

Understanding What is Happening in the Middle East

INTRODUCTION

I'm going to look at these notes just a little. We're not going to cover them in any detail. We never do. They're a reference point for later, for those of you who want to go into more detail.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ZECHARIAH 12—14

Paragraph A. Zechariah 12—14 is one of the most dramatic and important passages in all the Bible about the end times. I'm going to stress the word *important*: It's a must-know passage.

Go ahead and look at your neighbor and say, "I'm going to learn Zechariah 12—14, and so are you," or say anything you want.

OK, so that means you get to quiz them next week to see if they know it. No, it's going to take more than a week or two to understand this, but here's what I want you to put in your mind. I'm thinking of so many of the teens who are here. These are... OK... I was thinking of the younger, younger adults who are here, but... OK, there you go.

Zechariah 12—14 may not be three chapters that you are familiar with, but what I want you to do when you leave Kansas City is to say this when you go back to your family and church and your youth group: "We have to know Zechariah 12—14." If I don't convince you of anything tonight besides that you have to go and study these three chapters, then tonight has been a successful evening.

THE CONCLUSION OF GOD'S END-TIME PLAN

In these three chapters, we see how God's mysterious end-time plan comes to a conclusion.

I mean, the end-time plan is so interesting. Here is God with all His wisdom. He has total power, meaning He can do anything. He's smart enough to come up with any plan He wants, and He's powerful enough actually to pull it off. So the whiteboard is blank, so to speak, so God can write on it any script that He wants to end natural history and to transition the human race into the age to come.

Beloved, it may be a few decades out, and it may not be; it may be a little longer or a little shorter; but we are on the verge, historically, of the human race entering into a whole new order: not just a new world order, yes, but a new order of life where Jesus is going to return.

THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

He brings the New Jerusalem down to earth with Him. We don't go to heaven; Jesus is bringing heaven to the earth to begin a significant new chapter of human history on the earth, and you are going to be on the earth with a physical body.

Touch your body and say, "Physical body." You are going to have a physical body on the physical earth. The resurrected body is a physical body.

A little in the fall we're going to spend some weeks talking about heaven, meaning, heaven on earth—what it will be like to live on earth with a real, physical body, with a real job assignment on the physical earth.

Beloved, you are not going away. You are coming back.

If you meet the Lord before He comes, you are going to come back with Him, and if you are here when He comes, you are going to get caught up, transformed, reoriented, rewired, put through a really fast training program, and you are going to land on the earth.

THE MOST RADICAL TRANSFORMATION IN HISTORY

This transition is coming really soon. It's radical; it's drastic. It is the most radical transition in human history, and God could have planned the transition any way He wanted, but you know how He planned it? It's the strangest thing to my mind. He has a little nation, Israel, which is a new nation in terms of being a nation. Israel has only been in their land since 1948. For 2,000 years they didn't have a land. They were not a nation politically in that sense; they were a people group, but they didn't have a land, a nation, or a capital. They've only had it for a few years.

So God says, "Here's what I'm going to do: I'm going to take this group that has had no homeland for 2,000 years, and I am going to give them one suddenly." That's in 1948, when they became a nation. "Then I'm going to have every nation in the earth attack them."

THE STRANGENESS OF GOD'S PLAN

I could imagine in the elders' meeting in heaven, when God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are talking, and God the Father unveils the plan. It doesn't really work this way, but I can think of Jesus and the Holy Spirit saying, "Father, that's a good plan. That's an interesting plan."

It's the Father's plan: "I'm going to get one little nation. I'm going to get the whole world attacking them." Who would end human history with that concept?

Then Jesus is going to step out of heaven as a Jewish King. He's going to wipe out all the nations that attack, bring to conversion the nations who are there because they're not saved yet, bring them to a salvation experience, and then make them the new leaders on the physical earth.

I mean, Israel is going to get saved mostly after Jesus returns to the earth, and they will have their natural bodies. They will not be resurrected. They will get saved as Jesus preaches to them.

JESUS WILL PREACH TO THE JEWS

Now, that's a strange idea to some people. We're all comfortable with the fact that Jesus preached to people at the first coming, and He did a great job, but beloved, He can still preach. The physical Man, Jesus, the 5'8" Jewish Man, is coming to the earth, a physical man in a Jewish body, the same person as a human to rule the earth.

He is going to lead millions of Jews to salvation, and they will live their lives out under His leadership.

OUR RESIDENCE AND INTERACTION WITH THE DIFFERENT WORLDS

We will have resurrected bodies, and we will interact with them. The veil between the natural and the supernatural is going to be lifted, so the angels and the saints with resurrected, but physical bodies—our bodies will be physical bodies—will be living in the New Jerusalem, which is coming down to the earth.

Our residence will be in the New Jerusalem, but our sphere of work and our responsibility will be on the physical earth. Because the veil between the natural and the supernatural will be lifted, there will be tremendous interaction between the two realms.

DYING AND SWITCHING OVER

It is so dynamic. These Jewish people who are not converted, who don't take the mark of the beast, and who go through the Tribulation and are converted, will remain in their physical bodies for the rest of their lives; and then, when they die, they switch over.

People say, "How?" I say, "I don't know." The Bible doesn't say. I'm sure it's going to be easy. It is thought through. The Lord knows where He's going with that.

They are going to die and switch over, and move their residence to the New Jerusalem, but the nations as we know them will continue for another 1,000 years after this new regime is set into order.

THE TRANSITION OF THE AGES

What happens is at the transition of the two ages, the plan that God has to transition the two ages from this age to the age to come. Both of them will have natural and physical conditions, but where the veil is lifted, there will be dynamic interaction between the angels and resurrected saints and natural people, and we will bring the nations to the fullness of God's glory.

After a thousand years, it will shift to another dimension of God's purpose; it will go up another level in the glory of God, but this transition plan is right here in Zechariah 12—14.

AN ADMONITION TO STUDY

Again, I'm not going to try to go through all these six pages of notes here tonight. I give you just a little outline, particularly for those of you who are here short-term. I want you at least to have a paragraph, a few sentences, for each one of these key ideas in Zechariah 12—14.

I really want you to leave here and study this a little. I mean, you don't have to make it your number-one course of study, but you do need to know it because it's one of the clearest statements in the Bible as to how God is going to transition the two ages—this age and the age to come—and how the continuity of what we do in this age will matter in the age to come.

It's fantastic. It is a gift of God.

THE MEDIA'S PERPLEXITY

Paragraph B. It is a gift of God that God has given us the insight; that He has given us His roadmap of how the age is going to transition.

Now, the nations have no idea. Well, the truth is that most of the Church has no idea, because they don't read the Bible. We have to read the Bible, not just our favorite ten passages. I'm talking about the whole Bible. One-third of the Bible is prophecy. We have to understand what God has told us about how He's going to transition the age, at the end of this age, into the age to come. It's important that we understand these ideas so that we can tell people what's happening right now, already.

It's so interesting that the people in the media are so perplexed. "What's happening? What's the answer?" Just about everything I've heard in the media is wrong. It's different than what God says is happening, or what is happening. They may have insight, but almost no one in the media is saying it. No one is declaring with any insight what God thinks about the Middle Eastern troubles.

So Zechariah 12—14 is really critical.

ISRAEL'S MAIN CRISIS

Paragraph C. To understand the Middle East, you have to understand that Israel's main crisis is not with Islam. Israel's main crisis is not a military crisis, an economic crisis, or a border crisis. Israel's main crisis is with God.

That is Israel's dilemma. Her crisis is rooted in this fact: God loves Israel. I don't want to say this arrogantly, but I want to say it clearly: Most of Israel hates God. I know that's a bold statement, but it's true. I have the words of Jesus to back it up.

Jesus said in John 15, and this is true all over the world, in every religion, "If they don't love Me, they don't love My Father. If they hate Me, then they hate Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If they hate Me, they hate the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (Jn. 15:18-25, paraphrased).

He says, "I know. I am His Son. They hate both of Us when they hate Me."

I have confidence in Jesus' statement. God loves Israel; He isn't going to let go of them. That is Israel's problem. It's a glorious problem in the sense that God says, "No, I love you."

ISRAEL'S ONE SOLUTION

So Israel is trying to sort out how to get Islam in a place of peace with them. Islam is not your problem, Israel. God is your problem because you are at war with Him, and yes, He's going to bring peace in the days to come, but the real answer to the problem of Israel is that He's going to use people like you, who will be messengers of what He's doing and thinking, and what Jesus is about. And when Israel makes peace with Jesus, the world will be at peace.

I interact with a lot of leaders from Israel. I've interacted with a number of political leaders, not a lot of them, but some of them in high positions, as well as some of the higher-profile ministries in the land, and often they say this at the big meetings, the big banquets.

I've been to a few of these banquets, where a lot of people wear tuxedos. Not everyone, but some do. There are a thousand people, and it costs \$1,000 a plate, and everyone is the head. They all come to these things.

I've been to a few of those, and they say, "You cannot say Jesus, because well, we get offended."

I say, “There is no answer apart from Him. Why are we pretending like Israel is doing well? Israel is doing terribly. They are at war with the Person who can solve their problems.”

Well, anyway, let’s move on.

THE POLITICAL INCORRECTNESS OF THIS MESSAGE

Paragraph D. The end-time message, not just in Zechariah 12—14, though definitely there, but also beyond that, is politically incorrect. Just underline that—“politically incorrect.”

What does that mean? That means that if you take a stand for it, a lot of people will be mad at you. That’s what it means.

“Politically incorrect” means that if you’re bold about it, a lot of people will get mad. The Church will be mad, Islam will be mad, Arabs will be mad, the Jews will be mad. Not everyone, but all the people groups of the earth will be mad if you take a stand on what God says, because it’s politically incorrect.

I give a number of examples in paragraph D as to the extremes. A lot of Israel is going to get converted, but a lot of Israel is going to worship the Antichrist. A lot of Israel is going to have revival; a lot of Israel is going to fall away. Portions of Israel will be supernaturally-protected, but portions of Israel will die and go to prison camps.

There are all these extremes, and a number of those extremes are right here in Zechariah 12—14. It’s kind of like a mini-book of Revelation.

THE OFFENSIVENESS OF THIS MESSAGE

Zechariah 12—14 is one prophecy. It’s three chapters, but it’s one prophecy. The most offensive fact—paragraph D—is that Zechariah prophesied that two-thirds of the nation of Israel is going to be killed in the crisis.

Absolutely no one likes that. Maybe the terrorists like that, but I mean, the Jews don’t like it, the Christians don’t like it, the locals in Israel don’t like it. Nobody likes the fact, but we can’t get rid of the fact. We can’t do the ostrich approach and put our heads in the ground, and hope that it just goes away. The problem isn’t going away.

LOVESICK WORSHIPPERS OF JESUS

There is another fact that is equally offensive to many people, and to Israel: One-third of Israel is going to get radically saved and be lovesick worshippers of Jesus. There are fifteen million Jews in the earth at this time, so that’s four or five million people.

Beloved, could you imagine some millions of born-again believers? This is really tough. At the end of the day, all of Israel either ends up dying or, if they survive, they get radically converted at the second coming.

Many are going to get converted between now and then. We’re not going to give up on Israel now until the second coming.

As a matter of fact, it's the efforts of leading people to the Lord right now that is significantly related to the events that are going to happen that will lead up to the second coming. So there are more Jews getting saved right now in Israel than at any time in history.

Two-thirds. I mean, this is like, "Lord, could You soften it? Could You have a third category?" Two-thirds die premature deaths—that's millions. One-third who don't die are radical Jesus lovers. To the average Jewish man on the street, both of those are bad news. Neither of those turn out well for them. "Is there a third category where we're just Jews, and we're not bothered by God or man?"

That doesn't exist. That option does not exist.

That's what Israel wants—to be not bothered by God or man. They just want to have normal lives. They don't get that option because God is going to make them the leaders of the earth when Jesus returns.

THE NECESSITY OF BOLDNESS

Paragraph F. These themes, some of which I have written down more clearly than I'm going to cover—we need to be bold about them. Whether you're fifteen or fifty or eighty, we need to be bold and clear in proclaiming these themes.

It doesn't mean you need a microphone. You might be telling three people in your youth group; you might be telling a friend driving to school, but we need to make these truths known. We may email them to a friend. You don't have to understand it all before you begin to be a messenger. We're messengers now, even before we fully understand the message.

Some people think, "Well, you know, I'll study for twenty-five years, and then I'll be a messenger." No, we'll go deeply for twenty-five years if the Lord doesn't return, but beloved, we're messengers now. I'm giving the message right now. Tonight, I'm just giving part of the message. I'm acting as a messenger now.

So it's not just that we're going to be messengers. We're messengers right now to ones, twos, threes, tens, and twenties. It's very significant.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROPHECY

I'm going to give you just a little overview of these three chapters. Again, I hope you take this page right here and do something with it—learn it, share it, change some of the words on it if you want. You know that our copyright is the right to copy. Use this. Make your own handout and run with it. Don't just tell others; learn it yourself.

There are three different sections to this one prophecy. Section one starts really positively.

DAVID AND GOLIATH MEET AGAIN AT THE END OF THE WORLD

Paragraph A—Israel has a sudden military, and then a sudden spiritual victory or breakthrough. Suddenly, all the nations are gathered around Israel.

It says "all the nations." There are 210 nations in the earth: 209 of them are Gentile; one of them is Jewish. All 209 nations are Gentile nations, all of them, and the Scripture says here in Zechariah—you can read it later—

that all of them will gather against Israel. The idea is to exterminate Israel, but suddenly, Zechariah 12 tells us, there's a great victory.

There's a great victory where they win the battle. It's a David-and-Goliath reenactment on a global stage, actually. This isn't even a neat little point: The David-and-Goliath story was meant to be understood as the end-of-the-age crisis.

David really did meet Goliath, but it was understood as a clear picture. It took a whole chapter (1 Sam. 17) to show the picture of the giants surrounding Israel, and how Israel didn't have the military equipment to pull this thing off, and they had a slingshot, but they had God's anointing with it.

ALL OF ISRAEL GETS SAVED

Then what happens here in Zechariah 12, section one, is that all of Israel gets saved. Romans 11:26 says all of Israel gets saved.

The one-third—which is two to five million people, because we don't know how many people there will be at that point of time in history—will all get saved. One hundred percent of the surviving Jews will become born again. They will not go up in the Rapture, because they're unsaved when the Rapture happens, but Jesus comes.

Jesus is still a really good preacher. He's going to tell them who He is, and every single Jew who is alive on the earth—every one of them, which will be one-third of them, because God already knows the number in His perfect wisdom—are going to get profoundly saved.

The Jews who are saved now will go up in the Rapture and meet the Lord in the air, and we will all get changed and rearranged in the air, and then we will come back down and go to work.

THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLES

B. The second section. The first section is cool: If all you preached was section one of this message (because there are three sections to this message), then everyone would like you.

All of Israel would like you. They would say, "Cool, we're going to win." They don't really like that they're-going-to-get-converted-to-Jesus thing in section one, but they do like that we're going to beat up the Gentiles.

Normally, when leaders in the body of Christ interact with leaders in Israel, they go to Zechariah 12 and they say, "Yeah, yeah, we're going to win!"

I say, "Come on, tell them the whole story, not just their favorite parts of the dessert. Tell them about the whole drama that's going to happen."

BEING PREPARED FOR THE HARD TIME COMING

Section B is the really tough part. Section B is the most neglected part of end-time prophecy. It's the part of Israel's future suffering. The Church doesn't like to say it because Israel will get mad. Even the Jewish believers who have ministries, many of them, most of them avoid this like the plague, but beloved, it's not going to go away. I do understand them avoiding it, because it makes everyone sad and it troubles everyone, so they think, "Life is hard enough. Why tell the bad news?"

Because we have to get ready, and knowing the bad news prepares us for it.

Noah said, “There’s bad news. It’s going to rain for a long time.” Whoever believed him built a boat, and if we know bad news is coming, we build a boat. I don’t mean we build a real boat, but we do things with our lives that prepare us for the hour of trouble.

The knowledge of coming trouble is critical because we prepare now for the trouble, and for the people who don’t prepare, when the trouble comes, at least say they, “Oh, I’ve heard of this for years. Wait, this is in the Bible.” Then they read it in the middle of the trouble, and they say, “Well, the trouble is here,” but then they find out there’s encouragement in the trouble.

We have to tell the nations that trouble is coming. We have to tell them the whole story.

If they believe us, then they prepare with us, but if they don’t believe us, then they don’t prepare with us, but at least they have a reference point when the trouble comes. At least they think that somewhere there is hope. “Let’s read the Bible and see what God says about this trouble.”

Section two is the hard part. Beloved, we also have to do section two. It’s not my favorite part, but you have to be a section-two Christian and not just a section-one Christian.

WHEN JESUS COMES AGAIN

OK, section three is really fun. Section three isn’t as much about Israel’s victory; it’s about King Jesus coming over and the new world order—the new world order of life. Section three is the real fun. If you really want to go for the glory, go right to section three; but almost no one does.

I haven’t heard a message on Zechariah 14 three times in thirty-five years of walking with the Lord; probably not even one or two times. I can’t remember it, and it’s one of the most glorious chapters about the second coming of Christ.

It’s about Jesus coming: The lights go on and off a few times, the mountains shake and move around, living water begins to flow out of Jerusalem supernaturally. All these awesome things happen that transition into the new order. That’s all in section three.

Again, you can take some time in your E-12 groups and break this down and write some notes and journal it. Open it up at the prayer meetings and say, “Lord, speak to me; help me understand.” Bring your questions to other people if you don’t understand them.

THE GOD WHO STRETCHES OUT THE HEAVENS

III. Let’s look at section one a little. Again, we’re not going to go into great detail. The great military victory, the great spiritual victory—again, this is the one that everyone talks about. If people do Zechariah 12—14, they definitely focus on section one, they completely ignore section two, and, I don’t know, I guess they wear out by section three, but section three is really where the glory is.

It starts off in paragraph A—God introduces Himself. Look at how He introduces Himself in Chapter 12:1. I'll read the text.

It says, “The burden of the word of the Lord against Israel. Thus says the Lord” —now He describes Himself in three ways—“who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him” (Zech. 12:1).

So what God is saying is, “I am the God of Genesis 1,” and the reason He introduces Himself in this way is because the message of Zechariah 12—14, the plan that He is going to give Zechariah, is so difficult, so impossible to do, that no one besides the Genesis 1 God could pull it off.

THE BRILLIANCE OF JESUS

When you read Zechariah 12—14 by natural wisdom, you say, “It is impossible for this to happen. There's not one chance these things can happen, because they are totally supernatural;” and God says, “You're right,” but Jesus can say, “I was there in Genesis 1 under My Father's authority; I spoke and created the earth by My own words.”

So Jesus is describing Himself as the God of wisdom. Do you know how smart you have to be to keep 100 million galaxies in one place? The Milky Way galaxy has 100 billion stars. The sun is one of the smaller ones. There are 100 billion stars, of which our star is one. Our galaxy is one of the smallest ones. There are 100 million galaxies in the known universe, of which the Milky Way is one of the small ones.

Do you know how smart you have to be to keep galaxies in order? God is really smart. He's not just powerful; He's really smart, too. He has these things spinning, connected, and worked out. What?!

He says, “The God who stretches out the galaxies is the One who planned the end-time drama. It is smart. The God who laid the foundation of the earth with His power.” It's going to take power to enact this drama of Zechariah 12—14. He says, “I've got it.”

THE GOD WHO LOVES HUMANS

The part I really like as well is the part that says that He is the God who formed the spirit of man. Do you know why He created humans? He likes humans. He loves humans. He's actually saying here, “I created humans because I like them, but it's not only that. I understand them because I created them.”

When you read Zechariah 12—14 you say, “Lord, You are being a little heavy-handed here. This is really going to be heavy if you do this. Wow. A lot of people are going to die. Do You get it?”

He says, “Yes. Do you not remember? I am the One who created humans, because I like them, but I also understand them. I created them.”

So this title is very important. What He's saying is, “I have all power and all wisdom. I am filled with love, and I understand how difficult and how sensitive these issues are.” That's what He's saying by that introduction.

THE CUP OF DRUNKENNESS

Paragraph B. Now He goes onto two different metaphors: He says that Jerusalem is like a cup of drunkenness, or a cup that makes people drunk. That's what a cup of drunkenness is: It's a cup where you drink it and you become drunk. It's a simple point. It's a heavy stone. These are the two pictures.

Let's read it. This is very important, because this is happening right now in the nations. "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness" —which means that whoever drinks this cup will get drunk—"to all the surrounding peoples" (Zech. 12:2).

Whenever you see the word *peoples* like that, it almost always means *nations*. So you can put the word *nations* there.

THE SIEGE AGAINST JUDAH AND JERUSALEM

Look at what it says: "When they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem." Now, Judah is the geographic region; Jerusalem is the city. Judah would be the country, and Jerusalem is the main city, for those who are new with this geography here.

What's going to happen is, the nations around Israel are going to lay a siege, which means they are going to surround the region of Judah and the city of Jerusalem. They will put military power and force all around the area. It's going to take millions of people to do this whole thing.

They are going to completely surround and cut off Jerusalem from the earth. They are going to surround it and lay siege to it, which means that they will starve them out and not let anyone come or go, so that they cannot get any supplies.

The nations don't want to destroy Jerusalem. They want the city intact because they want to use it for evil purposes, for dark religion. They want to use it for the Antichrist religion. They want the city, but they have to get rid of the people in the city without destroying the city.

They could just bomb the city if that was all it was; they want the city because it is holy. I mean *holy* in the negative sense because it's important. It's sacred. That's what I'm trying to say. It's sacred in the scheme of the Antichrist religion.

So they're going to lay a siege around it.

THE SPIRIT OF INSANITY

"And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples" (Zech. 12:3). Again, put the word *nations* there instead of *peoples*. Let's read that again: "I am going to make Jerusalem a cup, so that if you touch Jerusalem, it's like drinking the cup." To touch Jerusalem in a negative way is like drinking the cup. "You are going to get drunk if you touch Jerusalem in a negative way. You are going to drink a cup that is going to get you drunk. You are going to get dizzy. You are going to get intoxicated, and you are going to get in trouble."

That is what God is saying: “You are going to lose your bearings. You are going to get disoriented. You are going to get intoxicated. You are going to do wrong things. You are going to lose your perspective if you touch Jerusalem.”

Because we find out in the very next verse that a spirit of insanity, a spirit of madness, comes on the soldiers who come against Jerusalem; a spirit of insanity, which is the same thing as drunkenness. They will get intoxicated; they will lose rational perspective about what is going on.

You can see that right now in some of the nations surrounding them: They are crazed in their eyes. They will give up everything just to take the city, it doesn't matter how great the cost. They are completely disconnected with rational thinking. They're already drinking the cup and becoming intoxicated.

When a person becomes intoxicated, they not only lose their abilities to think rationally, they get disoriented. Also, what happens is, they get a false sense of being invincible. They get this bold sense of, “I can do anything.” It's completely false.

That's what alcohol does: It makes people bold to do things they normally wouldn't do. It causes a lot of trouble.

THE STONE THAT WOULDN'T MOVE

“And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem” —not just a cup of drunkenness, but—“a very heavy stone for all peoples” (Zech. 12:3). There are two things: a cup that makes you drunk and a stone that is heavy. This is going to be for all the peoples.

Then He goes on and says something more specific: “All who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it” (Zech. 12:3b).

Now, what is God saying here? He's saying that there are going to be two nations—well, right now you hear the president of Iran. He says, “Let's drive Israel into the sea. Let's heave them away!”

That's a very common thing. You hear it today from the terrorist groups: “Let's push Israel into the ocean. Let's heave them from their place.”

Here is what God says: “You tell them that if they try to heave Jerusalem away, they will find out there is a power behind Jerusalem that they are not counting on. It is Me.”

Because all the enemies of Israel only see Israel. They don't see God who is jealous for Israel. I mean, that is Israel's problem: Israel only sees Israel, not the God who is jealous for them. Obviously, there are exceptions.

Now, the nations put their shoulders and try to push this rock, because they think it's just a little nation, like a little rock. They say, “Hey, let's just kick it into the ocean.”

He says, “They're going to find out that it's a very heavy rock, number one.”

“No, it’s not. It’s one of the smaller nations. Let’s just push it into the sea. There are 50 million of us. Let’s just push them into the sea and be done with it. What is all this talking about?” some of them are saying.

Well, they don’t know the power behind that stone. It is a very heavy stone.

They think that one nation can just push it over, and then all of a sudden ten nations, and then all of a sudden 210 nations of the earth, have their shoulder against it, and that stone will not move. It’s a heavy stone because there’s an invisible hand that is making that stone heavy.

THE STONE WITH RAZOR BLADES

It’s more than that: The stone has razor blades on it. I mean in the metaphorical sense. It says, “When they lean against it, it will lacerate them. It will cut them to shreds.”

It’s not just heavy. It’s a sharp stone. Whatever nation leans on it, they will come away lacerated and cut to pieces. They will say, “This is a little pebble! Why can we not move this thing?”

Because there is a hand behind it that makes it heavy, and makes it sharp.

HOW DOES ISRAEL SURVIVE?

Again, Israel doesn’t even understand it. Israel is saying, “How can we keep making it?”

I asked that. I got to talk to one of the top leaders in the Knesset some time ago. I said, “How do you account for the fact that it’s a million-to-one odds and you keep winning? What do you think it is?”

He said, “Well, I am not religious like you, so I would probably have a different point of view.”

I said, “Undoubtedly.”

We had a good talk, and I said, “Why is it? It’s always 100 to one, a million to one, whatever it is, and you always end up existing.”

He said, “We are fighters.”

I said, “I don’t think that’s the real reason. I know you’re fighters, but there’s more going on.”

There is an invisible hand that is keeping this land together, and it’s causing trouble. It’s causing trouble to Israel.

Look at this: The Lord is making Jerusalem a heavy stone. Some people think it’s the Jews who are making Jerusalem a heavy stone, or the Arabs. It’s God making it a heavy stone.

JERUSALEM WILL BE A HEAVY STONE FOR EVERYONE

Paragraph D. I talk a little about the drunkenness. I’ve already covered it, so I’ll skip that, now that I’m looking over it.

Paragraph E. Let's talk about the heavy stone for a minute.

Now, Jerusalem isn't just a heavy stone to the people who touch it negatively. It's a stone that cuts you to pieces if you touch it negatively, which means you stand against it. That's what I mean by "touch it negatively," but Jerusalem is a heavy stone for everyone, believers and unbelievers.

God says this: "I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all nations, for all peoples—believers and unbelievers alike."

Paragraph E. God will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for everyone. Everyone will have to decide to stand for God and His purpose in Jerusalem, or they will stand against God and against His people in Jerusalem.

There will be no neutral ground. Jesus said it: "If they are not for Me, they are against Me" in terms of this issue (Mt. 12:30, paraphrased).

THE VALLEY OF DECISION

Now, what happens right now is that most of the people in the earth, and even a handful of people in this room, not by belligerence, but accidentally, you just never thought about it. You're not for Jerusalem, and you're not against Jerusalem. You say, "I never thought about it much," and most of the nations—most of the Church and most of the nations that are not a part of the Church—the people of the earth, don't think about it much. But that's not an option.

He says in Zechariah 12:3, "I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone to everyone. Everyone is going to have to decide, one way or another, and if you decide wrongly, this stone will cut you. If you decide rightly, it is still a heavy stone to carry."

The issue of Jerusalem will have no neutral ground.

God will use, paragraph E, the issue of Jerusalem to separate the righteous from the unrighteous in families, in neighborhoods, in schools, in the marketplace, and in all spheres of life.

That's not true in 2006. You can see it growing, but in another five to fifteen years, if the Lord does not return before then, and I think we have that kind of time; I think we have more time than that, but again, no one in heaven is asking my opinion—I could be wrong—this thing really could be escalating far quicker than I think, but that's another subject.

A CONTROVERSY WITH THE WORLD AT JERUSALEM

The point is that in a few years, the issue of Jerusalem will trouble everyone. It will change all the gas prices; the issue of Jerusalem will be the issue in every junior high school in the earth, not just in America and not just in the Middle East. The issue of Jerusalem will be in every neighborhood: "Are you for them, or are you against them?"

It will be some years down the road, and people will be saying, "What on earth happened? You can't go anywhere without declaring where you are, one way or another."

There will be a number of reasons. It won't just be Jews and Islam. There will be a number of other reasons that will make this an unavoidable conflict for everyone. Everyone—home-school moms with their kids at home and a few friends across the neighborhood, working together, raising their kids homeschooling; it will be an issue even there.

The Lord says, "I promise you that the scenario will unfold, or the plan will unfold, or the situation will unfold, and it will stick for everyone. No one will be able to be neutral."

LEARNING AND PREPARING TO STAND FOR ISRAEL

Joel 3. The passage that I have here is talking about this very thing, about all the nations gathering. Joel 3 is all about what Zechariah 12—13 are about. All the nations are gathering around Israel in Joel 3. It's the exact same thing. As a matter of fact, Joel 3 and Zechariah 12—14 go together. I mean, they are really companion passages.

Here is what Joel says: "Multitudes, multitudes! All the billions of the earth are in the valley of decision. They have to decide if they are for or against God."

So many people say, "God, I love You, but I don't want to mess with the Israel thing."

The Lord says, "I'm not giving you the option."

"Well, I don't even care about Israel."

"I'm not giving you the option because there are going to be people in your school, in your neighborhood, in your family who have very strong opinions in the marketplace. You won't be able to move without taking a stand one way or another, and whatever stand you take will cause conflict. It will be the heavy stone of the planet in the generation the Lord returns."

So what do we do? We are in the valley of decision right now, but this valley of decision He is talking about is taking a stand for the politically incorrect truths of God's end-time purpose.

We have to stand for Israel. We have to stand for what God stands for.

Our stand for Israel is going to make Israel, because our stand for Israel says, "Your problem is that most of you hate God."

"How dare you say that to us!"

"Well, that is what the Bible says."

"Well, Mike, could you just delete a couple of those phrases and make it softer?"

"No, I have to stand where God stands."

It's troubling everywhere. The Church doesn't really like it, the Jews don't like it, and Islam doesn't like it. No one likes God's end-time plan. Really, no one does.

THE PURPOSE IN THE MIND OF GOD

What the Lord is doing with His end-time plan is that He is causing the righteous to exercise their muscles, so to speak. He is causing our hearts to be purified. He is making us stand for righteousness in these difficult spots. Everyone has to choose one way or the other, and our entire life in God is going to be in the balance.

Beloved, that has not come to a head yet, and it may not come to a head in another decade or two. It might become that intense for ten to twenty more years.

In the Middle East it is already that intense, but it may be a while before it hits all of our schools. But I promise you, based on the Word of God in Zechariah 12, it will be a heavy stone that every single nation of the earth, every people of the earth, will have to confront.

Right now we are in a valley of decision in our spiritual life, because if you and I aren't living close to the Lord, if we're living with compromise in our life right now, our hearts will get dull, and we will never get to stand for these ideas in the days to come if our hearts are dull, and if our hearts are spiritually bored and weak.

The only way you and I will stand boldly in the valley of decision in the future, the only way we will be bold in ten to fifteen years, is if our spirits are vibrant and our hearts are alive in God right now.

THE MUDDY PRECIPICE OF COMPROMISE

A compromised believer will not stand for the difficult, politically-incorrect concepts. They will not.

They'll say, "Nah, it's just too much trouble. I'll go on the other side."

You don't want to go on the other side; you can go on the other side for a little while, but sooner or later, the other side will make you fully deny the Lord.

Maybe when you first go over there it doesn't, but sooner or later, that stand that says, "I am not going to take a stand," will cause you to make a stand by not standing. You'll just stand by and say, "I'm not standing for Israel; I'm joining the other team accidentally. I'm not going to join them officially. I'm just going to hang out with them."

Beloved, you have joined them.

THE ENTRY TO THE VALLEY

Paragraph F. We are in the beginning stages of the valley of decision right now in our lives. We are in a place where we are saying no to darkness in our spirits so that we can take a stand. We are in the valley of decision right now.

THIS IS THE LORD'S DOING

Paragraph H—The Lord is the One who is gathering all the armies against Israel. Look at it: It says it in three verses right here, and there are more besides. "For I will gather the nations" (Zech. 14:2).

"You're gathering? Well, no wonder it's working, God. You're gathering the nations."

“Yes, I’m doing it.”

The devil is participating, and so are evil men, but beyond the devil and evil men, God says, “I am doing this,” so we’re in a jam here. “Well, Lord, I’m praying that the terrorist nations wouldn’t gather around Israel, but I’m praying against the Bible because You said You are gathering them. I am in a mess here.”

“PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM”

Are our prayers keeping the nations from gathering? Are our prayers causing the nations to gather? And, just to be safe, I don’t want anyone taking Zechariah 14 to the prayer meeting saying, “In the name of Jesus, Islam gather! Attack in the name of Jesus!” Don’t do that! “I’m just quoting the prophetic Scriptures!” Don’t go there.

Just let God determine when and how and where. We should always pray for the peace of Jerusalem. God says, “You guys are little guys. You’re little peewees down there, so you pray for the positive, and I will do the negative, but don’t be surprised when the negative happens, because it will happen.”

You will get some little whippersnappers down there praying these prayers: “Attack in the name of Jesus! Lord, come quickly and deliver them!” Just don’t go there. We’re praying for the peace of Jerusalem. Why? Because our minds are unrenewed; our hearts are impure. We just pray for the positive; that is where we are in these days.

THE TURN OF THE TIDE

Now, if an angel comes to us and says, “Things are shifting; now I want you to pray for these negative things,” then we will go there. They’re in the Bible, and some of God’s prophets prayed for the negatives, but none of us are in that place with God. We are going to pray for the positive, but I’m just assuring you that at the end of the day, it won’t be Israel invading Lebanon, which is happening right now, or at the border. That’s not going to be an issue.

It’s going to go the other way. All the nations are going to go the other way. This is only a momentary little parenthetical part of the end-time plan. It’s going to completely swing the other way, and the nations will gather around Jerusalem.

THE MIRACLE OF ISRAEL

Beloved, we are watching the beginning of these things right now in our daily world events. Zechariah wrote this stuff 2,500 years ago. Israel wasn’t a nation for 2,000 years. The Bible scholars for 2,000 years said, “Zechariah 12—14 cannot be right, because Israel isn’t even a nation. There’s not a chance they will be a nation. For 2,000 years they haven’t even had an army. They don’t have money. They don’t have anything to pull off a nation.”

The Lord said, “Watch this.”

1948—Suddenly, they’re a nation, and now they’re in the middle of all the headlines. This little nation is causing more headlines in every single city of the earth.

THE LORD HAS A CONTROVERSY WITH ISRAEL

Why? Because God is gathering the nations against Israel. God has a controversy with Israel. “Israel, I love you and you don’t love Me, but I’m not letting go. You will rule the earth with Me. Watch and see. Body of Christ, stand with Israel. Help them, pray for them, speak with them, stand with them in persecution, and help them see their destiny to lead the world to bring the knowledge of Jesus.”

We will all participate in bringing the knowledge of Jesus to the world, but Israel will lead. They will be the apostolic nation in the millennial kingdom.

God wants us to pray and help and serve and be a part of getting them ready for this while we are proclaiming Jesus to the nations as well. We don’t choose one or the other; we don’t choose either to preach Jesus to the nations of Israel. We do both. We want revival here, in all the world, and in Israel. We’re going for all of it.

THE MEANS BY WHICH IT OCCURS

Paragraph I. This prophecy doesn’t tell us how this whole scenario happens. Zechariah takes us right to the final hours, and he has all the nations surrounding Israel. “Zechariah, did you not miss a couple of points? How did you... did you miss a couple of steps of the story?”

He just brings this prophecy right to the end-time scenario, but you know what the real issue is? God put a lot of oil in the enemy nations.

I can imagine some of the leaders of Israel through the years: “God, You put the oil in the wrong nations.”

God says, “No, on purpose I did that. I want them to have the oil because I want them to seduce all the nations to come against you. I want to wake you up, and then I want to stun you with My loyalty to you. Even though you have hated Me, I am going to show you My loyalty. I will forgive you and crown you with glory. I’m going to show the whole earth how kind I am even to those who are against Me.”

So He told Esau and Ishmael, “Go over to these nations,” way back then, when the Arabic and Islamic nations were beginning. God put oil in their nations because He wanted them to have the power to seduce the earth in the end.

GOD’S DILEMMA WITH THE NATIONS

God has painted Himself into a corner. God has the whole room painted. The door is over there, and He has painted Himself into a corner. He cannot get out; He put Himself in divine checkmate.

The only possible way God can get out of this dilemma is with His power and wisdom from Zechariah 12:1. Remember, He said, “I am the God who stretched out the heavens; I am the God who laid the foundations of the earth, and I am the God who understands the human plight. I am sympathetic to the human condition. I formed the spirit of man.”

GOD ALONE THE SALVATION OF ISRAEL

Israel right now is looking to America. Even a lot of Christians are looking to America.

Beloved, America is not going to deliver Israel. I assure you that America will not deliver Israel for one reason: God will not allow it.

Now, we need to stand with Israel for our good—not for Israel’s good. We need to stand for Israel because we need to line up with God’s heart.

America needs Israel way more than Israel needs America. Now, you’re not going to convince the politicians on either side of that, because they’re not looking at the invisible hands.

God looks at America and says, “America, you are not going to deliver Israel. I am not going to allow it. You don’t have nearly the power nor the wisdom to deliver them. Their problem isn’t Arabs. Their problem is that they have a controversy with Me, and you cannot help them on that unless you are a praying, prophetic person in the name of Jesus.”

ONLY A PATRIOT TO HEAVEN

So some believers get really jazzed about Israel, and they get really into America, and they’re patriotic, Israeli, Zionist, patriotic Americans, and they wave the flag like redneck Texans. They’re all together in one big thing, with their cowboy shirts, “Yeah Zion, Israel, and Jesus!” and they get the dog and the shotgun, and they get it all mixed up. They think it’s all about, “Glory to God! I’m for Israel, brother. America, stand up and vote for Israel.”

They get really mixed up with their patriotism and their good ol’ boy stuff. It’s about Jesus, and God has set the nations against Israel. He put the oil in their hands; He put Himself in divine checkmate, and America is not going to bail out Israel. The ally that Israel has is a holy, praying, prophetic Church. That is the ally that Israel has at the end of the age.

Well, let’s just stop with that. Let’s stand. We’ll just end with that. I could go on forever, so this is just as good of a time as any to stop.

MINISTRY TIME

The phrase on my mind is, “The valley of decision.” We are going to take a stand for these ideas on a global level, though right now we need to take a stand, but the day is coming when it will be mandatory. The nations are not pressing us, but they are going to.

Everyone is going to have to declare their loyalty one way or the other in the years to come.

Beloved, we are in the valley of decision in our lives now. We have to get rid of what the Song of Solomon calls “the little foxes” (Song 2:15), those little areas of compromise that are stealing, that are nibbling at your heart. It’s the little nickel-and-dime sins that are keeping us from having a vibrant heart.

We have to get rid of those, because if we don’t have a vibrant heart, if we are not alive in God—use whatever term you want; living close to the Lord is what I’m talking about—you are not going to be able to stand in the valley of decision in the days to come.

We are in the early days of the valley right now. There are people in this room right now that the Lord has really been dealing with these little foxes in the areas of your life where they are nibbling at your fruit. They are destroying the fruit of your heart. It's slander, gossip, bitterness, a little immorality, a little drunkenness, a little lying, a little bit of wasting your time and money in ways that are not pleasing the Lord, a little of a whole bunch of things.

The Lord is saying, "I want you to get rid of these little foxes." They have jumped into your garden, and they are eating the fruit, and your heart is getting smaller, not bigger, in the things of God.

If, in the last couple of days, or even today, the Lord has been talking to you about how you have to confront some of these issues—I mean, we all have issues, but I'm talking about those whom the Lord has really been pressing for the last couple of days or longer—I want to invite you to come up here and take a stand.

Say, "Lord, I am going to get through this," and we are going to pray for you. You are making a stand, as well, before the Lord. You don't have to come forward to do that, but if it's on your heart to do that and you would like prayer, you can do it, of course, in your chair, but I would like to invite you to come up here.

I want to invite you to come up here. You are in the valley of decision in that early day.

Beloved, now is the time to go hard. Some of you are in different programs and internships and things, and you're here at IHOP-KC and you're still coasting. You're still doing a little pornography on the side, a little of this on the side.

Let's just stop it. I'm talking as a friend, as a brother. I'm not rebuking you.

What are we doing? Why are we here? Why did we come to Kansas City? It's not to see if we can sin more and not get caught by the com leaders. We're here to get our hearts connected.

What are we doing? It doesn't matter if it's three weeks or three months or three years. What are you here for? Why did you leave your place, your city—not to skip prayer and the Word?

Beloved, these days are serious. They are important. Anyway, it is a valley of decision—a time of deciding.

We are just going to wait on the Lord for a few minutes. Keep us blameless with no compromise. Help us, Lord. Give us grace, Lord, even today we ask.

Lord, we ask You to release Your power. Come and deliver us. We want to love You, Lord. We want to give ourselves to You, Lord. We want to be pleasing. Come and deliver us and help us. Deliver me.

Deliver me, O Lord.

I want to be holy before You, blameless in Your sight. Give us a steady heart, Lord. Give me a steady heart. Give me a steady heart, O God.



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