

Zechariah's Second Coming of Christ Prophecy

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The book of Zechariah more than any other prophetic book in the Old Testament, except Isaiah, references the first and second coming of the Messiah. For example, Zechariah predicts Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem: "Your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey" (*9:9; cf. John 12:14-15); and of Judas: "If you think it best, give me my pay, but if not, keep it. So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. ... the handsome price at which they valued me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter" (11:12-13; cf. Matt. 26:15; 27:9-10); and of the crucifixion wounds of Christ: "They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn" (12:10; cf. John 19:34).

Zechariah was both a priest and prophet that lived in Jerusalem around 520 B.C. (Neh. 12:12, 16; Ezra 5:1). In a series of epiphanies, he reveals God's plans for the Jewish people. This prophetic program concerns both Gentiles and Israel, providing an outline of events leading to the blessings of a golden age. Our focus in this discussion is on Zechariah's predictions of Christ's Second Advent, which includes chapters 12-14, written about 480 B.C.

Zechariah 12:2: The enemies of Israel fear them.

God declares of the Jewish people: "I am going to make Jerusalem a cup [of trembling] that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling" (v.2). Since the time of Zechariah, the Jewish nation has not been feared by their neighbors. The Jews were either a vassal state under a powerful nation or scattered, living in other countries. Thus, the description in this verse could occur only after the Jews gathered and became the State of Israel in 1948. During the 1967 six day Arab-Israel war, Old Jerusalem and the Temple site were captured and brought under Jewish unity and control for the first time since 70 A.D. Today, the dozen Arab nations surrounding Israel have learned to fear them because of their superior army and nuclear weapons.

Zechariah 12:2-3: Israel's enemies attack but fail.

Despite Israel's military superiority, the Arabic nations still attack. "Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. ... Jerusalem [will be] an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move [lift] it will injure themselves" (v.2-3). Enemies will attempt to destroy Israel but will be repelled, even though the Arabic peoples are far more numerous.

Zechariah 12:5-9: Many Israelis accept that God is protecting them from their enemies.

Since all these encounters against Israel fail, some Jewish families begin to believe their good fortune is beyond coincidence: “The clans of Judah will say in their hearts, the people of Judah are strong, because the Lord Almighty is their God” (v.5). This confidence increases as Israel “consumes all the surrounding peoples, right and left” (v.6). Many Jewish families in due course accept that, “the angel of the Lord [is] going before them,” that God is the “shield” and protector responsible for their deliverance from these escalating attacks (v.8).

Zechariah 12:10-14: Many Israelis accept Christ as God, and privately mourn.

Observing this major attitudinal change among the Jewish people moves God to: “Pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn” (v.10). This “spirit of grace” brings humility because they come to realize they are being protected by “the one they pierced!” They pierced ME and now they mourn! This will be a significant change since almost all Jewish people in Israel today are cultural Jews or atheists. The text says they “look on me,” which probably doesn’t indicate they are seeing Christ at this time, but rather, deeply realizing that 2000 years ago their ancestors rejected and crucified the Messiah! This mourning is not a media event. The mourning is somber, so troubling they mourn in private, individually and in families. They weep “as one mourns for an only child, and grieves bitterly” (vv.10-14).

Zechariah 13:1-6: Many Israelis reject worldly values and false prophets, and repent of their sins.

Judah is penitent, so God creates an opportunity for them to embrace Him: “A fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and impurity” (v.1). Various Jewish people in Israel show their remorse and, “banish the names of the idols [worldly values] from the land, and they will be remembered no more” (v.2). They also call out from among them the false “prophets” and their “prophecies,” who tell “lies in the Lord’s name” (vv.2-3). Some of these “prophets” will try to deceive by administering self-inflicted cuts or wounds to themselves, in order to make people believe they are persecuted for their predictions. They will say when

asked: “What are these wounds on your body?’ they will answer, ‘The wounds I was given at the house of my friends’” (vv.4-6). These three verses are not referring to Christ, but to false prophets.

Zechariah 13:8-9; 14:1-2: Israel is attacked and two of three Israelis are killed.

Zechariah’s narrative reveals the terrible devastation to modern Israel before Messiah returns as King:

In the whole land, declares the Lord, two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it. This third I will put into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name [from the midst of this fiery furnace of tribulation] and I will answer them; I will say, “They are my people,” and they will say, “The Lord is our God” (vv.8-9).

Throughout the State of Israel, “all the [enemy] nations” together (v.2), strike and kill two out of three people. Zechariah becomes more specific about Jerusalem:

Your possessions will be plundered and divided up within your walls [right in front of them]. The city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city (vv.1-2).

The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem in 587 B.C. and the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and many of the Jewish people in 70 A.D., but this time, modern Israel and Jerusalem will be attacked and destroyed by “all the [enemy] nations” together (v.2). This is a horrible time of national catastrophe! Only one in three people will survive. The survivors are likely the Jewish people described in 12:10–13:1, who turned to the Lord in contrition.

Zechariah 14:3-5: Christ intervenes to prevent Israel’s extinction.

Christ now returns to earth, preventing the extermination of the Jewish people! Zechariah writes:

On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. You will flee by my mountain valley; for it will extend to Azal. You will flee as you fled from the

earthquake in the day of Uzziah king of Judah. *Then the Lord my God will come* and all the holy ones [angels and saints] with him (vv.4-5, my italics).

The remnant of Israel will “flee” for safety through this “great valley” that has mountains on each side. Splitting the mountain by “earthquake” heralds Messiah’s coming in glory. It is interesting to note, that a recent geological survey in the area has verified the presence of a prominent fault running “east” to “west” through the southern section of the Mount of Olives.

Zechariah 14:6-7: There will be a reduction of light on earth.

Zechariah states that: “On that day there will be neither sunlight nor cold, [or] frosty darkness. It will be a unique day—a day known only to the Lord—with no distinction between day and night. When evening comes, there will be light” (vv.6-7). It will be like twilight, neither like day or night. The text doesn’t indicate how long the reduction of light among the heavenly luminaries will last.

Zechariah 14:12-15: Nuclear weapons may be involved.

Nuclear weapons may well be used. Zechariah refers to a plaque, but the description is likely nuclear radiation:

This is the plaque with which the Lord will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot while they are still on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. ... Plaque will strike the horses and mules, the camels and donkeys, and all the animals in those camps (vv.12, 15).

Zechariah 14:9-11, 16-21: Messiah reigns on earth.

Zechariah writes: “The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD and his name the only name” (v.9). *ALL* will accept that He alone is God: “Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the Festival of Tabernacles” (v.16). This was an ancient agricultural holiday of great rejoicing—and now becomes symbolic of the beginning of Christ’s Kingdom on earth.

Zechariah continues: “If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, they will have no rain” in

their nation (v.17). The Arabic nations are used to making a yearly pilgrimage to Mecca to honor Allah. Now, they will travel and worship the Messiah at Jerusalem. There will be “no rain” for countries refusing to worship the Messiah on this annual jubilant holiday (vv.18-19).

During this golden age writes Zechariah: “HOLY TO THE LORD will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, and the cooking pots in the Lord’s house [temple] will be like sacred bowls in front of the altar. ... There will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD Almighty” (vv.20-21). In short, there will be no distinction between sacred and secular. Everything will be holy—set-apart to God. There won’t be any Canaanites [heathens], because all acknowledge Christ as God and King.

Zechariah chapters 12-14 clarify that Christ’s Second Advent is not yet imminent. His three chapters provide us with a key for determining where things stand in the world—the key being to watch the State of Israel. Global problems will be ubiquitous, but the focal point will be the Middle East.

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