union between Judah and Israel, thus representing the whole house of Israel. **Cut off three shepherds:** The shepherds became as in the days when they led the flock astray before the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. **What is to die, let it die:** The labor and care of the shepherd was not appreciated. Therefore, the flock must reap the consequences of rejecting all that God had done for His people by sending them the Savior. The people of Israel were thus to be terminated as a special race of people in a covenant relationship with God. God turned national Israel over to itself, which subsequently led to the destruction of the nation in Palestine in A.D. 70.

**11:10-12 Break the covenant:** The covenant and law were fulfilled with the coming of the Messiah (Mt 5:17,18). What the Jews failed to understand was that their special covenant with God was only the means to an end. The end was Christ. Once Christ came, then the covenant was terminated (See comments Jr 31:31-34; Rm 7:1-4; Cl 2:14; Hb 8). Grace for the preservation of national Israel was terminated when grace for spiritual Israel was poured out through

Jesus Christ (Compare Ti 2:11). **The poor:** Those who were poor in spirit received the Messiah (See comments Mt 5:3-11). Those who were rebellious did not receive him (Jn 1:11). **Thirty pieces of silver:** As the shepherd, Zechariah asked for his wages for his work of shepherding the flock. The people determined to give him the price of an injured slave (See Ex 21:32).

**11:13,14** To this point in the text, Zechariah was the representative of the Lord. Now the Lord speaks directly. **Throw it to the potter:** Though Zechariah thought that the price of thirty pieces of silver was sufficient, the Lord said to discard the menial wage. The miserly amount measured their value of the Lord's shepherding of them as a flock. When considering all that God had done for Israel throughout their history, the thirty pieces of silver for His wages as their shepherd was insulting. Throughout their history, Israel had been plagued with worthless shepherds (Ez 34). But God had been a good shepherd to them, sending even His Son who was the Good Shepherd on earth (Jn 10:15). Nevertheless, He was rejected and betrayed for the price of a injured slave (Mt 26:15). By the time of the coming of Jesus, the religious leaders were of the same character as their forefathers who had led Israel into apostasy, and subsequently into destruction (Compare Jn 8:44). **Break the brotherhood:** In Christ, the existence of national Israel as a united people who brought the world to Christ, was terminated (See comments Gl 3:23-26; compare Hb 11:32-40).

**11:15-17 *Worthless shepherd:*** Zechariah had already taken the part of the good shepherd. At this time he was to take the part of the foolish, or worthless shepherd. Being rejected by national Israel, the Good Shepherd would turn the Jews over to the worthless shepherd. The worthless shepherd represented the Roman Empire that would ravage the flock. In the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, over one million Jews were killed. The remainder were sold into captivity throughout the Roman Empire. But God would eventually bring judgment on the Roman Empire. The city of Rome fell in A.D. 476, thus ending another empire that had inflicted calamity on God's people.

## Chapter 12

### THE BURDEN OF JUDAH

**12:1-6 *The Lord ... lays the foundation of the earth:*** As in His message to Job, so here the encouragement is given in the sense that the God who could create all things can surely protect those who put their trust in Him. There would eventually be a destruction of Judah and Jerusalem to come in A.D. 70. Until that time, those who were sons of Abraham by faith, and who were obedient to the call of the Messiah, must trust in the Lord. Throughout the termination of national Israel, they would need to see God working in order to give birth to and preserve the new Jerusalem, the spiritual Israel of God. But until the coming of the Messiah, national Israel would go through great turmoil during the interbiblical period. ***Spirit of man within him:*** God is the father of our spirits (Hb 12:9).

He created our spirits to indwell our bodies. ***Cup of reeling:*** The nations would gather in order to drink from the cup of Jerusalem, thinking that it contained sweet wine. However, when they drank of the cup, they would reel from the calamity that God would bring upon them (Compare Is 51:22). God would not allow His people to be overcome until the day set for the outpouring of His Spirit. Once the Spirit had been poured out, then national Israel that rejected the Messiah would be terminated. ***Heavy stone:*** The metaphor is from men's efforts to remove a heavy stone. In their efforts to move the stone, they would discover that the stone was a tremendous burden to remove. There would be much grief among the nations in their efforts to remove the stone of Jerusalem, the representation of the people of God. ***I will open my eyes on the house of Judah:*** God would look with favor on His people. He would look with favor on Jerusalem until the new Jerusalem was brought forth (See comments Rv 21). When the new Jerusalem was brought forth, then the old was terminated. ***Firepan ... torch:*** These two metaphors explain that the rulers of Judah would participate in the continuation of Jerusalem. They would be as a small fire (firepan) that would set an entire forest on fire. They would be as a burning torch thrown into dry sheaves. Physical Jerusalem would struggle until the spiritual Jerusalem was brought forth (See comments Mt 13:36-43).

**12:7-9 *The glory:*** The survival of the people would be to the glory of God, not to the glory of the people. The Jews

had forgotten that all was about bringing glory to God, not about bringing glory to themselves as a people. **House of David:** Jesus was born of the house of David in order to reign on the throne of David from heaven (See comments At 2:22-36). The house of David would thus survive until the Seed came forth from the seedline of David. **As God:** Jesus was the Son of God who was born of the house of David. **Seek to destroy all the nations:** The terminology is not absolute as in reference to the nations that fought against national Israel throughout their history. God did destroy the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires. But those who would come against the spiritual Jerusalem, the church, would be attacked by the gospel of Jesus. God would seek to destroy the hostility of the nations who would come against His people through the preaching of the gospel.

**12:10-14 Pour ... Spirit:** See comments JI 2:28-32. At the time when national Israel was destined to come to a close, God would send forth His Spirit. **Look on Me whom they have pierced:** The Jews had metaphorically pierced God through their rebellion against Him throughout their history. Their piercing in rebellion eventually came to a climax when a soldier pierced the rejected Son of God on the cross of Calvary (Rv 1:7). **They will mourn:** King Josiah was possibly killed at Hadad Rimmon that was located in the Valley of Megiddon. The people greatly mourned his death. There would also be great mourning over the crucified Christ (Lk 23:48). **The family ...:** These leading families would be rep-

resentative of all families of Israel. At the time Peter stood up on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30, the people responded to his message because they mourned over what they had done to Jesus (At 2:36-41).

### Chapter 13

**13:1-3 In that day:** This day could only be the era of the Messiah, the time of the *ekklesia* (the church) of our Lord (12:11). The piercing opened a fountain of blessing for the people. The cross of Jesus made available justification for sins (Rm 3:21-26) because of the cleansing of sin through His blood (1 Jn 1:7; 1 Pt 1:2). We are made legally acceptable to God (justification) through the precious blood of Jesus that cleanses us of all sin (sanctification). The apostle Peter announced on the day of Pentecost the means by which the sins of men are cleansed (At 2:38). When thousands obeyed the gospel (At 2:41), the time of refreshing and regeneration came in Israel (At 3:19-21). **Idols out of the land:** Speaking from the standpoint of the Jews who were in the land at the time Zechariah ministered these words to the people, there would be a time when idolatry would no longer be a part of those associated with God. Israel put away their idolatry while in captivity. **Cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land:** The false prophets and diviners would have no part in the church of the living God. Even if one would presume to speak a new revelation from a spirit, he would be known to be false and a liar in that which he spoke. Those

presumptuous speakers who proclaimed declarations that they claimed to be from God would be banned from the Christian community.

**13:4-6** *Hairy garment to deceive:*

The false prophets of old put on these clothes in order to deceive the people into thinking that they were speaking for God. They gave an appearance of being a prophet of God. They dressed as a prophet on the outside, but were actually wolves in sheeps' clothing (Mt 7:15).

**Wounds:** If some might inquire concerning the wounds on his body, the false prophet had to confess that they were only the wounds that he had inflicted on himself (See 1 Kg 18:28). The context of these words is not in reference to Christ, but in reference to those who would presumptuously speak for God where God had not spoken. The means by which the people would know if such a one was a false prophet would be to check his statements with the written word of God (See comments At 17:11; 1 Pt 4:11; 2 Jn 9-11).

**13:7-9** These words seem to be parallel with the preceding fate of Israel, and thus a continuation of the thoughts of chapter 11. The Good Shepherd is smitten. The rebellious Jews during the end of the ministry of Jesus and before the cross, took part in striking Jesus because they rejected Him (Jn 19:7). **Sheep will be scattered:** When Jesus was stricken with rejection at the end of His ministry, in the final hour the disciples were scattered (Mt 26:31). **I will turn My hand on the little ones:** Though the disciples would be scattered, God would gather

them again (Mt 26:32). **Two parts ... cut off ... third will be left:** Jesus came to the Jews, but many rejected Him (Jn 1:11). Those who rejected Him were cut off, and thus died in their sins (Lk 13:3). However, thousands of Jews accepted Him, and thus became the heart of evangelism to go into all nations (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15,16). Those who obeyed the gospel of Jesus gave themselves to God, and thus were claimed by God to be His people.

## Chapter 14

### THE TRIUMPHAL JERUSALEM

**14:1,2** It is certain that if we come to this text with a strictly literal interpretation, we will be confused. In the beauty of metaphors that were taken from the historical background of Jewish history, Zechariah paints a glorious picture of the continued purging of the people of God as they struggled throughout history. The focus, therefore, is not of some grand event that will take place at the end of time, but on the struggles of the new Jerusalem, the church, that was instituted by the coming of the Messiah. It is thus a picture of those who gave themselves in allegiance to the Messiah at the conclusion of chapter 13. The defeat that is mentioned here in the first two verses sets the stage for the deliverance of the remnant of the faithful in verses 3-5. **Day of the Lord:** The use of the Hebrew word *yom* in the context would refer to the "time of the Lord," not to a specific day. It would be the time when the Lord would allow the unbelievers to launch their attack against His people. **Remnant of the**

**people:** This would be the remnant of the spiritual Jerusalem that is preserved, and yet faces struggles continually throughout history (See At 14:22; Gl 4:29; 2 Tm 2:3). The world would launch numerous assaults against the spiritual Jerusalem, the church. According to Daniel, such attacks were launched by the “little horn” of the fourth world kingdom (Rome). The saints were given into his hand (Dn 7:21). This persecution by the Roman Empire prevailed against the church for almost two centuries after its establishment in A.D. 30 (Rv 13:7; see comments of Rv). However, the Roman onslaught against the church would not fulfill the extent of Zechariah’s prophecy, for attacks would be made against the church throughout history. Nevertheless, a remnant of the church would always survive, as a remnant of Israel survived the captivities (Mc 5:3; Zp 2:9).

#### **14:3-7 Fight against those nations:**

Any attack against His people gives God the opportunity to fight for His people (See Hk 3). **In that day:** This would be any time in history when God’s people would come under attack by unbelievers. God will fight for them in order that a remnant be delivered. No time in history, therefore, would the church go out of existence. **Mount of Olives:** Being east of Jerusalem, the figure is that God stands and watches over the new Jerusalem in order to protect her from all enemies. The mountain is divided. Half is moved toward the north and half toward the south, providing a great valley to which the people may flee for safety. In every conflict, God provides a way of

escape for His people (1 Co 10:13; 2 Pt 2:9). **Valley of My mountains:** The two halves of the divided mountain became the mountains that provide the valley of escape. **Azel:** The location of this place is unknown. Reference may be to Beth-ezel that was mentioned by Micah (Mc 1:11). **Earthquake in the days of Uzziah:** This traumatic event lingered with the Jews throughout their history (Se Am 1:1). **The Lord my God will come:** This would be the coming of the Lord in judgment on the persecutors of His people. The coming would mean calamity for the unbelieving persecutors of God’s people, but deliverance for the saints. Inspired records of history have revealed only a few times when this occurred. The unbelieving Jews launched great persecution against the church after it was established (At 8:1-4). However, God brought deliverance to the saints in the destruction of Jerusalem and national Israel in A.D. 70 (See comments Mt 24). A personal vendetta was led against Christians by Nero, Caesar of Rome, in the early 60’s. But Nero eventually killed himself. At the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, state persecution was launched against the church by the Romans. But the beast of Rome was eventually terminated (See comments Rv 19:11-21). **There will be no light:** This would be a time of great distress for the saints (Compare Is 13:10; Jl 2:2,10). **In evening it will be light:** Though going through times of despair, there would always be hope, for the Lord would not allow His people to vanish from history (See Jn 14:18; Hb 13:5).

**14:8-11 Living waters:** The living

waters of salvation would flow from Jerusalem (See comments Jn 4:14; Ez 47:1-12). Regardless of the calamities that would come upon the saints, the living waters of the Savior would always bring forth a continuation of the body of believers (Jn 7:37,38). **Eastern sea:** The Dead Sea. **Western Sea:** The Mediterranean Sea. **King over all the earth:** This statement establishes the time of fulfillment of the prophecy. Jesus is now King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tm 6:15). He is now reigning over all things for the sake of the church (Zc 9:9,10, see comments Ep 1:20-23). He will reign as King until He has subjected all enemies, the last of which is death (See comments 1 Co 15:26-28). He reigns, therefore, throughout this time when enemies attack the saints (Rm 5:17). But this time will come to an end. **One Lord:** See Ep 4:4-6. **Turned as a plain:** See comments Is 2:2-4; Mc 4:1-4. The city of God would be exalted above all the surrounding territory of the enemy. **Gate:** Though these particular gates of the city are not known, the meaning is that the walls of the city would extend in every direction, thus affording protection to all who were within the city. Throughout the history of physical Jerusalem, she succumbed to the attack of many nations. The spiritual Jerusalem, however, would be exalted above the mountains of other nations, and thus offer spiritual safety to all who would come within her walls (Is 2:2-4).

**14:12** This graphic picture portrays the living dead because of their attacks against the people of God. Their flesh would rot as they struggled against the

saints. Every part of their bodies that was used in opposition to the saints of God would rot away while they persecuted the church.

**14:13-15** God would turn the enemies against one another. Such a condition prevailed in the society of Jerusalem before she was given over to the destruction of the Babylonians (Mc 7:2-6). Now it was time for the same social conditions to cause a moral digression within the societies of nations that would struggle against the new Jerusalem of God's people. In such a manner the Roman Empire fell, for she died from within herself. Rome became morally weak, leading to the fall of the city of Rome and empire in A.D. 476. When men give up the moral standards of God, the people of society turn on themselves, and thus the nation falls from within. **Fight at Jerusalem:** There would be a united stand within the spiritual Jerusalem against the onslaught of all enemies. The saints would draw from the wealth of the nations in order to make their stand against those who would oppose the work of God through them. Though surrounded by great armies with great beasts of war, the beasts would all succumb to the plague.

**14:16-19** *Everyone who is left:* During any onslaught against the saints, there would be those who would fall. However, there would always be a remnant of the faithful. These would go up to worship the King as the Jews, throughout their history, went to the tabernacle of God for the feast of tabernacles. **Feast of tabernacles:** This was the annual feast

of the Jews when all went before the Lord for a festive time of rejoicing (Lv 23:39-44). In the symbolic picture that Zechariah gives, both Jews and Gentiles would go before the Lord with rejoicing and celebration. ***Be no rain on them:*** The result of not going before the Lord would be that there would be drought, not blessing from the Lord. The Lord would inflict judgment upon those who would work against His eternal plan through the saints (See Is 60:12; Mc 5:15).

**14:20,21** Zechariah now turns to the true nature of the new Jerusalem. All the horses and instruments of war are cut off from the city. There would be no war within the city, for all would be holy to the Lord (See Ex 28:36-38; see comments Is 2:1-4). That which was unclean (the Canaanites) would have been cast out. The glorious church would be a place of peace, dedicated to the service of and sacrifice to the Lord (See comments Rm 12:1,2).