

### The Beginning of Zechariah's Second Prophetic Burden

#### Zechariah 12

Zechariah 12:1-9 - *"The burden of the word of the Lord against Israel. Thus, says the Lord, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him: <sup>2</sup> "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. <sup>4</sup> In that day," says the Lord, "I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. <sup>5</sup> And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in the Lord of hosts, their God.' <sup>6</sup> In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a firepan in the woodpile, and like a fiery torch in the sheaves; they shall devour all the surrounding peoples on the right hand and on the left, but Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place—Jerusalem.*

*<sup>7</sup> "The Lord will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not become greater than that of Judah. <sup>8</sup> In that day the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the Lord before them. <sup>9</sup> It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem."*

#### Background Notes

Zechariah 12 begins the last section of this book of prophetic Scripture. Remember, chapters 1-6 contain eight prophetic visions. Chapters 7-8 contain four prophetic messages, and chapters 9-14 contain two prophetic burdens, or oracles. We discussed Zechariah's first prophetic burden in chapters 9-11, and now we will look at the second prophetic burden in chapters 12-14.

In the historical context, the entire book of Zechariah was given to the people of Israel who had returned from a 70-year captivity and exile in Babylon. God gave these visions and messages to Zechariah so he could encourage the people of Jerusalem, and motivate them to finish the job of rebuilding the Temple, under the leadership of their governor, Zerubbabel. The prophecy of Zechariah was encouraging because it not only predicted the completion of the rebuilt Temple, but it looked forward to Israel's glorious future under the kingship of the Messiah.

Because Israel rejected her Messiah at the Lord's first advent, a number of Zechariah's prophecies still await to be fulfilled when the Lord comes the second time. But even though the fulfillment is delayed, the promises **will** be fulfilled. And they **will be fulfilled** in **Israel** - the Jewish people. They will not be re-assigned to another recipient. Let's not make the

mistake of saying that God is finished with Israel. Let's not make the mistake of thinking that the Church is "the New Israel" (as some Christians teach). Let's not make the mistake of "spiritualizing" these promises and transferring them from Israel to the Church. Let's not say that the as-yet unfulfilled prophecies about Israel must be fulfilled in a "spiritual" sense - in the Church.

Israel is Israel, and the Church is the Church! Don't make the mistake of thinking that the Israel and Judah and Jerusalem in this chapter are simply "different names for the Church." No! ***The Church is distinct from Israel throughout the Bible!***

The next event on God's timetable is the Rapture of the Church, when the Lord Jesus will take all those who have trusted in Him from this earth to be with Him. The Rapture is imminent - it could take place at any time! Then will come the 7-year Tribulation period, followed by the return of the Lord to this earth to set up His 1000-year earthly kingdom.

The future time period that includes the Tribulation period and the return of the Lord to set up His earthly kingdom is often called the "End Times." In the prophecy of Zechariah, as well as in a number of the other prophetic books, the phrase "***in that day***" refers to the End Times. In fact, in this second prophetic burden of Zechariah, the phrase "***in that day***" is used fifteen times – five times in chapter 12, three times in chapter 13, and seven times in chapter 14.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. In that day, Israel will be delivered from all her enemies.

In the End Times, all nations will be gathered against Israel and her capital, Jerusalem (v3). In light of current events, it's easy to see that this situation could come about in the near future. But when the nations attack Israel, they will find that they have "bitten off much more than they can chew"! They will "reel" and "stagger" in distress, like a drunken person (v2). They will be cut to pieces on this rock that they will be unable to move or eliminate (v3).

And the key to Israel's deliverance will be the Lord Himself - the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and of all life (v1)! The nations are no match for the Lord, who will come to Israel's defense. He will strike down the enemy and deliver the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem (v4-7). All this will be part of the battles at the end of the Tribulation period, when the Lord returns to earth in power and glory.

This time period is predicted in the prophecy of Daniel 2, when Gentile power (the feet of the statue) will be crushed to powder by a Rock that fills the entire earth. The dynasty of David will be reestablished when the Lord Jesus, the Son of David, establishes His kingdom over the earth, with Jerusalem as His capital. At that time, Jerusalem will finally be a city of true peace!

What a great day that will be! In that day, Israel will be delivered from all her enemies.

**2. In that day, Israel will look on their Messiah, whom they pierced.**

*Zechariah 12:10-14 - "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. <sup>11</sup> In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.*

*<sup>12</sup> And the land shall mourn, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; <sup>13</sup> the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of Shimei by itself, and their wives by themselves; <sup>14</sup> all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves."*

During the Tribulation period a great spiritual awakening will take place among the Jewish people. (Read Romans 11 in this connection.) The groundwork for this awakening is already taking place today. Recently I spoke with a Jewish man who is a Christian evangelist in Israel, and he told me that in the past year he had seen more interest in Jesus as the Messiah among the Jewish people than in all of his 25 years of ministry put together! God is at work - but this is just the beginning!

During the Tribulation period (called "*the time of Jacob's trouble*" in Jeremiah 30:7), there will be a great spiritual awakening among the Jewish people. This is the time period when the 144,000 Jewish evangelists of Revelation 7 will preach the gospel of the return of the Messiah and the coming kingdom. Many will turn to the Lord at that time.

Then the Lord will return, and Israel will look on her Messiah, the One "*whom they pierced*" (v10). This prophecy is not just a prediction of the piercing that would take place at the crucifixion of Christ - although it certainly is that, as John 19:37 indicates.

This prophecy also looks on to the second coming of Christ. Then the believing remnant of Israel, the remnant that will come out of the great Tribulation, will mourn with great mourning when they see the Lord. Israel did not mourn at the crucifixion - but they will mourn then. Verse 11 says that the mourning will be like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. This is a reference to the tragic death of good King Josiah (see 2 Chronicles 35). All of Judah mourned for Josiah as if an only son had been killed. What a tremendously touching scene that will be, when Israel will weep and mourn, and will receive the Messiah whom they once rejected!

In the life of Joseph there is a great picture of this the initial rejection and then the wonderful reunion. Joseph was betrayed by his brothers. They sold him into slavery in Egypt, and thought he was gone forever. But God raised Joseph up to be ruler over all of Egypt! Because of a famine the brothers had to go down to Egypt and bow down to Joseph to

obtain food. At first Joseph did not reveal himself, but put his brothers through a series of tests to see whether or not they had repented of their sin, and to see if their hearts were changed. Then Joseph revealed himself to his brothers. *“Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, “Make everyone go out from me!” So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. <sup>2</sup> And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it. <sup>3</sup> Then Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph; does my father still live?” But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. <sup>4</sup> And Joseph said to his brothers, “Please come near to me.” So they came near. Then he said: “I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt” (Genesis 45:1-4).*

What a moment that must have been, when Joseph revealed himself to his brothers! And what a moment it will be when the Lord Jesus returns and Israel receives His as their Messiah - the Messiah whom they once rejected. In that day, Israel will look on their Messiah whom they pierced.

## Practical Application

### Have you mourned the death of Christ by yourself?

In verses 12-14, notice that mourning for the Messiah will be on an individual basis. The fact that the wives of the different families mourned by themselves emphasizes this individual and personal position. Prominent families and or ordinary families – throughout the nation there will be individual mourning because of the nation’s rejection of the Messiah.

Salvation is always an individual matter. Someone else can’t repent for you. You aren’t saved because your family or the people around you are saved. No, salvation is a personal matter.

Have you come to that place in your life where **you** – personally - have realized that **you** are guilty before a holy God, and that the Lord Jesus died for **your** sins? Have **you** mourned the death of Christ by yourself? Have **you** realized that it was **your** sins that put Jesus Christ on the cross - that He **had** to die for **your** sins? Have you trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?

Have you mourned the death of Christ by yourself?