

**Message #17****Zechariah 14:1-7**

When we were in Florida, we were discussing what things were like when the hurricane hit Florida. My sister said that you could not buy gasoline for your cars for a few days. All of the gasoline stations were out of gas and no one could get in to resupply it. She said what you had in your car was it. You had to be very careful where you chose to go because you were not going to be able to get any more gas for a while.

This book of Zechariah predicts that just before Jesus Christ returns, things in this world will become very primitive and very disastrous. God will be pouring out His wrath on this Christ-rejecting, God-mocking world. He will hammer the world with a series of heavenly wrath judgments and that will mean life as people know it and enjoy it will come to an end. Food will be scarce. Water will be scarce. Travel will be tough. You won't be able to go to a gas station and say, "Fill it up." That will be the way it is for the world. But for Israel, it will be even worse, because the time of Jacob's trouble will feature an Antichrist who is on a vendetta to kill Jews. It will be in this very context that Jesus Christ will return.

We come now to one of the most amazing predictions you will ever see in the Bible. This was the chapter of the Bible that caused Martin Luther to say, "I give up for I am not sure what the prophet is talking about" (*Lectures on Zechariah*, p. 337). But the words are clear, if you take them literally.

For Israel, this is one of the most intimidating and one of the most exciting predictions you will ever see in the Bible. When you look at what is predicted there are obvious conclusions to draw:

- 1) The things in this chapter sure have not happened yet anywhere in history.
- 2) The things in this chapter predict some specific things for Jerusalem and Israel.
- 3) The things described in this chapter use very literal and specific language that demands a futuristic literal interpretation. There is nothing symbolic in the language that would lead to any other type of interpretation.
- 4) There is only One true interpretation possible for this passage and it is this:

**GOD, IN THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST, IS GOING TO LITERALLY AND PHYSICALLY RETURN TO JERUSALEM AND DESTROY ALL OF ISRAEL'S ENEMIES AND MAKE ISRAEL HIS GLORIOUS, HOLY NATION THAT WILL BE HONORED BY ALL NATIONS OF THE WORLD.**

Now you cannot deny that this is what this chapter does say. J. Vernon McGee said if you want to know whether or not your pastor takes the Word of God seriously and if you want to know what a pastor believes, take him to Zechariah 14 and ask him to explain it to you. There are ten predictions made in these verses:

**PREDICTION #1** – A day is coming sometime in the future. **14:1a**

Since the text says the day “is coming,” it hadn’t come during the days of Zechariah and when we read what is described here, it hasn’t come yet. But this day is specifically predicted to come that will be a day “for the LORD.” Now you either believe this day is coming or you don’t. But what you cannot deny is that this text does say this day is coming. In fact, this day is a key theme of this chapter (14:1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 20, 21).

Now how do we know that this day will come? What evidence do we have that this prediction will come true? Because the other predictions that we may track that Zechariah made did come true literally. For example, Jesus did first ride into Jerusalem on a donkey colt (Zech. 9:9) and Jesus was sold for 30 pieces of silver that were thrown on the floor of the Temple (Zech. 11:12-13). So the fact that this happened literally is the reason why we believe the predictions here will happen literally. **A day will literally come in the future when Jesus Christ will literally put His feet on this earth again.**

**PREDICTION #2** – A day is coming when all things that have ever been taken from Israel will be returned to Israel. **14:1b**

This is an amazing prediction. Everything taken from Israel will be returned and the nation will enjoy the totality of all of the blessings of her land.

The Hebrew word “spoil” (shilalek) is one that is often used in the O.T.. It refers to spoil that is attained by preying on someone else. It is used to refer to property, prisoners, precious metals, food, livestock and even clothing (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 829).

Israel has been preyed upon by many nations. Her land has been taken; the Jews have been mistreated and her riches have been looted. The prediction here is that in the future God will literally see to it that everything is returned to Israel. She will be paid back in abundance

Let’s just use one illustration of this. 81.5% of the world’s oil reserves is in the Middle East. Four of the largest producers of oil today are the Arab nations of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Iraq. Now here is the problem with this. Most of this land was supposed to be Israel’s land and the oil in the land was to be hers. The fact is, Arabs have taken her land and the oil in the land. That will all change one day. Every inch of land and every barrel of oil that belongs to Israel will be returned to Israel. That is what is predicted here.

**PREDICTION #3** – God will gather all nations against Jerusalem. **14:2**

After having opened with some amazing predictions for Israel, God informs her that before all of these blessings occur He will gather nations of the world to come against Jerusalem. **The actual name Jerusalem means city of peace. But before it becomes the ultimate city of blessing and peace, it will be a major city of horror and war.**

Now it is certainly easy to see in our day how nations of the world could gather against Jerusalem. The United Nations hated the fact that the United States declared Jerusalem to be the capital of Israel. The United Nations and the Arab Nations will at some point in the future make their move against Jerusalem. Just before Christ returns, God will permit the city of Jerusalem to be captured.

Jesus made a prediction that when those in Jerusalem see the Antichrist go into the Temple and demand to be worshipped as God, they need to get out of there as fast as they can. In fact, Jesus said don't even go back to your house to get anything (Matt.24:15-20).

There are five horrible realities revealed here about what will happen to those living in Jerusalem:

**(Horrible Reality #1) - The city will be captured. 14:2a**

The word "capture" is interesting. It means that this city will be specifically targeted and chosen to be attacked and taken captive (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 438-439). The Niphal stem of the verb means that there will be a surge of emotions that nations will have in themselves to take Jerusalem. Nations will be saying within themselves we must take Jerusalem.

**(Horrible Reality #2) - Their houses will be ransacked. 14:2b**

The word "ransack" means to plunder something with the goal of taking what you want (*Ibid.*, p. 841).

**(Horrible Reality #3) - Their women will be raped. 14:2c**

That word "ravished" means the women will be raped (*Ibid.*, p. 805). Moses made this same prediction and he said the reason for it was because God would curse His own people for their evil disobedience (Deut. 28:30).

Now we are living in a time when there is much talk in the news about sexual harassment of women. During the Tribulation, the Antichrist will have no regard for women whatsoever. He will promote going into Jerusalem and raping women.

**(Horrible Reality #4) - Half of the city will be exiled and go on the run. 14:2d**

This will be when the Antichrist commits the Abomination of Desolation. Half of the Jews in the city will flee it as fast as possible. So what we understand this to mean is that about half of the Jews in Jerusalem will believe the Word of God and flee the city. The truth is those who will survive will be those who believed the Word of God and obeyed it. They are the ones who always survive.

**(Horrible Reality #5) - Some of the city will survive. 14:2e**

God, in pure sovereign grace, will permit some of the Jews to live in the city.

**PREDICTION #4 – God will fight for Israel against those nations who came against Israel.  
14:3**

Just as this happens, God Himself will come to deliver Israel. Jesus Christ will return. **Israel's help will not come from the north, south, east or west; it will come from Heaven.** One commentator pointed out that some churches don't ever want to hear the word "fight." In fact, some actually took fighting battle songs out of the hymnals because all they want to hear about is love and peace. But the truth is, any life right with God is a fight. It is a war and a battle and the ultimate warrior in the fight is Jesus Christ.

Nowhere in history has this happened yet. When the Romans came and destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70, Jesus Christ did not return and fight the Romans. When the Muslims took Jerusalem in AD 637, Jesus Christ did not return and fight the Muslims. When the Crusaders took Jerusalem in AD 1099, Jesus Christ did not return and fight the Crusaders. But I guarantee you this, there is coming a day when He will return and He will fight for Israel and all her enemies will be destroyed.

**PREDICTION #5 – God will literally come and physically put His feet on the Mount of Olives.  
14:4a**

This is an amazing prediction. When God comes to fight for Israel, He will put His feet on a specific place. Notice He is coming in the form of a real Person and He has real feet.

The Mount of Olives is a ridge that is about 2 ½ miles long and runs from north to south. This place became a favorite spot for Jesus Christ when He was here on earth. He went there many times for many different reasons (Matt. 21:1; 24:3; 26:30; Luke 19:37; 31:37). The King of King's feet will literally stand with His own feet on the top of this Mount of Olives. He is literally going to come back from heaven and land His feet on top of this mountain.

When Jesus Christ ascended up into Heaven, two men specifically told His disciples that He would return to that very spot (Acts 1:11-12). Notice the pronoun "His" feet (14:4). The feet of Jehovah (LORD) (14:3). Jesus is Jehovah. This mountain is located on the east side of Jerusalem. Zechariah says when He comes again this is where He will be.

**PREDICTION #6 – When Jesus Christ puts His feet on the Mountain, it will be split from east to west and will form a large valley. 14:4b**

This is another amazing prediction of some major physical and topographical and geographical changes. There will be a major shaking and earthquake that will cause half of the mountain to

move north and half will move south and form a valley that will run east to west. Isaiah predicted that this will happen when Gentile powers are in the land (Is. 29:5-6).

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John described this moment as being part of the final wrath judgment (Rev. 16:18-19). This major earthquake will occur when Jesus Christ puts His feet on the Mountain and in order for this to happen, the One standing on the Mountain is the God of all creation..

In fact, when this happens the entire world will stand in awe of His power. This will open up a new east west highway for people to travel.

When Jesus was here the first time, His feet were often on the Mt. of Olives, but nothing like this occurred. Why? The first time He came as a Lamb to save; the next time He is coming as King to Reign.

**PREDICTION #7** – When this happens Israel will flee to the valley of God’s mountains. **14:5a**

The split of the Mountain will provide an easy escape route for the rest of the people who have not yet escaped. This will be a God-ordained escape route for the final episode of Anti-Semitism that will ever exist. This new valley will reach Azel. This is clearly a specific place to which the last of the refugees will escape.

This will be like the earthquake that hit in the days of Uzziah. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C., Josephus claims an earthquake occurred because Uzziah attempted to offer incense in the Temple over the protests of the priests. (*The Complete Works of Josephus*, Antiquities IX, 10, 4). Amos referred to this in Amos 1:1.

What we suspect happens is this is a second wave flight that occurs near the end of the Tribulation. This is the final flight of the remaining Jews who did not leave the city when the Abomination of Desolation in which the Antichrist is in the Temple demanding to be worshipped as God.

**PREDICTION #8** – This will be the moment when the LORD will return with all His holy ones. **14:5b**

This moment is specifically referred to in multiple passages (I Cor. 6:2; Rev. 2:26-27). This moment is actually described in Revelation 19:11-14. Paul predicted that when the Gentile age is over, all Israel would be saved (Romans 11:25-26).

**PREDICTION #9** – When these things happen there will be no light via normal luminaries. **14:6**

In many passages of Scripture it is predicted that when Jesus Christ returns, there will be a major light change and light show (Joel 2:31; 3:15-17; Amos 5:18; Matt. 24:30). God controls the lights in the heavens and during the Tribulation and when Jesus Christ returns, it will be seen in the sky. When Christ returns with all of His holy ones, they literally will light up the sky and the

universe and there will be no need of any luminaries. There will be major cosmic changes. The entire world will realize Jesus Christ has returned. They will dwindle in comparison.

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**PREDICTION #10** – This future day is known only to the LORD and there will never be another day quite like it and there will be light even at evening time.  
**14:7**

This is critical; when this event occurs there will never be another day like it. There will never be another time when Jesus Christ comes out of the sky in all of His glory and puts His feet on this earth. When He comes He will come to take over the world and the whole world will understand that.

At the end of the memorial service for Billy Graham, they played some videos of him. One of the things he said was “no matter what the ideology of the world, in the end, God wins.” In the end, Israel will win. In the end, every believer will win. Believe on Jesus Christ and you will win.