

ZECHARIAH

Text: Zechariah 12:1-9

INTRO: Well, we have come to the final message in Zechariah. In the last message we saw his prophecies regarding Alexander the Great, Antiochus Euphianes, Jesus Christ and the millennium. By the way, I had wanted to show you the picture of the seven branch candlestick that is on display in Jerusalem (show here Menorah here).

When you read Bible history, Israel has faced tremendous odds for survival. It has often been a David and Goliath situation. It is so today. The Muslims outnumber Jews by huge odds and they live in lands that are many, many times larger than Israel. The odds for Israel's survival are miniscule. That was so when Israel declared itself a nation in 1948 and it is so at this very moment (show picture of Israel's land mass).

Today, as in all the years of Israel's modern history, if her enemies had their way, her extinction would come very quickly. Right now Iran is a huge threat. The land mass of Iran is many, many times larger than Israel, but Israel exists. When you look at the odds you must ask this question: Will Israel survive? The answer according to the Bible is, "Yes!"

Listen to Jeremiah 31:35-37, "Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, who disturbs the sea, and its waves roar (The LORD of hosts is His name): if those ordinances depart from before Me, says the LORD, *then* the seed of Israel shall also cease From being a nation before Me forever. Thus says the LORD: "If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel For all that they have done, says the LORD." One of the sad things about this is that the majority of Christians believe God has cast Israel off forever. They are called amillennialists or replacement theology. That means the Church has replaced Israel and God is through with the Jew. This passage says that can never be.

Well, the last section of Zechariah is Zechariah's two burdens. In the first burden we saw the conquests of Alexander the Great and how Jerusalem was spared. We saw the victories of the Macabees and the blessings of the

Messiah's reign and the rejection of the Messiah at His first coming. With that we come to the second burden of Part III of the book of Zechariah. This second burden brings the book to a close, and it is most fascinating. We will see the fulfillment of the last three feasts of Israel. More than 2000 years will separate the fulfillment of the first four from the last three. The first four were fulfilled in just over 50 days. The last three will be fulfilled in 15 days. And in Zechariah 12-14 we will see how the tribulation closes and how the Lord saves Jerusalem, and then we will see the fulfillment of the last of Israel's seven feasts.

2. Second burden (12:1-14:21)

a. The Close of the tribulation (12:1-14:16)

1) Gathered for Armageddon (12:1-14)

And so with that, we begin this second burden, and in this second burden we have Scriptures that speak directly to our day and then beyond. In 12:1-14:16 Zechariah will deal with the close of the tribulation. So, let us read 12:1 to see who it is that dares to give such incredible prophecies (read). Richard Dawkins has said that if he should die, and wake up and see God the first question he would ask is, "Who are you?" You see, according to Dawkins, if there is a god he left himself so hidden that Dawkins doesn't know if the true God is Buddha or Zeus or a grasshopper or whatever. But when Dawkins dies and wakes up, if he does not repent before, when he comes before this One and only God he will not be asking who this God is. This is the God that made all those things Dawkins thought had evolved and the One who formed Dawkins own spirit within him. Then he will know that every moment he was alive he was dependant for every breath on this One whom he so vehemently denied.

Well, we want to look first at the powers that will be arrayed against Jerusalem. We find this in Zechariah 12:1-14. Now look at

verses 2-3 (read). Notice in verse 3 that it says, "In that day." This phrase is used 16 times in these last three chapters and it speaks of the tribulation and the millennium. As I see it, the tribulation is the night time of the Day of the Lord and the millennium is the light time. Now the night is 7 years and the light is 1000 years and one might think that is way out of proportion. One would almost think the Lord used the day as we experience it here in Northern Alberta in the middle of June. It hardly gets dark and then it is light again. Well, the truth of it is, it is not the quantity of time that is in view, but the quality. The tribulation is without question the darkest of the darkest of the night. The millennium the lightest of light!

So our passage is written in the context of the tribulation. The Wycliffe Bible commentary says, "This siege of Jerusalem by the peoples (not people) of the earth cannot be the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar nor the siege of Titus (A.D. 70); the prophetic passages compel us to place it before the visible return of Christ to earth." So, it speaks of a time yet future. McGee says this takes place in the tribulation.

If these verses speak specifically of the tribulation, no doubt today we see the preparation for this time. In a sense the world is besieging Israel today. When you watch the news, or consider the meetings of the United Nations, Israel is besieged on every side. McGee talks about Great Britain, how they took this cup Zechariah speaks about in hand and how they lost their position of being the number one nation in the world. He wrote sometime before 1982 and he said, "I hope the United States does not get too involved." Well, today the United States is too involved. When the president of the United States

tells Israel not to build more homes in Jerusalem, you know they are too involved.

But the final and ultimate besieging of Jerusalem will happen in the end of the tribulation and verses 4-9 speak of that (read).

2) Jesus Christ Returns (12:10-14)

In 12:10-14 we have the return of Jesus Christ (read). A greater picture of what will happen when Jesus returns is given to us in the book of Revelation. (Read Rev. 19:11-21). The book of Revelation also tells us that when Jesus comes back down to earth every eye will see Him. Well, look at 12:10 (read). I believe that right here, the Feast of Trumpets is fulfilled. Four of the seven feasts of Israel were fulfilled from when Christ died until the birth of the Church, which is just over 50 days. Three feasts took place in the first month and three will take place in the last month, and one feast happened in between. The Feast of Trumpets signals New Years It commemorates the day the heavens and the earth were created. From here on it will signal the day God began creation and the day Christ returned to earth.

Now, in this passage we see the repentance of Israel. When Israel comes to this time they will mourn for the One they have rejected all these years and they will embrace Him. The antichrist and the false prophet and the rest of the world will gather together to seek to defeat Him in battle.

Now between the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement were 10 days. These days, even today in Jewish culture, are days of repentance. So between the time Christ returns to earth to when Israel's repentance nationally has taken place will be a mere 10 days! And so, right here, I

believe, the Day of Atonement has its fulfillment. When Christ returns, the fifth feast is fulfilled, when Israel has repented, the sixth feast will then be fulfilled. So when Israel nationally repents, 6 of Israel's 7 feasts are fulfilled.

3) False prophets (13:1-6)

In chapter 13:1-6 we have a prophecy of a spiritual cleansing and purifying of the land and the people (read). The land will be cleansed of all false prophets. However, this passage raises a difficult question. In verse 6 we have a question addressed to a certain prophet, but to which prophet is it? (read). J. Vernon McGee says this is a prophecy of the Lord Jesus. That is a most natural conclusion. But the Wycliffe commentary and David Levy agree that this cannot refer to Christ. There are too many things that do not match Jesus here. He did not try to hide His identity by claiming He was a farmer and a number of other things that could not be true of Him.

So I am going to give an explanation that makes sense to me. In the context we are at the close of the tribulation, and the prophets in view here are false prophets. Saved parents will be so zealous for the Lord that they will cause their own sons to be put to death if they are false prophets.

The rest of the prophets will be so ashamed of what they have prophesied that they will disguise themselves as farmers. And when this passage speaks of these wounds in his hands, the Hebrew literally says, "between the hands." I think these scars may be some sign that the false prophet and his followers will use to set themselves apart. Ryrie thinks they are wounds received in ecstatic frenzy, like the prophets of Baal in the OT. These wounds would indicate that they are prophets. Any one who saw these

wounds would immediately conclude he must be a prophet. And when these prophets are asked why they have these wounds they say, "Oh, these. I was hurt at a friend's house."

4) The true prophet (13:7-9)

To the contrast of this false prophet we now have the true prophet in verses 7-9(read). In verse 7 we have a prophetic verse used by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 26:31 and was fulfilled when all His disciples left Him when He was apprehended and prepared for death (read verse 7). This happened at His first coming. Verses 8-9 will happen at his second coming (read). These verses will be fulfilled in the tribulation.

5) The Lord saves Jerusalem (14:1-5)

That brings us now to chapter 14 and we begin with verses 1-5 which speak of the visible return of Christ to earth at the end of the tribulation. Verses 1-2 tell us what it will be like in Jerusalem at the time Christ returns (read). I believe at the close of the tribulation, if the Lord would not return when He will, Israel would be finished. They would be destroyed. But the Lord will intervene.

In verses 3-5 we are told of Jesus' return (read). I think that no event in all history will rival this one for greatness. It will be incredible beyond description! Once more, when He returns, as I see it, this is the fulfillment of the Feast of Trumpets.

Now look at what will follow this (read 6-11). The topography of Jerusalem will change, and for once there will be water in Jerusalem. This water will flow east towards the Mediteranian Sea and west, to the Dead Sea, and this Sea will come to

life with the fresh water. And from when the Lord returns, there will be peace in Jerusalem! One of the requests on our Wednesday prayer meeting is praying for the peace of Jerusalem according to the instructions found in the Psalms.

But for the enemies of God, the close of the tribulation will be most horrifying. We do not have time but there are many Scriptures that describe this time. But look at it briefly in 12-15 (read). The warfare described here sounds like some kind of biological warfare.

b. The Millennium (14:16-21)

We come now to chapter 14. You will remember that as I view prophecy, the second coming of Jesus Christ, when He comes right down to earth is not the same as the rapture. In the rapture He comes into the air. There He receives the Church and returns to heaven. Of that event, no one can know the day or the hour. But the second coming will happen on the first day of the first month of the Jewish year. That is the Feast of Trumpets. Just 10 days later, Israel will have repented and the Feast of the Day of Atonement will take place.

Then on the 15th day of that same month, the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles will take place. Here the final of the seven feasts will be fulfilled and then all seven feasts will have found their fulfillment. This is the millennium. So let us read verses 16-21 (read). And once more we might close this book like this: And they lived happily ever after!

CONCL: Well, in conclusion, Zechariah's second burden talks about the end of the tribulation. (Time to read Rev. 6:12-17?). The people's of the earth will be gathered for the battle of Armageddon. Then will come the darkest time this world has ever known. Then the false prophet and the antichrist will be taken and cast alive into hell. Jesus Christ the true prophet will come and He will save Jerusalem and then the millennial reign of Christ will

begin. The book of Revelation tells us that Satan will be bound, and peace will reign. Only once more will Satan be given a brief moment of freedom and then he will be cast into hell along with all the unsaved, and then eternity on the new earth will begin according to Revelation 20-22.