

## ***Session 11 Israel: Saved and Cleansed (Zech. 12:1-13:6)***

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. After the visions in Zechariah 1-6, the question arises, what about the Gentile nations who oppress Israel? Zechariah receives *two prophetic oracles* (Zech. 9-11 and Zech. 12-14) that answer this question. Their theme is the messianic King who brings judgment and blessing as He empowers Israel, defeats the Gentile world powers, and establishes the kingdom (Zech. 9-14).
- B. Both oracles speak of war between the Gentile world powers and Israel, but in different ways. The Messiah will deliver, empower, and regather Israel, and overthrow her enemies (Zech. 9-11). The Messiah will save, refine, and transform Israel in the context of a global war (Zech. 12-14). The second oracle gives more details about the global war that is introduced in the first oracle
- C. The complete fulfillment of most of the events in these six chapters will occur at the time of Jesus' second coming. In Zechariah 12-14, the phrase "in that day" occurs 18 times, indicating the end of the age (12:3, 4, 6, 8 [2x], 9, 11; 13:1, 2, 4; 14:1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 13, 20, 21).
- D. Zechariah 12-14 is one of the most dramatic and important prophetic passages in Scripture. It is a "must-know" passage. In it, we see the conclusion of God's mysterious end-time plan. Zechariah tells of Israel's great victories, horrific suffering, and world leadership (12-14). It is a gift from God, showing us the storyline. Its message must be boldly proclaimed to all.
- E. Surprisingly, God's plan to make the "transition from this age to the age-to-come" includes all nations making war against Israel as the context in which Jesus will return to deliver Israel and destroy her enemies. How is it possible that one small nation could so enrage the whole world?
- F. Zechariah 12 gives an overview of the events from the military and spiritual points of view. Zechariah 14 tells the story, highlighting geographical changes and plagues on the disobedient. (The events are in chronological order in 12:1-13:6. Then the story is told again in 13:7-14:21).
- G. Zechariah's message has several seeming paradoxes. Israel will see both revival and apostasy. Her best and worst days are yet ahead. Her victory and suffering will surpass anything in history. The Jewish people will be both gathered to the land and driven from it (10:6-12; 14:2).
- H. Israel's main crisis is not with Islam or other anti-Semitic nations, rather it is with God. Her crisis is rooted in the fact that God loves Israel, and yet the majority of Israel does not love God. God will not violate their free will, but will use the great difficulty to lead them to His great love.
- I. Zechariah's end-time message is politically incorrect, offending Christians, Jews, and Muslims. Zechariah's most offensive message to Israel is that 2/3 of them will be killed (13:8). Zechariah's most offensive message to Islam is that all will worship the God of Israel (14:16). Zechariah's offensive message to the Church is God's Jerusalem-centric plan for world dominion.

## II. ALL THE NATIONS WILL GATHER AGAINST ISRAEL (12:1-3)

- A. The Lord introduces this oracle by reminding us that He has the power to create the heavens, the earth, and all humanity (12:1). His plan as set forth in this oracle will require this kind of power. No matter how impossible things appear to Israel, nothing is impossible for God. The fact that He formed the spirit of man within him assures Israel that He understands the human make-up and, therefore, knows that His plan, as seen in this oracle, will work in leading Israel to salvation.
- <sup>1</sup>The burden...of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him: (Zech. 12:1)*
- B. This prophecy begins with *burden* which is translated as *oracle* or a heavy burden (12:1). The two main events in this oracle are the *siege of Jerusalem* (12:2-3; 14:1-2) and the *return of the Messiah*, leading to Israel's salvation and the transformation of the whole earth (12:10; 14:3, 9).
- <sup>1</sup>The burden [oracle] of the word of the LORD against Israel. (Zech. 12:1)*
- C. The Battle for Jerusalem is a spiritual, political, and military battle for the control of Jerusalem. It is one of the most significant battlefronts in the spirit today; Jesus will end the battle when He returns.
- D. The end-time siege around Jerusalem (12:2-3). This same siege is described again (14:2).
- <sup>2</sup>“Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples [nations], when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples [nations]; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.” (Zech. 12:2-3)*
- E. The leaders of the nations will work together under the Antichrist's leader to lay siege against Jerusalem and Judah (Mt. 24:15-21). This siege will last for 3½ years (Rev. 11:2-3; 12:6; 13:5).
- F. The siege begins with the nations that *surround Jerusalem* (12:2), but it escalates to *all nations* (12:3; 14:2) joining the siege to try to destroy the Jewish people and capture the city. They do not bomb the city, but seek to capture it intact for religious purposes.
- G. Two metaphors warn the nations of their danger—cup of drunkenness and heavy stone (12:2-3). The nations drink the cup and are injured by the stone by opposing God's purpose for Jerusalem.
1. ***Cup of drunkenness:*** The nations that resist God's purpose for Jerusalem will become like a man who is so drunk that he staggers and falls, being in a stupor and a state of helplessness. He becomes powerless and cannot stand. He also loses his ability to reason clearly, being intoxicated with a dangerous sense of invincibility.
  2. ***Heavy stone:*** God will make Jerusalem like a very heavy rock with sharp edges to every nation that resists His purpose for the city. The stone will be far too heavy or burdensome to heave away (by fighting to destroy Israel) and will severely lacerate any who try.

- H. The Lord Himself is gathering the armies of all the ungodly nations to stand against Israel (Joel 3:2, 12; Zech. 12:3; 14:2; Zeph. 3:8; Ezek. 38:4; 39:2). He will draw all the nations to Jerusalem to judge them in order to cleanse Israel and the nations and to replace their national governments.  
<sup>2</sup>***“For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem.” (Zech. 14:2)***  
<sup>2</sup>***“I will gather all nations...I will enter into judgment with them there [Jerusalem].” (Joel 3:2)***  
<sup>8</sup>***“My determination is to gather the nations to My assembly of kingdoms [at Jerusalem], to pour on them My indignation...all the earth shall be devoured with...My jealousy.” (Zeph. 3:8)***
- I. Satan also works to draw the nations to Jerusalem but with evil purposes (Rev. 16:13-14; 19:19). Armageddon is an area in the valley of Megiddo, in the northern part of Israel. This area will function as the military staging area to mobilize the armies of the nations to attack Jerusalem.  
<sup>14</sup>***For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty...<sup>16</sup>And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon. (Rev. 16:14-16)***
- J. Gentile world leaders will accept the leadership of the “worthless shepherd” (Antichrist) as Israel did in Zechariah 11:15-17.
- K. One reason that the Lord intentionally put so much oil in Arab lands is so that the money from it could be used to seduce the nations to stand with them against Israel. The Lord is reenacting the “David and Goliath drama” to reveal His salvation, but this time it is on a global stage. He put Himself in “divine checkmate” so that it will take His great power to solve Israel’s great dilemma.
- L. No one has the power to deliver Israel. God will kick every prop from beneath Israel. He will not allow America to be a prop for Israel. The ally that Israel most needs is a holy, praying and fasting, prophetic Church. Israel has Jesus on her side and so does not need the military strength of America. America needs Israel more than Israel needs America.
- M. The accumulated impact of many social, economic, religious, and political dynamics will create a scenario where everyone will be forced to “make a decision” to stand for or against Jesus and Jerusalem. ***There will be no neutral ground.*** The Lord will cause everyone to be in the “valley of decision” by the many dynamics that will develop related to Jerusalem.  
<sup>14</sup>***Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! The day of the LORD is near... (Joel 3:14)***
- N. He will use Jerusalem as the issue to separate those *who are His* from those *who are not His* in all the families, schools, neighborhoods, work places, and churches across the whole earth.
- O. Iran’s President Ahmadinejad said in a speech (August 1, 2012) to ambassadors from Islamic countries, “*Liberating Palestine would solve all world problems.*” He said that the ultimate goal of world forces must be the annihilation of Israel. He went on to say that anyone who loves freedom and justice must strive for the annihilation of the Zionist regime to pave the way for world justice. (Ahmadinejad first called for Israel’s annihilation in 2005, see [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)).

### III. MILITARY VICTORY: ISRAEL IS UNIFIED AND ANOINTED LIKE DAVID (ZECH. 12:4-9)

- A. The Lord will release confusion and a spirit of insanity on the Gentile armies (12:4; Deut. 28:28). Imagine terrified horses that are suddenly struck blind and that are being led by insane soldiers.

*<sup>4</sup>In that day...I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. (Zech. 12:4)*

1. **Panic**: Zechariah prophesied a great panic coming on these Gentile armies (14:13).  
*<sup>13</sup>A great panic from the LORD will be among them. Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor, and raise his hand against his neighbor's hand... (Zech. 14:13)*
2. **Open My eyes**: The Lord will open His eyes on the house of Judah. This speaks of His supernatural intervention in the battle. The Lord watches over Judah (Ps. 32:8; 33:18).

- B. The Lord will supernaturally empower the small Israeli army as a weapon in His hand (12:6). The political leaders of Judah who live outside Jerusalem will see the events in verse 4 and will conclude that God is helping Jerusalem. This will greatly encourage those in Judah (12:5).

*<sup>5</sup>“And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, ‘The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in the LORD of hosts, their God.’ <sup>6</sup>In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a firepan in the woodpile, and like a fiery torch in the sheaves; they shall devour all the surrounding peoples on the right hand and on the left, but Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place—Jerusalem.” (Zech. 12:5-6)*

1. **Like a firepan**: The newly encouraged leaders of Judah will also receive supernatural help from the Lord, who will make them like a firepan (vessel they put hot coals in to carry to ignite other fires). They will devour all the armies close by.
2. **Like a fiery torch**: The military success of the leaders of Judah will be comparable to fire that burns dry grass effortlessly and instantaneously. This new ability will surprise them.

- C. The Lord will empower the soldiers who live in Judah first, to create unity with Jerusalem (12:7). The Lord will do this because He does not want the people living in Jerusalem to assume that they are more important to the Lord, especially after receiving such great help as seen in verse 8. Those in Judah will be in a more defenseless condition, as indicated by them dwelling in tents, and contrasted with those in the well-defended capital city. All this will work together to help end the long-standing in-fighting among the Jewish leadership (11:6, 14). Zechariah earlier prophesied that the “house of Judah” in the south (10:3, 6) and the “house of Joseph,” (10:6) or “Ephraim,” in the north (10:7) would all be anointed for battle, not just those in Jerusalem.

*<sup>7</sup>The LORD will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not become greater than that of Judah. (Zech. 12:7)*

- D. Zechariah prophesies that the Lord will anoint Israeli soldiers, as He did David (12:8). Note, the Lord will empower Israel's army to resist the Antichrist even *before* Jesus returns (9:13; 10:3-7)
- <sup>8</sup>The LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them. (Zech. 12:8)***
1. ***Like David:*** The most feeble person without any skill to fight shall be as David—Israel's greatest military hero. When Jesus returns, He will empower Israel (9:13; 10:3-7).  
***<sup>5</sup>They shall be like mighty men, who tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle. They shall fight because the LORD is with them. (Zech. 10:5)***
  2. ***Like the Angel of the Lord:*** Suddenly the house of David will receive an unusual measure of supernatural strength to fight, as if the Angel of the Lord went before them (Ex. 14:19; 23:20; 32:34; 33:2, 14-15, 22; 1 Sam. 29:9; 2 Sam. 4:17, 20; 19:27).
- E. Jesus will destroy all the nations (12:8). This will be the greatest military reversal in history. The most extreme judgment in history will occur in the largest, most violent battle in history.
- <sup>9</sup>"It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem." (Zech. 12:9)***
- F. All kings will be gathered with their armies (Rev. 19:19; Joel 3:2, 12; Zech. 14:2; Zeph. 3:8). It will be the only time in history when all the kings of the earth will be together in the same city. Jesus will kill all of them and will replace all governments of the earth in one great event (Rev. 19:21; Ps. 110:5-6; Isa. 24:6, 21-21; 66:24).
- <sup>19</sup>I saw the beast [Antichrist], the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him [Jesus]... <sup>21</sup>The rest [all the kings] were killed with the sword...from the mouth of Him... (Rev. 19:19-21)***
- G. Jesus will defeat the Antichrist in the sight of all nations (Rev. 19:20).
- <sup>8</sup>...lawless one...whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth. (2 Thes. 2:8)***
- H. The leaders of Jerusalem will receive Jesus, a Jewish man, as their messianic King. Jesus will establish His throne in Jerusalem (Mt. 19:28; 25:31; Jer. 3:17). Then He will transition the earth to the millennial kingdom, as Israel and all the nations on the earth are born anew on one day.
- <sup>7</sup>Lift up your heads, O you gates [Jerusalem]...And the King of glory shall come in. <sup>8</sup>Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. (Ps. 24:7-8)***
- I. In that Day, Jesus will show Himself as the ***greater Moses*** when He frees the captives of Israel from prison camps. He will be seen as the ***greater Joshua*** when He leads Israel, who are refugees in the nations, to the Promised Land, and as the ***greater David*** when He wins back Jerusalem and establishes His throne and tabernacle there! He will come as the ***greater Elijah*** to confront the Antichrist, cleanse the earth of idolatry, and turn Israel and the nations to God.

#### IV. ISRAEL'S NATIONAL SALVATION (12:10-14)

- A. After this great military victory, Israel will have deep humility without any pride, as they understand that Jesus was loyal to them for centuries when they despised Him. God will deliver Israel in a way that causes them to love Jesus more than the nations that they looked to for help.
- B. Zechariah described Israel's national repentance and conversion (12:10-14). His focus changed from physical to spiritual deliverance (Deut. 30:1-10). After Jesus defeats Israel's physical enemies, He confronts their greatest enemy—their sin and unbelief. This people did not receive the two witnesses who testified of Jesus in Jerusalem for 3½ years.

***<sup>10</sup>I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me [Jesus] whom they have pierced; they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son. (Zech. 12:10)***

- 1. Look on Me:* Jesus will personally call the nation of Israel to look on Him. As Jesus called Saul of Tarsus to look on Him, so He will call the whole nation to look. Paul's conversion is a prophetic foreshadowing of Israel's national salvation. They will be as surprised as Paul was to discover that Jesus of Nazareth is the God of Israel.**

***<sup>3</sup>Suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. <sup>4</sup>Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" <sup>5</sup>And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus..." <sup>6</sup>So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" (Acts 9:3-6)***
- 2. Both Jesus and John elaborated on Zechariah's prophecy that Israel would look on Jesus. They both prophesied that all Jews and Gentiles would see Him (Mt. 24:30; Rev. 1:7). They will see Him while He is on the clouds (yet close enough to the earth to see Him).***

***<sup>7</sup>He is coming with clouds, and every eye [Jews and Gentiles] will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. (Rev. 1:7)***

***<sup>30</sup>"All the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Mt. 24:30)***
- 3. Jesus told the Jewish leaders who killed Him that they would see Him (Mk. 14:62).***

***<sup>62</sup>"You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." (Mk. 14:62)***
- 4. The Lord will be "seen" over His people (9:14) in the context of Israel being raised up as mighty men (9:13) and the Lord defending them (19:15).***

***<sup>14</sup>Then the Lord will be seen over them, and His arrow will go forth like lightning. The Lord will blow the trumpet, and go with whirlwinds from the south. (Zech. 9:14)***

5. ***Mourning:*** This mourning describes repentance unto salvation, with weeping caused by despair over their sin and rejection of Jesus. Mourning for an only son was proverbial for intense and bitter grief (Jer. 6:26; Amos 8:10). Zechariah describes how the Jewish people will feel when they understand that Jesus was their Messiah and that they killed Him. They will weep as if their first-born son had been murdered.
  6. ***Whom they pierced:*** Israel did not know that their hatred of Christ was hatred of God. They will discover that “piercing” Jesus was equivalent to rejecting God.
  7. ***The Spirit of grace:*** The Spirit of grace and supplication refers to the anointing of revelation, power, and prayer. This will help the people come to salvation. The prophets promised that the Spirit would be poured out on Jerusalem (Isa. 44:3; Joel 2:28-32).
- C. Israel’s national repentance and mourning is described graphically (12:11-14). There will be great mourning in Jerusalem and throughout all Israel. All Israelites will mourn in this national repentance. The mourning will be intense, universal, and yet personal within each family:
- <sup>11</sup>“There shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. <sup>12</sup>And the land shall mourn, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; <sup>13</sup>the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of Shimei by itself, and their wives by themselves; <sup>14</sup>all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves.” (Zech. 12:11-14)*
1. ***Like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon:*** Zechariah compared Israel’s national mourning over Jesus to the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. This is where King Josiah was mortally wounded in battle (2 Kgs. 23:29-30; 2 Chr. 35:22-25). Hadad Rimmon, according to Jerome, was a city near Jezreel in the valley of Megiddo. Josiah was a godly king who died young (age 39) in the midst of establishing great spiritual reforms in Jerusalem. His death led to national mourning. Jeremiah wrote a dirge about Josiah’s sudden death (2 Chr. 35:25). The national lamentations over Josiah became “an ordinance” in Israel. The army of Israel mourned while in Hadad Rimmon, where Josiah was mortally wounded (he was rushed to Jerusalem, where he soon died).
- D. The political and priestly families were the ones most responsible for Jesus’ death. David and Levi represent the most prominent in their family lines. Their sons, Nathan and Shimei, represent lesser prominence in their family lines. Together, they represent the whole family, to indicate that the mourning affects every family, from the least to the greatest.
1. ***House of David and Nathan:*** These two families represented the political arena—they were the royal family. Nathan was a son of David (2 Sam. 5:14; Lk. 3:31).
  2. ***House of Levi and Shimei:*** These two families represented the priestly arena—they were the priestly family. Shimei was a grandson of Levi (Num. 3:18).

## V. ISRAEL'S NATIONAL CLEANSING (13:1-6)

- A. Zechariah 13 continues with the theme of Israel's national salvation. The same people and places are mentioned within the same timeframe in both chapters. The events in 12:1-13:6 are chronological. Once Israel receives her Messiah, He begins to cleanse the land.
- B. Israel's national cleansing is from sin, idols, false prophets, and the unclean spirit (13:1-6). God will open a fountain of grace to cleanse Israel of all her national and individual sin. Idolatry and false prophets had been a significant problem for Israel throughout the centuries. They will both be fully and finally removed.
- <sup>1</sup>“In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. <sup>2</sup>It shall be in that day...that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land.” (Zech. 13:1-2)*
- C. Jesus will open a fountain for the total cleansing of Israel, spiritually and physically (Ezek. 47). Jesus will remove idolatry, false prophets, and the unclean spirit that was in the land, related to the abomination of desolation (the center of Antichrist worship) being in Jerusalem (Mt. 24:15). Satan will be thrown into prison, and the Antichrist and False Prophet into the lake of fire (Rev. 19-20; 20:1-3).
- D. This new cleansing will cause false prophets to be afraid and put to shame (13:3-6).
- <sup>3</sup>“If anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who begot him will say to him, ‘You shall not live, because you have spoken lies in the name of the LORD.’ And his father and mother who begot him shall thrust him through when he prophesies. <sup>4</sup>And it shall be in that day that every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies; they will not wear a robe of coarse hair to deceive. <sup>5</sup>But he will say, ‘I am no prophet, I am a farmer; for a man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.’ <sup>6</sup>And one will say to him, ‘What are these wounds between your arms?’ Then he will answer, ‘Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.’” (Zech. 13:3-6)*
- E. The zeal for purity will be so great in that day that even the parents of a false prophet will put him to death as the Law commanded (Deut. 13:6-9), thrusting a sword through him (13:3).
- F. This situation for the false prophets will be so dangerous that they will deny their past involvement. They will refuse to wear the clothing of the prophets (13:4). Some will claim to have worked on a farm since their youth and, therefore, that they could not possibly be a prophet as that would have taken years of training (13:5). Some will hide the wounds that they received from involvement with the false prophets (13:6). Prophets were known for making wounds in a prophetic frenzy to stir up the spirit realm, to help them receive demonically-inspired prophecies (Lev. 19:28; 21:5; Deut. 14:1; 1 Kgs. 18:28; Jer. 16:6; 41:5; 48:37). In the past, having scars from such wounds was proof of having a great prophetic gift. But *in that day* they will be too afraid to admit their past association with false prophets, and will strongly deny ever being involved. They will claim that they received the wounds in an accident while visiting a friend's house.