

Session 12 Israel: Refined and Transformed (Zech. 13:7-14:21)

I. OVERVIEW OF ZECHARIAH 12-14

- A. ***Review:*** In his final message (Zech. 12-14), Zechariah tells of Israel's great victories, horrific suffering, and world leadership. He gives details of how Jesus will save, refine, and transform Israel in the context of a global war (12:2-9; 14:2) and His physical return to earth (12:10; 14:3, 9).
- B. Zechariah 12 gives an overview of the events from a military and spiritual point 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).
- C. The complete fulfillment of most of the events in these three 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 (Zech. 12:3, 4, 6, 8 [2x], 9, 11; 13:1, 2, 4; 14:1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 13, 20, 21).
- D. Zechariah 14 brings millennial Jerusalem as Jesus' world capital into focus (14:6-21). This chapter is difficult for amillennialists to spiritualize. It demands a premillennial interpretation to make sense of the specific details that are given. Most of the details are impossible to spiritualize.

II. ISRAEL'S SUFFERING: THE REMNANT REFINED IN THE FIRE (13:7-14:2)

- A. The Lord reveals part of His method in awakening Israel to receive salvation. Daniel spoke of persecution as part of God's end-time plan to prepare Israel to rule the earth with Him (Dan. 7:18-27). In this passage (13:8-9), the Lord forewarns Israel that her great destiny will include pain.
- B. In this passage, we must recall the principle that Jesus will use the least severe means to bring the greatest number to Jesus at the deepest level of love without violating their free will.
- C. The remnant of Israel will be refined through the fire unto salvation (13:7-9). This passage gives us insight into the siege of Jerusalem (12:2; 14:2) and into Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7).
⁷"Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd [Jesus], against the Man who is My Companion," says the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd [Jesus], and the sheep will be scattered; then I will turn My hand against the little ones. ⁸It shall come to pass in all the land," says the LORD, "that two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, but one-third shall be left in it: ⁹I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; and each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.'" (Zech. 13:7-9)
- D. Zechariah returned to the theme of the shepherd that God sent to Israel, as seen in Zechariah 11. This begins a new section. The Spirit turned Zechariah's attention from the false prophets (13:3-6) to the true prophet (13:7) who was wounded in the house of His friends (Israel).

- E. ***Awake, O sword:*** The sword is personified, then called to awake from a deep sleep to execute God’s justice in killing the Messiah. The Father awakened His sword against His Son at the cross. Jesus is qualified, by His being deeply acquainted with suffering, to oversee Israel’s suffering. No one can say that Jesus does not understand suffering. Jesus understands what Israel will go through since He knows what it means to be struck by the Father’s sword.
1. The sword is a common figure of death. Zechariah is not seeking to describe the way in which Jesus died—crucifixion.
 2. The worthless shepherd (Antichrist) was struck by God (11:17), but here it is the good shepherd who is struck.
 3. The killing of the Messiah was seen as an act of man (12:10-14), but also as an act of God (13:7) What probably greatly perplexed Zechariah was that God Himself struck the good shepherd (Isa. 53:10; Acts 2:23; Rom. 8:32), and yet Israel pierced Him (12:10).
- F. God calls Jesus “My Shepherd,” “the Man,” and “My Companion” (13:7). In these three descriptions we see the great mystery of the incarnation, God in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). Here we see the glorious truth of the dual nature of the Messiah—fully God and fully man.
1. ***My Shepherd:*** The Father called Jesus, “My Shepherd” because He was the Father’s choice to be the Messiah—“the Shepherd of Israel”—and His representative to Israel. The Shepherd whom the sword is to smite is the Messiah.
 2. ***The Man who is My Companion:*** The unique relationship of Jesus to the Father is seen here. Jesus is described as One in close relationship and kinship to Father; the One who shares the divine nature because He is equal to God; the One whom God called “My Shepherd.” Jesus was accused of blasphemy, of claiming to be “equal with God”—Jehovah’s very Companion.
- G. ***The sheep will be scattered:*** The immediate result of striking the Shepherd is that “the sheep of Israel were scattered as Zechariah had predicted earlier (11:6, 9, 10). Jesus also predicted the scattering of the Jews into all the nations *until* the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled, which will happen when He returns (Lk. 19:41-44; 21:24). Jesus also quoted this verse in relationship to the scattering of His beloved disciples (Mt. 26:31, 56; Mk 14:27, 50).
- ²⁴***“They will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” (Lk. 21:24)***
- H. ***I will turn My hand against the little ones:*** This can be taken as a positive or a negative depending on how one translates and interprets “turn My hand against.” Some translate it as I will turn My hand “back upon” the little ones, indicating His favor, not His displeasure.
- ⁷***“The sheep will be scattered; then I will turn My hand against the little ones.” (Zech. 13:7)***

- I. In using the positive interpretation, the “little ones” are seen as the “humble ones” (or those who make themselves little), in a way that is similar to the poor of the flock (11:7, 11), who speak of the godly remnant. These are like “the poor of the flock” (11: 7), the righteous oppressed from the godless majority. The message here is that God will always have a remnant in Israel that He shows favor to, even in the long dark years of the dispersion. Jesus spoke of the godly remnant when quoting this passage in reference to His disciples (Mt. 26:31-32; Mk. 14:27-28; Jn. 16:32).

³¹*Jesus said to them, “All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: ‘I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’* ³²*But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.” (Mt. 26:31-32)*

- J. ***One-third:*** The Lord promised to bring one-third of the nation of Israel through the fire unto salvation. This will be the largest number of Jews coming to Jesus in all history, possibly surpassing six million new believers (based on there being about 18 millions Jews worldwide). Malachi 3:1-6 develops this same theme of Israel being refined like silver in the end times.

⁸*“It shall come to pass in all the land,” says the LORD, “that two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, but one-third shall be left in it: ⁹I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, ‘This is My people’; and each one will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’” (Zech. 13:8-9)*

- K. ***Two-thirds will die:*** In the great tragedy of 70 AD, when Rome destroyed the city of Jerusalem, over one million Jewish people were killed. Sixty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, a similar tragedy occurred: under the leadership of a false Messiah named Bar Kokhba over a half a million Jews died. This prophecy will have its ultimate fulfillment in the generation in which the Lord returns, when one-third of the nation will be born-again worshipers of Jesus.

- L. Jerusalem will be temporarily captured and half its people will be taken captive (Zech. 14:1-2).

¹*Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. ²For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. (Zech. 14:1-2)*

1. ***The day of the LORD:*** The long awaited Day has arrived—the day set apart to show the nations God’s majestic power as He destroys His enemies and saves His people.
2. ***Spoil divided in your midst:*** Israel’s spoil will be divided by the Gentiles who are attacking the city, because they do not understand what is about to come. The events of Zechariah 12:4-9 take place after the spoil is taken by the Gentiles.
3. ***The city is captured:*** Jerusalem shall temporarily be captured by the Antichrist’s armies. Half of Jerusalem shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. About 600,000 Jews currently live in Jerusalem. The city temporarily being taken creates the context in which Jesus delivers Israel.

III. JESUS RETURNS AS KING: JERUSALEM IS HIS CAPITAL CITY (14:3-21)

- A. Jesus will return as the king of Israel to deliver her from her enemies (Zech. 14:3-5). This is the point where the surprising events prophesied in Zechariah 12:4-10 take place. The mourning will spread from Israel (12:10) to the Gentiles armies camped around Jerusalem.

³*Then the LORD will go forth and **fight** against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. ⁴And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives...And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south. ⁵Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah...The LORD my God will come, and all the saints with You. (Zech. 14:3-5)*

1. **The Lord will fight:** He will show Himself as the divine warrior who was seen at the exodus (Ex. 14:13-14; Josh. 10:14; 23:3; Judg. 4:15; 2 Chr. 20:15).
2. **You shall flee:** The Jews in Jerusalem will escape through this newly created valley. They will flee with panic, as in an earthquake. When Jesus prophesied about mountains moving, He was standing at the Mount of Olives, perhaps pointing at it (Mark 11:1, 23).
3. **My mountain valley:** God calls this mountain valley His because He formed it by an act of His power in a way that will be parallel to dividing the Red Sea (Ex. 14:22). The Lord will split this mountain so that half of it moves to the north and the other half to the south, creating a vast east-west valley. The valley will reach “as far” as Azel some distance east of Jerusalem (it is unknown where Azel is).

- B. Jesus’ kingship will be announced by miracles of darkness, light, and living water (14:6-8). Zechariah describes Jerusalem as the new capital of the world and the epicenter from which “garden-of-Eden-type blessings” will spread progressively to the whole world in the Millennium. He highlights two issues—the healing waters and the mysterious light at night (Isa. 4:5; 30:26).

⁶*It shall come to pass in that day that there will be **no light**; the lights will diminish. ⁷It shall be one [unique] day which is known to the LORD—neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen that it will be light. ⁸In that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea [Dead Sea] and half of them toward the western sea [Mediterranean Sea]; in both summer and winter it shall occur. (Zech. 14:6-8)*

1. **No light:** It will be a day of gloom with utter darkness (14:6). Darkness shall come on the Antichrist’s global empire (Rev. 16:10). The light of the sun, moon, and stars will be darkened (Isa. 13:10; Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15; Mt. 24:29; Mk. 13:24; Lk. 21:25; Acts 2:19-20).

²⁹*“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” (Mt. 24:29)*

¹⁰*...the throne of the Beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness... (Rev. 16:10)*

2. ***One day:*** Then it will suddenly be illuminated in the evening in a very unique way that only God can understand (14:7). This unique and mysterious light will introduce God's new order for the created order (sun, moon, topography, animals, vegetation, etc.).
 3. ***Living water:*** A river with supernatural healing properties will flow out of the temple (14:8). Ezekiel saw this same river (Ezek. 47:1-12). Its waters will flow east to the Dead Sea and west into the Mediterranean Sea (Ps. 46:4; 65:9). It will flow from the temple even in the summer when most streams in Israel dry up and in the winter when it is cold.
- C. Jesus will reign from Jerusalem as the King of kings over all the earth (14:9; Rev. 19:16). All the kings of the earth will worship and serve Him (Ps. 72:11; 102:15; 138:4; 148:11; Mal. 1:11). He shall be one, which means that Jesus will be the only one acknowledged as God in the earth.
- ⁹The LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—“The LORD is one,” and His name one. (Zech. 14:9)***
- ¹⁷At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem. (Jer. 3:17)***

IV. THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING (14:10)

- A. The topography of Jesus' global capital city will be drastically changed (14:10-11). The whole region will be greatly altered. It will both be leveled and raised, or elevated, to a height that surpasses all the other mountains. An earthquake will bring these topographical changes.
- ¹⁰All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba [northern Judah] to Rimmon south of Jerusalem [southern Judah]. Jerusalem shall be raised up and inhabited in her place from Benjamin's Gate [north wall] to the place of the First Gate [north-east corner] and the Corner Gate [north-west corner], and from the Tower of Hananeel [north wall] to the king's winepresses [south wall]. ¹¹The people shall dwell in it; and no longer shall there be utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited. (Zech. 14:10-11)***
1. ***A plain:*** Jerusalem and the land around it will become as flat as a plain, while the whole area will be physically elevated to make it the perfect place to establish the world capital. The prophets (Isaiah, Micah, and Ezekiel) prophesied that in last days the Lord's house would be established on the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills.
- ²In the latter days the mountain of the LORD's house [the temple] shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills... (Isa. 2:2)***
2. Baron claims that the sites mentioned were on the east, west, north, and south sides of Jerusalem. The gates and towers named cannot be identified with certainty. Geba was six miles north of Jerusalem, Rimmon was 35 miles southwest of Jerusalem.
 3. ***Safely inhabited:*** Jerusalem will be the safest city in all history (14:11). No enemy will ever disrupt the peace in Jerusalem. Jerusalem has endured 36 wars. It has been invaded over 50 times, conquered 20 times, reduced to rubble 17 times, and rebuilt 18 times.

- B. The Lord will bring total destruction to Israel's enemies (14:12-15). Zechariah here elaborates on the promise that Jerusalem will be safe (14:11). Jesus is zealous to stop anyone from ever disrupting the peace of Jerusalem. Chronologically, these verses describe what follows verses 3-8. The Lord will destroy the enemy by using four different means: plague (14:12), panic (14:13), fear-crazed Gentiles turning against each other (14:13), and anointed Israeli soldiers (14a).

¹²This shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths...¹³In that day a great panic from the LORD will be among them. Everyone will...raise his hand against his neighbor's hand;¹⁴Judah also will fight at Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be gathered together: gold, silver, and apparel in great abundance.¹⁵Such also shall be the plague on the horse and the mule, on the camel and the donkey. (Zech. 14:12-15)

1. **All the people:** The Lord will pay back each individual person who fought against Jerusalem, stole its goods, raped its women, and took captive its citizens (14:1-2).
2. **Plague:** The flesh, eyes, and tongues of the enemy soldiers will dissolve even as they stand there on their feet (14:12). The plague will kill many of their animals (14:15).
3. **Great panic:** Great fear will take hold of them and cause them to fight their own soldiers.
4. **Wealth:** Israel will reverse the earlier situation by taking the spoil of the Gentiles (14:2).

- C. The Gentiles shall be converted and unified with Israel in worshiping Jesus (14:16-19). Here we see God's zeal for the supremacy and glory of His Son, who will be worshiped by all nations.

¹⁶And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.¹⁷And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain.¹⁸If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.¹⁹This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. (Zech. 14:16-19)

1. **Everyone who is left:** The unsaved survivors of the Tribulation (who refused to worship the Antichrist) who stood against Jerusalem will be radically converted to become worshipers of the God of Israel. Scripture refers to "those who are left," who receive salvation and populate the millennial earth (Isa. 4:3; 10:20; 11:11; 49:6; 65:8; 66:19; Jer. 31:2; Ezek. 20:38-42; 36:36; Amos 9:9-10; Joel 2:32; Zech. 12:14; 13:8; 14:16).
2. **To worship the King:** All the Gentile survivors of the Tribulation will annually go up to Jerusalem to worship Jesus as King and to participate in the Feast of Tabernacles (14:16). Earlier, Zechariah prophesied of the nations coming to Jerusalem to pray (2:11; 8:20-23).

3. ***The families of the earth:*** All families are required to go to Jerusalem yearly to worship Jesus. In this they will acknowledge Israel's national supremacy in the millennial earth.
 4. ***Not come up or enter in:*** The Lord requires all to enter in to worshipping Jesus (14:18). Any family or nation who neglects to do this shall have no rain for their crops (14:17).
 5. ***Feast of Tabernacles:*** The one feast that God will require all to participate in will be the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths, or Ingathering). This feast celebrates the Lord's provision (food and crops), His redemption from slavery, the ingathering of the harvest of the nations to Jesus, and the fact of His tabernacling among His people.
 6. ***No rain:*** The Lord judged Israel's rebellion and compromise by withholding rain. The Lord will not make any exceptions for this requirement (Deut. 28:23-24).
- D. Israel will be the first entire nation to walk holy before God in every area of their life (14:20-21). Israel will walk in holiness in their ***public life*** (bells of the horses; 14:20), in their ***religious life*** (cooking pots in the Lord's house; 14:20), and in their ***private life*** (every pot in Judah; 14:21).
- ²⁰In that day "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" shall be engraved on the bells of the horses. The pots in the LORD's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. ²¹Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the LORD of hosts...In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts. (Zech. 14:20-21)***
1. ***The bells and pots:*** The bells on horses represent life on the streets in Jerusalem. The pots throughout Jerusalem and Judah represent private domestic life. Every pot throughout the area will be set apart to the Lord (14:21). The ordinary cooking pots in the temple (14:20) will be as holy as the bowls used to sprinkle the sacrificial blood on the brazen altar.
 2. ***Canaanite:*** There are no longer any ethnic Canaanites family lines, so this speaks of a type of behavior not a particular bloodline. The Canaanites throughout Israel's history represented those who were ungodly "merchants" and those rebellious towards God. Never again will a person who rebels against God be allowed to ever enter Jerusalem.
 3. God's original purpose for Israel was that they live as a holy nation of priests (Ex. 19:6). The world will see for the first time an entire nation in which every individual is radically dedicated to Jesus. Jerusalem as the world capital will truly be The Holy City. God's zeal has been manifested and the Lord will cause the counsel of His will to come to pass.
- ²"I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; with great fervor I am zealous for her...³I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, The Mountain of the LORD of hosts, The Holy Mountain." (Zech. 8:2-3)***

V. SUMMARY: THE GLORY OF GOD IN JERUSALEM UNDER JESUS' LEADERSHIP

- A. Jesus' kingship will be proclaimed to the nations with dramatic miracles that will establish a new order for His capital Jerusalem (14:6-21). Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem will be announced globally by all the lights in sky going dark (14:6). It will be a day of gloom for His enemies as utter darkness comes on the Antichrist's empire. Then, it will suddenly be illuminated in the evening in a very unique way that only God can understand (14:7). This unique and mysterious light will introduce God's new order for the created order (sun, moon, topography, animals, vegetation, etc.). A river with supernatural healing properties will flow out of the temple (14:8). Its waters will flow east to the Dead Sea and west into the Mediterranean Sea. It will flow from the temple, even in the summer when most streams in Israel dry up, and in the winter when it is cold.
- B. Jesus will reign from Jerusalem as the King of kings over all the earth. He will be the only person in the world that is acknowledged as God (14:9). Jesus will be received by all nations as their King. The topography of Jesus' global capital city will be drastically changed (14:10-11). The whole region will be greatly altered. It will be both leveled and raised, or elevated, to a height that surpasses all the other mountains. An earthquake will cause these topographical changes, which will make Jerusalem the perfect place to establish the world capital. Jerusalem will be the safest city in all history (14:11).
- C. In the midst of all these topographical changes the Lord will show His zeal for His city and people by destroying their enemies with a terrible plague; this will bring great panic (14:12-13) that will cause Israel's enemies to turn against each other (14:13). The plague will be terrifying, causing the flesh, eyes, and tongues of the enemy soldiers to dissolve, even as they stand on their feet (14:12). The plague will kill many of their animals (14:15). Israel will reverse the earlier situation in verse two by taking all the wealth, or spoil, of the Gentiles (14:14).
- D. The Gentiles shall be converted, and unified with Israel in worshiping Jesus (14:16-19). Here we see God's zeal for the supremacy and glory of His Son, who will be worshiped by all nations. The unsaved survivors of the Tribulation who stood against Jerusalem will be radically converted to become worshipers of the God of Israel. They will go up to Jerusalem annually to worship Jesus as King and to participate in the Feast of Tabernacles (14:16). In doing this they will acknowledge Jesus' glory and Israel's national supremacy in the millennial earth. The Lord will require everyone to do this (14:18). Any family or nation who neglects to do this shall have no rain for their crops (14:17). Some from Egypt will be tempted to resist.
- E. Israel will be the first entire nation to walk holy before God in every area of their life (14:20-21). Israel will walk in holiness in their *public life* (bells of the horses; 14:20), in their *religious life* (cooking pots in the Lord's house; 14:20), and in their *private life* (every pot in Judah; 14:21). God's original purpose for Israel was that they live as a holy nation of priests (Ex. 19:6). Never again will a person who rebels against God be allowed to enter Jerusalem. For the first time, the world will see an entire nation in which every individual is radically dedicated to Jesus. Jerusalem, as the world capital, will truly be The Holy City. God's zeal has been manifested and the Lord will cause the counsel of His will to come to pass.