

### The Conclusion of Zechariah's Second Burden

#### Zechariah 14:12-17

Zechariah 14:12-17 - *"And this 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.<sup>13</sup> It shall come to pass in that day that a great panic from the Lord will be among them. Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor, and raise his hand against his neighbor's hand.<sup>14</sup> Judah also will fight at Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be gathered together: gold, silver, and apparel in great abundance.<sup>15</sup> Such also shall be the plague on the horse and the mule, on the camel and the donkey, and on all the cattle that will be in those camps. So shall this plague be.<sup>16</sup> And 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.<sup>17</sup> And 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.<sup>18</sup> If 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.<sup>19</sup> This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.<sup>20</sup> In 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.<sup>21</sup> Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the Lord of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts."*

#### Background Notes

The second half of chapter 14 concludes Zechariah's second burden, an oracle that he was to lift up and deliver to the people. It contains the bad news of future panic and plague on the nations, and then the good news of the great blessing to come with the future celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles.

How do we sort out all the information in these verses, and interpret them *properly*? Remember the simple diagram of the future that we previously discussed. After the Rapture of the Church (that could occur at any time) comes the seven-year Tribulation period. After the Tribulation period comes the Kingdom of Christ on this earth. The Kingdom will last for a thousand years, this it is called the Millennium. The phrase "in that day" in the prophetic Scriptures includes these End Times events.

The "bad news" of panic and plague on the nations refers to the Tribulation time (v13). The "good news" about the blessing on Israel and the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles refers to the Millennium (v20). All these events will

come to pass – **literally!** As we have emphasized in previous chapters of Zechariah, these prophecies should **not** be interpreted as being “fulfilled spiritually,” at the present time, in the Church (as is sometimes taught). They will be fulfilled **literally** with the **literal** nation of Israel in the End Times. We can draw *spiritual lessons* and *spiritual applications* from these great prophetic truths, but the proper interpretation is that the *fulfillment of these prophecies and promises will take place literally in the future.*

Jeremiah 32:42 says, *“For thus says the Lord: ‘Just as I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will bring on them all the good that I have promised them.’”* What is God saying here? Just as all the calamities have come on the nation of Israel, so the Lord will fulfill to **Israel** (note: *not* the Church!) **all the promises that He has made with them.**

For an example, look at Luke 1:31-33, the announcement of the angel Gabriel to the virgin Mary. *“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever.”* Do you see what’s being said here? So - if a fellow believer questions you concerning the literal fulfillment of the Old Testament prophetic promises to Israel, take them to this passage and ask, “Do you if believe in the literal birth virgin birth of Christ?” When they say yes, then ask, “Then why don’t you believe in the literal kingdom of Christ here on this earth? Why do you spiritualize the throne of David, but not spiritualize the virgin birth - that are mentioned together in Gabriel’s speech?” Both should be taken literally.

In addition, do you see how difficult it would be to spiritualize the judgments of Zechariah 14, and apply them to the Church today? Take for example verse 12: *“And this 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.”*

Is this verse to be interpreted as “heartache” or “psychological problems” for those who refuse the gospel? No. These judgments will be fulfilled *literally* in the future.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. In that day, the Lord will strike the nations with panic and plague.

In verses 12-15, the Lord Himself will strike down the armies of the nations that have gathered to attack Jerusalem. This attack of the nations on Israel was described back in verse 2, but now we learn that the Lord will strike these armies down with plague and panic. *“And this 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”(v12),*

Will a very potent flesh-eating virus of the End Times cause this plague - or will it be the result of the use of tactical nuclear weapons? We don't know – but we do know that the Lord will use it to strike down the armies that have united against Israel.

The Lord will also use panic to strike down these enemy armies (v13), as in the days of Gideon when the Lord defeated the Midianites by panic and confusion (Judges 7). As the Lord won a great victory in the days of Gideon by using confusion among the enemy troops, so the Lord will use panic to win a great victory in the future. In that day, the Lord will strike the nations with panic and plague.

## **2. In that day, the Feast of Tabernacles will be celebrated as never before!**

*Verse 16: "And 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."*

In verse 16, the phrase "everyone who is left of the nations" refers to the living believers who will come out of the Great Tribulation and enter the millennial kingdom of Christ. These are the "sheep" of the nations that will pass the test of the Lord's judgment of the nations. This judgment, predicted in Matthew 25 by the Lord Jesus Himself, is often called the "Judgment of the Sheep and Goats." Representatives of all the believing nations will come up to Jerusalem annually to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles in the millennial kingdom of Christ.

What about the punishment of the nations that do not send delegations up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, or *Sukkot* (v17-19)? Remember, the millennial kingdom of Christ on this earth will last for a thousand years. Everyone who enters this kingdom period will be a believer, but during the thousand years many people will be born. Some people who are born during that thousand years will not become believers. In fact, Revelation 20 reveals that at the end of the thousand years, Satan will be able to deceive these unbelievers. Satan will rally these unbelievers from the nations, and they will go up to Jerusalem to make war against the Land. Then fire will come out of Heaven and consume these unbelievers. Following that event, the "Great White Throne Judgment" of all unbelievers will take place. Then the New Heavens and the New Earth will be established, and the Eternal State will ensue.

The point is that some people who are born during the kingdom age will not become believers. Those unbelievers will not support the Feast of Tabernacles during the Millennium. They are the ones who will be punished (v16-19). Remember, by the way, that we will be in our resurrected bodies and reigning with Christ all during this time.

Why is the Feast of Tabernacles singled out here in Zechariah 14? Why not all the other biblical Feasts? Ezekiel 45 and 46 reveal that all the other biblical Feasts will be celebrated during the Millennium. But because the Feast of Tabernacles is a great time of celebration, it is thus a prophetic "**type**" or illustration of the kingdom period.

All seven biblical feasts that God gave to Israel are *types* (pictures, illustrations) of future events surrounding the two Advents of the Messiah. The Feast of Tabernacles was the last Feast, and when the time of the Kingdom comes, it is the only one that will not yet have been fulfilled

The *type* provided in Passover, the first biblical Feast, was fulfilled with the death of Christ (1 Corinthians 5:7). The Feast of Unleavened Bread is a *type* that is fulfilled in the separation and communion of saints (1 Corinthians 5:6-8). The *type* provided in the Feast of First Fruits was fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:20). The Feast of Pentecost was *typically* fulfilled with the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). The illustrations or *types* provided by these first four Feasts were all fulfilled in events surrounding the first coming of Christ.

The last three Feasts (which all come later in the year, after a gap of several months) are *types* that are seen in events surrounding the second coming of Christ. The Feast of Trumpets is a *type* of the re-gathering of Israel to the Land (Zechariah 10). The *type* provided in the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, illustrates the national repentance and cleansing of Israel (Zechariah 12-13). And the *type* that is seen in the Feast of Tabernacles will be fulfilled literally in the kingdom itself (Zechariah 14).

What a great time that will be! *“In 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”(v20).* Everything in Jerusalem, which is the focal point and headquarters of the kingdom, will be cleansed and dedicated to the Lord - even the small, ordinary things like cooking pots and bells on the horses! There will be no unbelievers (Canaanites) or idolatry in the Temple, as in the past.

Israel will truly be the Holy Land. And this wonderful condition will ripple out around the world, because the Lord’s kingdom is universal!

*And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be - “The Lord is one,” and His name one”(v9).* In that day, the Feast of Tabernacle will be celebrated as never before!

## **Practical Application**

### **Remember - your present situation is not your permanent state!**

Would you want to live in your present situation forever? No? Well, don’t worry. No matter how good or bad your present situation is, it’s not your permanent state! If you’re a believer, you will be part of all the future blessings in Christ’s kingdom that will literally come here on this earth. You will reign with Christ in His kingdom! And it doesn’t get any better than that!

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