

NOTES ON THE BURDENS OF ZECHARIAH (9-14)

* * * PROPHECIES OF THE TWO COMINGS OF MESSIAH * * *

S.L.H.
Soli Deo Gloria!

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee ... and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth."
Zechariah 9:9-10

AUTHOR: Zechariah (c. 470 BC)

AUTHORSHIP AND DATE. Zechariah means *the LORD remembers* (Berechiah means *Jehovah blesses*, Iddo means *appointed time*). Zechariah's grandfather (Iddo; Zech1:1) was a priest who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel and Joshua (Neh12:1,4,16; Cp., Zech3-4). Zechariah began his ministry "in the second year of Darius" during the period of the Persian empire. Zechariah 1-8 can be dated precisely to 520-518 BC by chronological references provided in the book (cf. Zech1:1; 7:1). Allusion to the ascendancy of Greece in Zechariah 9 (Zech9:13) suggests Zechariah 9-14 was written later (c. 480-470 BC). According to Jesus, Zechariah was murdered in the Temple; he is noted as the last prophet to be martyred in the O.T. (Matt23:35).

HISTORICAL CONTEXT. Zechariah was a post-exilic prophet whose ministry was contemporary with that of Haggai (Cp., Hag1:1; Zech1:1). Both prophets wrote during the time of the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem by the small remnant of Jews who returned from the Babylonian captivity (cf. Ezra5:1; 6:14); the historical background for this period of time is given in Ezra 4-6.

The Jews living as captives in Babylon were freed to return to Jerusalem by the decree of Cyrus, the king of Persia, in 538 BC (2Chron36:22-23; Ezra1:1-4). The first group of 42,360 Jews returned under the leadership of Zerubbabel (Ezra2:2; 2:64) and began the task of rebuilding the Temple in 536 BC (Ezra3:8-10). However, the personal hardships associated with rebuilding their own homes and reestablishing their fields, combined with active opposition to construction of the Temple from the Samaritans, resulted in the abandonment of the rebuilding project in 534 BC (Ezra4:24). The LORD raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah in 520 BC (Hag1:1; Zech1:1) to exhort/encourage the Jews to resume rebuilding the Temple, and its construction was finally completed in 516 BC (Ezra6:15).

MESSAGE OF ZECHARIAH. Zechariah 1-8 revolves around a series of eight prophetic night visions given to Zechariah, all of which relate to fulfillment of the ultimate Jewish hope (i.e., restoration of the Kingdom to Israel; cf. Act1:6); none of these prophecies were fulfilled during Zechariah's lifetime, all look forward to the eschatological future. The prophet refers to the Temple throughout this section. He encourages the people to complete its construction (Zech4:9); since Messiah will use the Temple, the rebuilding of it is a necessary prerequisite to His coming (Zech6:12-13).

Zechariah 9-14 presents two prophetic "burdens": 1) the **first coming** and rejection of Messiah (Zech9-11), and 2) the **second coming** and acceptance of Messiah (Zech12-14). The scope and prophetic perspective of Zechariah 9-14 is identical to that of Zechariah 1-8; both sections of Zechariah look to the coming of Messiah and the establishment of His Kingdom on earth as the consummation of all prophetic hope.

OUTLINE OF THE BURDENS OF ZECHARIAH (9-14).

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| I. 1ST BURDEN: | The Coming and Rejection of Messiah | Zechariah 9-11 |
| II. 2ND BURDEN: | The Return and Reign of Messiah | Zechariah 12-14 |

NOTE ON THE APOCALYPTIC GENRE. Zechariah is an example of the apocalyptic genre as used in the Bible (also Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation). It is a special type of divine revelation that focuses on the eschatological end of God's prophetic program. In the Bible, apocalyptic revelation is given to the people of God during times of extreme corporate suffering in which there is no prospect for their immediate or even near-term deliverance. During such times, even the people of God can be tempted to despair, believing that God has apparently forsaken them. The purpose of apocalyptic prophecy is to encourage/assure the people of God that He is in sovereign control of history, and that He will providentially bring it to His appointed end (Isa46:9-11). The believer's hope should not be in temporal deliverance from present tribulations (cf. Jn16:33), but an unwavering confidence in the surety of the coming/return of Messiah/Christ (Tit2:13) as the only solution to every world problem, which provides comfort (1Thess4:13-18) in any circumstance.

PROPHETS AND PROPHECY. According to Arnold Fruchtenbaum, the great value of the Book of Revelation is not that it contains a multitude of original information not given in the O.T., but rather that it takes the many scattered O.T. prophecies and sets them in chronological order so that the sequence of end-time events may be properly understood. Thus, students of the O.T. prophets like Zechariah should remember that while the great prophetic truths/events foreseen by the prophets and recorded in the O.T. are (without question) infallibly true, they are not always presented in their proper chronological order, or even as distinct events¹.

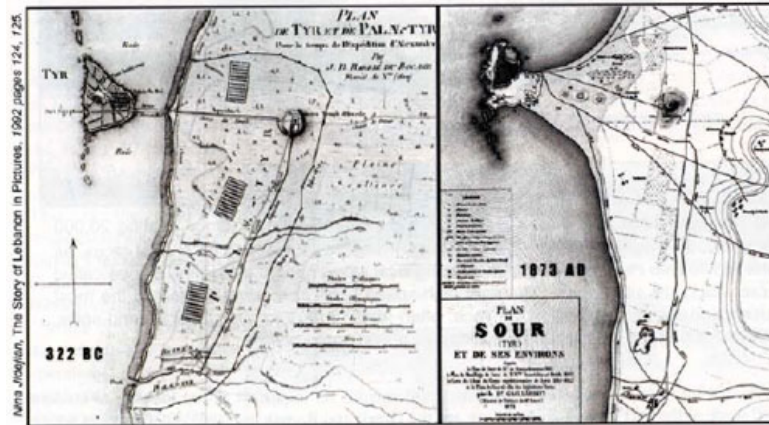
¹ For example, details concerning the first and second comings of Messiah often appear together in the same O.T. passage (or even the same sentence!), with no indication from the local context that they will actually be separated in time by thousands of years (cf. Isa61:1-2; Zech9:9-10). This is consistent with the N.T. revelation that the Church Age was a mystery not foreseen by the O.T. prophets (Eph3:1-10).

CHAPTER 9

THE RISE OF THE GREEK EMPIRE

The prophet Zechariah lived during the period of the Persian Empire (i.e., King Darius; cf. Zech1:1; 7:1), the second of the four Gentile kingdoms prophesied by Daniel (Dan8:20) that will be persecutors of Israel during "the times of the Gentiles" (Luk21:24). Zechariah 9 looks into the prophetic future (from Zechariah's perspective) and anticipates the rise of the third Gentile kingdom, the Greek Empire (Dan8:21; cf. Zech9:13). Though the military conquest of the Levant during the meteoric rise of Alexander the Great would include the destruction of the peoples and cities surrounding Judah (Zech9:1-7), the LORD would providentially preserve Jerusalem (Zech9:8) in preparation for the (first) coming of Messiah (Zech9:9ff).

- [1] A "burden" is a prophetic oracle that includes a message of divine judgment. The "land of Hadrach" is an ancient designation for the land of the Arameans (i.e., modern Syria), of which "Damascus" was its most prominent city. The language used is idiomatic and suggests that the judgment in view will "rest" (i.e., abide) upon the land of Syria. The armies of Alexander the Great overran Syria in 332 BC. In watching the rapid conquests of Alexander, "the eyes of man" (i.e., all mankind), including "the tribes of Israel", would actually be "toward the LORD" (i.e., observing the LORD). That is, Alexander would be Jehovah's instrument of judgment upon the peoples surrounding the land of Israel.
- [2] Verses 2-4 concern Alexander's conquest of Phoenicia. "Tyre and Sidon", the most prominent cities of the Phoenicians, would also be included in judgment. "Tyre" was reputed to be "very wise"; the people of Tyre took great pride in their own wisdom, so much so that the prophet Ezekiel compared the pride of Lucifer to that of the king of Tyre (cf. Ezek28:11-17). Though most of the cities of Phoenicia quickly surrendered to Alexander and his Greek armies, including Sidon, Tyre refused to do so.
- [3] Tyre originally existed as an extremely well-fortified city on the coast of Phoenicia. Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians besieged Tyre for 13 years (585-572 BC), which eventually fell and was destroyed. The surviving remnant migrated to an island approximately a half mile off shore, rebuilding the city of Tyre as a formidable island "stronghold" that came to be considered unconquerable. The wealth of Tyre, gained by facilitating international commerce as a result of its sea-faring prowess (v4), continued to increase.
- [4] Although Tyre was nominally willing to surrender to the Greek armies, they denied Alexander entrance into the city. The city was destroyed by Alexander in 332 BC following a siege of only 7 months. During the siege, Alexander's armies constructed a causeway from the mainland to the island, using in part the debris of the old city of Tyre that had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar over 250 years before (literally fulfilling a prophecy of Ezekiel; Ezek26:1-5); over time, Alexander's causeway has been greatly enlarged by tidal silting, turning what was originally an island into a peninsula (as shown in the 19th century map below). That Zechariah attributes the destruction of Tyre to "the Lord" indicates that Alexander the Great was used as Jehovah's instrument of judgment upon the prideful city.



Map of Tyre from 1873.

- [5] Verses 5-7 concern Alexander's conquest of Philistia. Four of the five prominent cities of the Philistines are mentioned: "Ashkelon", "Gaza", "Ekron", and "Ashdod" (v6; Gath is not mentioned, probably because it had been incorporated into Judah by this time). Ashkelon quickly surrendered to Alexander out of "fear". Gaza refused to surrender, but fell after a 5 month siege; Alexander had its "king", Batis, dragged through the city behind a chariot until he "perish[ed]".
- [6] The "Philistines" would never again be a people of significance (i.e., "pride") after their conquest by Alexander. Those who "dwel[t]" in their lands would be "bastard[s]" (i.e., illegitimate descendants).

Modern Palestinians. *Palestine* was the Roman (i.e., Latin) name for Philistia. Following the Bar Kokhba revolt (132-135 AD), a failed attempt of the Jews of Judea to win independence from the Roman Empire under the leadership of a messianic figure named Simon Bar Kokhba, Roman armies decimated many cities of Judea and implemented extreme Jewish persecution on those that remained, including forbiddance of Torah study, Sabbath observance, synagogue attendance, and circumcision. As a final affront to the Jews, the Roman Emperor Hadrian renamed their land the province of *Palestine*, the name of the ancient enemies of Israel. The people calling themselves modern Palestinians are a mongrel group of Arab peoples who are not legitimate descendants of the Philistines; the prophecy of Zechariah 9:6 that "a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod" has been fulfilled.

- [7] Following the Greek conquest of Philistia, the abominable practices of the pagan Philistines (which included the eating of bloody sacrifices offered to idols) would be put to an end. This was a necessary prerequisite for the land of the Philistines and its remaining inhabitants to be incorporated into the Land of Israel (i.e., in preparation for the Messianic Kingdom). The essence of the concluding thought is "he [of Philistia] that remaineth ... shall be like ... a Jebusite", expressing the idea that those continuing to dwell in this land would become loyal, albeit non-Jewish, citizens of

"Judah" akin to the "Jebusite[s]", the original inhabitants of Jerusalem whom David subjugated².

- [8] During Alexander's conquest of the Levant, all its prominent cities were either subjugated or destroyed—with one exception. "I will encamp about mine house because of the army" prophesied that the LORD (Jehovah; v1) would sovereignly protect Jerusalem from the "army" of "him" (i.e., "Alexander") who would "passeth by" and "returneth", preserving it intact and undefiled for the coming of Messiah (v9). Alexander and his "army" passed Jerusalem twice, first on his march toward, and again when returning from, Egypt; on neither occasion did Alexander disturb the city.

The Testimony of Josephus. According to Josephus (*Antiquities of the Jews* 11.8.5), when Alexander approached Jerusalem he was met by a delegation led by the Jewish High Priest Jaddua. When shown in the Book of Daniel the prophecy that the Persian empire would fall to the Greeks³, Alexander recognized himself as the "rough goat"⁴ and "first king" of "Grecia" (Dan8:21). As a result, he spared the city, consented to their request to continue observance of the Law of Moses, and waived their tribute payment (formerly to the Persians, subsequently to the Greeks) every seventh year.

THE COMING OF MESSIAH

Jews who understood the prophecy of Daniel should have known that the arrival of Messiah would not occur at the time of Alexander the Great (c. 330 BC; e.g., Dan9:25), but during the (Roman) empire that would follow that of the Greeks (cf. Dan7:8-13). Thus, their deliverance from the armies of Alexander would come by other (albeit equally providential) means. Nonetheless, the LORD's almost singular preservation of Jerusalem during the Greek conquest of the Levant was essential in preparation for the future coming of Messiah.

- [9] In contrast to Alexander who came as an exalted and conquering king, Messiah would come to "Jerusalem" as one who was both "just" and "lowly" (Cp., Matt11:29; Phil2:3-7). Messiah's humility was exemplified by his entrance into the city "riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass", a prophecy fulfilled at Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (Matt21:1-9; Mk11:1-10; Luk19:28-38; Jn12:12-15); fulfillment of this prophecy was the *terminus ad quem* of Daniel's 69 Weeks (Dan9:25), fulfilled to the very day (Luk19:41-44). Since an "ass" is a beast of burden not fit for use in battle, the symbolism is that of a King who comes in

² Araunah/Ornan the Jebusite sold King David the land upon which the Temple would be constructed (cf. 2Sam24:18-25; 1Chron21:18-30).

³ That Alexander and the Greeks would conquer the mighty Persian empire was an extraordinary accomplishment and by no means expected. The Persians were famed for their supposed one-million-man army. While this number may have been somewhat exaggerated, the Persians generally outnumbered the Greeks on the field of battle by 20-to-1.

⁴ The "goat" was used as a national emblem by the Greeks. *Ægae*, the capital of ancient Macedonia, means goat and is the basis of the name for the *Ægean* sea on the east coast of Greece; Alexander the Great named his only son *Ægus*, which means *the son of a goat*.

peace⁵; in a similar way Solomon, who reigned over Judah during an extended period of peace, presented himself as king by entering "Jerusalem" riding on David's mule (1Kgs1:32-37). Messiah's entrance into "Jerusalem" in this prophesied manner was His formal presentation of Himself to the nation of Israel as "thy king", and the nation's ultimate obligation under the Mosaic Covenant was to "set him as king over thee whom the LORD thy God shall choose" (Deut17:15).

The "salvation" Messiah would bring at His first coming would not be physical deliverance of Israel from their enemies, but a genuine propitiation for sins (Jn1:29; 1Jn2:2) that "the blood of bulls and of goats" could never accomplish (Heb10:4). For this reason, the people of God are exhorted to "rejoice greatly" and "shout".

- [10] Between vv9-10 is a vast chronological gap, into which the entire Church Age will be unexpectedly inserted; it is unnoted here since its very existence was a "mystery" unrevealed until the Apostle Paul (Eph3:1-6). This verse looks ahead to the return (i.e., second coming) of Messiah, at which time He will bring "peace unto the nations" in the kingdom He establishes, one in which He will exercise "dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth" (fulfilling God's original purpose in His creation of Man; Gen1:26-27). In the coming Kingdom, Messiah will "cut off the chariot of Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off", signifying it will be a time of peace utterly free from war (Cp., Isa2:1-4).

PROPHECY OF JEWISH VICTORY OVER GREEK PAGANISM

Persian rule over the Jews did not interfere with their worship of the LORD. Cyrus allowed the Jews who had been dispersed by the Babylonians to return to Judah and rebuild both Jerusalem and the Temple (Ezr1:1-4). However, under Greek rule the freedom of the Jews to worship the LORD as required by the Mosaic Covenant was increasingly curtailed. The religious conflict between the Jews and the Greeks reached its zenith under Antiochus Epiphanes. Antiochus ruled the (Greek) Seleucid empire, which included Israel, from 175-164 BC. He purposed to enforce Hellenism (which included religious paganism) throughout his empire, but encountered extreme resistance in Israel. He was one of history's infamous persecutors of the Jews. He forbid circumcision, Sabbath observance, Torah possession/reading, and all forms of Jewish worship under penalty of death. Most offensive was his sacrifice of a pig on the altar of the Temple in Jerusalem, and his subsequent erection of an idol of Zeus in the Holy of Holies; this historical event, designated "the abomination that maketh desolate" (Dan11:31), foreshadows an analogous offense to be performed by the future Antichrist (Cp., Dan9:27; Matt24:15; 2Thess2:4; Rev13:7,14-15). The persecution of the Jews under Antiochus ended in a revolt led by the Maccabees (a family of Jewish priests), which temporarily threw off the Seleucid oppression of Israel.

- [11] "As for thee" returns the focus to the regathered Jews of Zechariah's generation who are struggling to rebuild the Temple (a prerequisite

⁵ In contrast, at His second coming Christ returns as a conquering king riding on a white horse and leading the armies of heaven to deliver Israel from her enemies at the Battle of Armageddon (Rev19:11-16).

to the coming of Messiah; Dan9:26). The "pit in which there is no water" seems to be an allusion to Joseph's confinement by his brothers in such a pit⁶ (Gen37:24), typologically signifying the death of Messiah (of whom Joseph is the greatest of all the O.T. types); this expression becomes a Hebrew idiom for *Sheol*/Hell. Thus, by "the blood of thy covenant", by which is meant Christ's blood which inaugurates the New Covenant (Matt26:28; Luk22:20), Messiah will release the "prisoners" (i.e., O.T. believers who died before Christ) from *Sheol*/Hell (Cp., Ps68:18; Eph4:8-10).

- [12] This verse is likely a "double" entendre. If the Jews will "turn to the stronghold" (i.e., rely on the LORD; v14), these "prisoners of hope" will be both physically delivered from Greek oppression as well as resurrected from *Sheol*/Hell in order to participate in the future Messianic kingdom (cf. Dan12:1-3).
- [13] Speaking metaphorically, the LORD views Himself as a warrior having "Judah" as His "bow" and "Ephraim" as His arrows, thus identifying intimately with His people Israel and their coming struggle against "Greece". As there was no armed conflict between the Jews and the Greeks at the time of Alexander, this verse looks ahead to the Maccabean revolt during the reign of Antiochus IV (c. 167-164 BC).
- [14] The LORD is viewed as a storm "over" the land of Israel, with "lightning" as His "arrow[s]" and thunder as His "trumpet". Storms (i.e., "whirlwinds") that came from the desert region "south" of Israel were the most violent.
- [15] In the armed conflict between the Jews and their Greek oppressors at the time of Antiochus, "the LORD of hosts shall defend them".
- [16] Under the leadership of Judas Maccabee and his brothers, the Jews will be victorious (cf. Dan11:32-35). Believing Jews are referred to as God's "flock" (Cp., Jn10:11-16); "like the stones of a crown", the converted nation of Israel will be an item of adornment treasured by the LORD (Cp. Isa62:3; Mal3:17).
- [17] This verse alludes to the testimony of "the flock of [God's] people" (v16) during the Messianic Kingdom. Both the "goodness" and "beauty" of the LORD are recognized to be "great" (Ps27:4; Isa11:1-10; 33:17). The Kingdom will be a time when the nation of Israel is abundantly blessed with material prosperity (e.g., "grain", "new wine"; cf. Isa62:8-9; 65:21-23; Amos9:13-14) as promised under the Mosaic Covenant (cf. Lev26:3-13; Deut28:1-14).

CHAPTER 10

THE REGATHERING OF ISRAEL IN PREPARATION FOR THE KINGDOM

Zechariah foresees that the Jewish people will be dispersed from the land of Israel, but that God will regather them in preparation for the coming of Messiah and the Messianic Kingdom. This was true before the first coming, in that the Jews were brought back from exile in Babylon (Jer29:10); this will be true before the second coming, in that the Jews

⁶ Such pits in ancient Israel were generally man-made cisterns, so the fact that it had "no water" was unusual.

will be regathered from a worldwide diaspora that began in 70 AD (Isa11:11-12).

- [1] Agricultural productivity in ancient Israel depended upon the former and "latter rain"⁷ (Cp., Hos6:3; Joel2:23; Jas5:7), which came from "the LORD" as a blessing promised under the Mosaic Covenant (Deut11:14), and for which Israel was to "ask of the LORD" (i.e., pray). The obedience of Israel under the reign of King Messiah during the Millennial Kingdom will bring timely rains that result in the promised blessing of agricultural abundance (both literally true as well as being a general figure of material prosperity).
- [2] In contrast to faithful dependence upon "the LORD" (i.e., JEHOVAH, the God of Israel; Exod5:1), Israel has throughout its history worshiped vain "idols", sought lying "diviners", and desired "false dreams" (all pagan/occult practices forbidden by God; Deut18:9-14), none of which provided "comfort". As a "flock" with "no shepherd" is destined for disaster, so goes Israel apart from the LORD (cf. Jer50:17). Practically, the circumstance of having "no shepherd" refers to the fact that there has been no king in Israel since Zedekiah (1Kgs24:17; Jer37:1; Matt1:11), and there will not be another until Messiah/Christ (cf. Luk1:31-33).

The LORD is the Shepherd of Israel (Ps23:1), and Jesus Christ declared Himself to be "the good shepherd" (Jn10:11,14); note that all the major O.T. types of Jesus Christ are *shepherds*⁸ (e.g., Abel, Joseph, Moses, David).

- [3] Here, the LORD's "flock" refers to "the house of Judah". While it is not the case that every Jewish member of "the house of Judah" in Zechariah's generation was faithful to the LORD, nonetheless "the house of Judah" is being used here as a type of the believing remnant of the nation of Israel. The previous verse asserted that Judah had "no shepherd", meaning no legitimate or *good* shepherd (i.e., a king). But they had had many false "shepherds" (i.e., apostate Jewish leaders; cf. Ezek34:2-4,8-10). They had also had many "goats", a Hebrew word actually meaning *he-goats*, which were male goats used to lead the "flock" (Cp., Jer50:8), a reference to Gentile rulers who have oppressed Judah (Cp., Matt25:32-33). The poetic language of the verse speaks of a future day in which the LORD will rescue His "flock" from wicked leaders/oppressors and restore it to a place of prominence and dignity (Rev19:11-21).
- [4] The prepositional phrase, "out of him", refers back to "Judah" (v3). Genealogically, Messiah comes "out of [Judah]" (Gen49:10; Matt1:3,16). Messiah is characterized as the "corner[stone]" (i.e., the rejected One who ultimately rebuilds the nation; cf. Ps118:22; 1Pet2:6) and the "nail" (i.e., the sure and immovable anchor point; cf. Isa22:22-24), who will come as a conquering King who forcefully puts down "every oppressor" of His people (Rev19:11-21).

⁷ The former and latter rains in Israel become types of the 1st and 2nd Comings of Messiah/Christ (cf. Hos5:15-6:3).

⁸ In the Dispensation of Grace (Eph3:2), during which the nation of Israel is temporarily set aside (Rom11:11; Act15:16) and God is "visit[ing] the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name" (Act15:14), the people of God are organized into local churches, each of which is to have a shepherd (i.e., pastor; cf. 1Pet5:1-4).

- [5] When Messiah comes, "they" (i.e., "the house of Judah"; vv3,6) will overcome and "tread down" all their enemies (Rev19:11-21). Note that "the LORD is with them" in reference to the Messianic title Immanuel (Isa7:14; Matt1:23).
- [6] Messiah's coming will be to "strengthen ... Judah" and "save ... Joseph" (i.e., the whole, undivided nation of Israel) and to "place them" back into the Promised Land, from which "the LORD, their God" had "cast them off" in 70 AD (in ultimate fulfillment of the Land Covenant⁹; Deut30:3-5).
- [7] "Joseph" was mentioned in v6, and here "Ephraim" is included. The emphasis is on the fact that the eschatological restoration of the nation will include the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah (Cp., Jer31:31).
- [8] Here, "hiss" has the sense of a *whistle*, or *call* issued by the LORD indicating it is time for the Jews to return home (Cp., Isa5:26). The completion of the "[re]gather[ing]" of the Jews to Israel will not occur until after they have been "redeemed" (which takes place after the Church Age, during the Tribulation; Rom11:25-27).
- [9] The worldwide diaspora of the Jewish people is foreseen. Whereas the first dispersion(s) of the Jews was only to Assyria (in the case of Israel) and Babylon (in the case of Judah), the second dispersion would be worldwide in scope; since 70 AD, the Jews have been scattered "among the peoples" and "in far countries". However, they will "[re]turn again" to the land of Israel (cf. Isa11:11-12; Matt24:31).
- [10] The LORD will regather the Jewish people from Gentile lands back into the land He has promised to give them. In this future, eschatological regathering, the Jews will return to both "Gilead" and "Lebanon". While "Gilead" was part of the promised land (east of the Jordan river) originally occupied by the Jews under Moses (Num32:1,29), "Lebanon" has never been possessed; yet it must be according to the land grant made to Abraham (Gen15:18). The expression "and place shall not be found for them" is figurative language meaning that when the Jews return to the Promised Land for the final time, their numbers will be greatly multiplied.
- [11] This verse is a highly figurative description communicating the truth that when the LORD begins to regather the Jewish people to the Land of Israel (the second time; cf. Isa11:11-12), every impediment to their return will be overcome. Israel's ancient enemies of "Assyria" and "Egypt" are mentioned as examples from history, both of which had leaders who were types of Antichrist (i.e., Sennacherib and Pharaoh).
- [12] And "I" (i.e., the LORD; cf. Zech10:1) "will strengthen them in the LORD". This recursive, mystical assertion hints at the plurality of Persons in the Godhead (i.e., the Trinity), latent in the O.T. (e.g., Isa48:16) but explicitly revealed in the N.T. (cf. Jn10:30; 1Jn5:7).

⁹ While a partial regathering of Jews to the land of Israel began in the late 1800's and continues to the present day, it will not be completed until the Second Coming of Christ (cf. Matt24:30-31).

The expression "they [Jews] shall walk up and down" signifies possession of the Land (Cp., Gen13:14-17; Num13:2; Zech1:10-11).

CHAPTER 11

ISRAEL'S NATIONAL APOSTASY

In Zechariah 11, the burden of the prophet turns dark. Israel's ultimate return to her Land to enjoy the promised blessings of the millennial kingdom is to be preceded by national apostasy, including rejection of the good shepherd (i.e., Messiah; vv7-14) and the coming of the foolish shepherd (i.e., Antichrist; vv15-17).

JUDGMENT ON THE LAND FOR REJECTION OF THE MESSIAH

Though apparently out of order chronologically, verses 1-6 give a prophecy of divine judgment upon the Land of Israel that will occur as a result of Israel's rejection of Messiah at His first coming (prophesied in vv7-14). While all of the Levant today appears quite desolate, that is not the description of it given in the O.T. (cf. Gen13:10; Num13:23-27). Its current state of desolation began in the 1st century as a result of divine judgment (Lev26:32-32).

- [1] Throughout O.T. history, "Lebanon" was famously known for her "cedars" (cf. Ps104:16; Song5:15; Ezek27:5); Israel benefited greatly from Lebanon's forests, as they were indispensable in the construction of the Temple (1Kgs5:1-12). However, Lebanon is part of the land promised to Israel (Gen15:18), and it will be judged as a result of Israel's rejection of Messiah; her "cedars" will be devoured by "fire".
- [2] "Bashan", the northernmost portion of the Land east of the Jordan river occupied by Israel, was abundant in "fir trees" and "oaks"; those "vintage" (i.e., old growth) "forest[s]" will be destroyed.
- [3] Two groups are depicted as in despair as a result of the desolation of the land: 1) "shepherds", as the land will no longer nourish their flocks (Cp., Deut32:14; Num32:1-4), and 2) "young lions", as the land will no longer support their "pride" (Cp., Judg14:15; 1Sam17:34; 1Kgs20:36).
- [4] Zechariah as a prophet of "the LORD" is commanded to "feed the flock of the slaughter". As the object of this command, the "flock" is the nation of Israel, which has been given over to "slaughter" as a result of God's determination to judge the nation. The very fact that the prophet is commanded to continue ministering to the nation is an indication that the divine judgment they must endure will not result in their extermination (Cp., Lev26:40-44; Rom11:1-2,11).
- [6] The divine desolation of the Land of Israel will occur while the Jewish people are dispersed from it; while in exile in foreign lands (during most of the Church Age), the Jews will be persecuted by their Gentile hosts. This is the ultimate "curse" of the Mosaic covenant (Lev26:32-39; Deut28:63-68).

REJECTION OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD (MESSIAH)

- [7] Zechariah accepts the charge to "feed the flock of slaughter" (i.e., the nation of Israel given over to judgment). The "poor of the flock" is a reference to the righteous, believing remnant¹⁰ of Jews within the rebellious nation (Cp., Ps14:6; Isal:9; Matt5:3; Mk12:37).

Object Lesson. The prophet Zechariah begins acting out a prophetic object lesson for the nation of Israel in which he is a type of Messiah who comes as "**the good shepherd**" (Jn10:14; cf. Ps23). He takes up the "two staves" of a shepherd, one a stout club used to drive away wild predators that would attack the flock and the other a crooked staff used to retrieve wandering sheep (Cp., "rod" and "staff"; Ps23:4); he names the one "Beauty" and the other "Bands".

- [8] The "three shepherds" that Messiah "cut off in one month" at His first coming is a wildly debated topic. The best view may be to interpret them as the Herodians, Sadducees, and Pharisees, the three sects of Judaism that openly opposed Him, each of which He decisively repudiated in the weeks leading up to the crucifixion (Matt22); they are said to have "abhorred" Messiah (Cp., Luk19:14), and Messiah is said to have "loathed them" (cf. Matt23:13-36).
- [9] In response to His rejection by the nation of Israel at His first coming, Messiah will (temporarily) set aside His flock. There will be a period of time in which He will not shepherd Israel, neither "feed[ing]" them, nor caring for their infirmities/afflictions, rather allowing them to "die"; this ultimately alludes to the setting aside of the nation of Israel during the Church Age (cf. Rom11:1-25). Finally, "let the rest eat, every one, the flesh of another" is a dark allusion to the cannibalism that resulted during the Roman siege of Jerusalem that occurred in 70 AD (Cp., Jer19:9; Lam2:20; 4:10) as a judgment on the nation (Luk19:42-44).
- [10] To portray Messiah's prophesied refusal to care for (i.e., bless; cf. Lev26:3-13; Deut28:1-14) the nation of Israel, Zechariah breaks the "staff" called "Beauty"¹¹, which symbolizes the ultimate and catastrophic breaking of the Mosaic covenant.
- [11] Here, "that day" is the day the nation of Israel catastrophically broke the Mosaic covenant by rejecting Jesus (Messiah) as king at His first coming (Jn19:14-15; cf. Deut17:15). The "poor of the flock" is the remnant of Jews within the nation of Israel that believed in Jesus as Messiah at His first coming (e.g., Simeon, Anna, the disciples/apostles; Rom11:5). They are described as those "that waited upon me" and "knew that it was the word of the LORD" (Cp., Jn10:14,27).
- [12] This verse prophesies the betrayal of Messiah at His first coming for the "price [of] thirty *pieces* of silver". The price is offensive, as it was the value of a slave (Exod21:32). This prophecy was fulfilled

¹⁰ Since the Mosaic Covenant was a national covenant, a remnant of righteous Jews suffered under divine discipline (Lev26:14-39; Deut28:15-62) for the sins of the nation as a whole; this will not be true for the nation of Israel under the New Covenant (Jer31:29-32).

¹¹ The Hebrew word translated "Beauty" connotes *grace/favor* (Cp., Ps27:4; 90:17).

literally when "Judas Iscariot" agreed to "deliver" Jesus to the "chief priests" for "thirty pieces of silver" (Matt26:14-15).

- [13] Continuing the prophecy, the payment is sarcastically referred to as a "goodly price" (i.e., the life of Messiah was valued to be no more than that of a menial servant). The payment would be "cast to the potter in the house of the LORD". This was fulfilled literally when Judas, afterward attempting to return the money to the chief priests, "cast down the pieces of silver in the temple" (Matt27:5); being blood money, the priests could not return it to the temple "treasury", so instead used it to buy a "potter's field" in which to "bury strangers" (i.e., a "potter" ended up receiving the money used to betray Messiah; Matt27:6-7).
- [14] The symbolic act of Messiah breaking His (Mosaic) covenant relationship with the nation of Israel, begun in v10, is completed in this verse with the breaking of the second "staff" called "Bands"¹². Thus, during the Church Age that follows Israel's rejection of Messiah at His first coming, the "brotherhood between Judah and Israel" will end (i.e., Israel will cease to exist as a nation).

THE COMING OF THE FOOLISH SHEPHERD (ANTICHRIST)

Israel's rejection of the Good Shepherd (i.e., Messiah) not only brings the ultimate curse of the Law upon the nation, which is dispersion of the Jews out of the land of Israel and desolation of the land itself (Lev26:22-23), but allows for the eventual advent of the Antichrist in the place of Christ.

Will Israel Accept Antichrist? No. Largely because of John 5:43, some believe that the Jews will accept Antichrist, in the sense of believing him to be their Messiah. This will not be the case, for several reasons. First, Antichrist will be a Gentile (Dan9:26-27), whereas Messiah must be "the son of David" (Matt22:42). Second, Antichrist will be the ruler of the Revived Roman Empire (Dan7:7-8,19-25), whereas Messiah will be the king of Israel (Luk1:31-33). Third, any person who worships the Antichrist will be damned for eternity (Rev14:9-11), whereas "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom11:26). As the Tribulation approaches, the unregenerate nation of Israel will sign a peace treaty with the Antichrist as the ruler of the Roman Empire (Dan9:27), believing he can ensure their peace and security (Cp., Isa31:1); but they will not believe him to be Messiah. As the nation of Israel chose Barabbas over Jesus (Matt27:15-26), that choice was a rejection of Jesus as Messiah, but not a reception of Barabbas as such.

- [15] The "instruments" of the good shepherd were the "two staves" (v7) used to defend and gather the flock. The "foolish shepherd" (i.e., Antichrist) will have different "instruments". The implication is that the "foolish shepherd" will not be motivated by the best interests of the flock; Antichrist's covenant with the nation of Israel (Dan9:27) will merely be a diabolical means to an end, the

¹² The Hebrew word translated "Bands" connotes *unity*, or that which binds together disparate parts.

safety and security of Israel will not be his genuine intention (cf. Isa28:14-15).

- [16] It is "the LORD" (v15) who "will raise up [the foolish] shepherd" (i.e., Antichrist) when the Lamb opens the first seal judgment (Rev6:1-2); whereas it is Satan's desire to do so, he is restrained until the LORD allows (cf. 2Thess2:6-8). The "foolish shepherd" does not care for the flock, but feeds himself upon them; so the Antichrist's motive will not be the security of the nation of Israel, but its destruction (cf. Rev12:13).
- [17] A Portrait of Antichrist. Antichrist is called an "idol shepherd", for he will demand the whole world worship his image (Rev13:15). He "leaveth the flock", meaning he will forsake the covenant he makes with the nation of Israel (Dan9:27) at the midpoint of the Tribulation (Rev12:13). He will have two distinguishing physical characteristics. Because of injuries caused by a "sword", his "arm" will be permanently disabled, and his "right eye" will be "darkened". Presumably, these are permanent disabilities resulting from his attempted assassination, from which he returns as if from the dead (Rev13:3,14).

CHAPTER 12

ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE

The advent of the Antichrist initiates the 7-year Tribulation period, called in Scripture "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer30:7) and the 70th "week" of Daniel (Dan9:27). During the final three-and-a-half years of the Tribulation, Antichrist's singular mission will be the destruction of the nation of Israel (Matt24:15-22; Rev12:13-17) in order to prevent the second coming of Christ (Hos5:15; Matt23:39); Israel's only hope for deliverance will be the return of Christ (Rev19:11-21).

- [1] Zechariah 12-14 represents the second "burden" revealed by the prophet (Cp., Zech9:1). The surety of this prophetic "burden" is guaranteed by "the LORD", who is the Creator not only of the physical universe but also the immaterial "spirit of man".
- [2] Near the end of the 7-year Tribulation period, Antichrist's attempt to destroy Israel will culminate in the Battle of Armageddon (Rev14:19-20; 16:13-16). God "will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling" (i.e., a goblet filled with intoxicating drink, all of whom drink it will "tremble", stumble, reel about uncontrollably). Indeed, "all the peoples" will become as if drunk over the issue of "Jerusalem" and lay "siege" against "Judah" and "Jerusalem" (i.e., Israel).
- [3] This assault on "Jerusalem" will occur "in that day" (i.e., the Day of the LORD, and specifically the Battle of Armageddon) as a result of "all the nations¹³ of the earth" sending armies against Israel (Joel3:2; Zeph3:8; Zech12:3; 14:2). Here, Jerusalem is described as

¹³ Here is the U.S.A. in prophecy. Whereas America has been the singular ally of the regathered nation of Israel since 1948, this will change at some point. As the end approaches, America will join "all the nations of the earth" in opposition to God's declared will for the nation of Israel.

a "burdensome stone", a burden so heavy it thwarts all attempts to lift; those who "burden themselves" with Jerusalem will be "cut in pieces". This description would seem to accurately characterize the geopolitical intrigue associated with the nation of Israel, and especially the city of Jerusalem, even today (and it will only intensify during the Tribulation).

- [4] Expressed using the language and military accouterments of the day in which the prophecy was written, this verse asserts that "the LORD" will supernaturally intervene in defense of Israel "in that day" (i.e., Armageddon; Cp., 7:19-22).
- [5] Since the rebirth of the nation of Israel in 1948, God has graciously blessed the Jewish people with decisive victories in the existential wars she has had to endure (i.e., 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, etc.); however, this unparalleled success in battle has made the people of Israel, and especially the government of Israel, trust in themselves and their own perceived military might, rather than trusting in the LORD (i.e., the Jews today remain an unbelieving people). During the Tribulation, this will change. The "governors of Judah" (i.e., the government of Israel) and "the inhabitants of Jerusalem" will "say in their heart" (i.e., with deep conviction, belief), "My strength [is] in the LORD of hosts, [our] God". This is the beginning of conversion of the nation of Israel.
- [6] Because of their genuine faith, the "governors of Judah" will be empowered to perform miraculous exploits in defense of "Jerusalem" and its inhabitants.
- [7] The LORD will "save the tents of Judah first". The "tents" are temporary dwelling places of the citizens of "Judah", likely a reference to the deliverance of the Jews who fled the land of Israel at the midpoint of the Tribulation to seek refuge in Bozrah (cf. Isa63:1-6; Matt24:15-20; Rev12:6,14-17). The LORD's supernatural deliverance of the nation of Israel will be so spectacular and compelling that the Jews will never again "magnify themselves".
- [8] The LORD will empower "the inhabitants of Jerusalem" to fight with supernatural might in its defense, though the city will ultimately fall to the forces of Antichrist in the days immediately preceding the return of Christ (cf. Zech14:2).
- [9] The fall of Jerusalem notwithstanding, the LORD "will destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" at the second coming of Christ (cf. Joel3:12-17; Rev19:15-21).

ISRAEL'S CONVERSION

- [10] National repentance and trusting the LORD (v5) is one thing, but genuine (saving) faith for the Jewish people is not a return to Judaism. For the Jews, the issue of receiving Jesus Christ (i.e., Messiah) has been "a stone of stumbling, a rock of offense" (Ps118:22; 1Pet2:8). For Israel to be saved, she must "confess ... [Jesus is Lord], and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead" (Rom10:9).

JEHOVAH speaks directly in this verse. In that day, He will "pour" His "Spirit of grace" (in contrast to the Law; Jn1:17) out "upon the house of David" (Joel2:28-32), leading the Jewish people to "look [unto] Me, whom they have pierced" (cf. Num21:8-9; Isa45:22). It is the turning to Jesus (whom they crucified; Act2:36), and accepting Him as Messiah, that completes the conversion of Israel¹⁴. It is not the second coming of Christ that results in Israel's salvation; rather, the salvation of Israel is a prerequisite for the Lord's return (Lev26:40-46; Hos5:15-6:3; Matt23:39).

- [11] "In that day", the day in which Israel accepts the fact that they put to death Messiah at His first coming, there will be "great mourning in Jerusalem". The mourning at that time is compared to the "mourning of Hadadrimmon¹⁵, in the Valley of Megiddon", an allusion to the mourning of Judah over the death of the righteous King Josiah (2Kgs23:29-30; 2Chron35:24-25).
- [12] Verses 12-13 relate the nation-wide extent of the "mourning" (i.e., conversion/salvation) of the Jewish people. Descendants of "David" and "Nathan" (the prophet; cf. 2Sam12:1) will be saved.
- [13] Descendants of "Levi" and "Shimei" (a descendant of King Saul, and ancestor of Mordecai, who cursed King David on his return to Jerusalem after the death of Absalom; cf. 2Sam16:5-8; Est2:5) will be saved.
- [14] The extent of the conversion/salvation of the Jews will be total. All individual Jews who "shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt24:13), such that at the return of Christ the nation of Israel will be completely regenerate (Rom11:26). In contrast, those Jews who refuse to believe will die during the Tribulation (Ezek20:33-38; Zech13:8).

CHAPTER 13

ISRAEL'S NATIONAL CLEANSING

"For [Israel], being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom10:3). The Apostle Paul's description of the spiritual condition of the nation of Israel has been true since the first coming of Christ. Following the conversion of Israel, its great need will be for national cleansing. Some of what follows is a preview of cleansing that will not occur until after the return of Christ (see PROPHETS AND PROPHECY in the introductory section of the notes; p. 2).

- [1] "In that day" is the day of Israel's conversion/salvation. The "fountain opened to the house of David" is the indwelling Holy Spirit promised to all who believe as a blessing of the New Covenant (Joel2:28-29; Ezek36:24-29; Jn7:37-39; 14:16-17).

¹⁴ Note that Israel is back in the Promised Land when converted, so the nation must have been regathered in unbelief (cf. Ezek37:1-14).

¹⁵ Hadadrimmon was a town in the valley of Megiddo, apparently the place of King Josiah's death.

- [2] The "idols" that must be removed "out of the land" are images of the Beast (i.e., Antichrist; Rev13:14-15). The "prophets" that must be removed include the False Prophet (Rev13:11-14; 19:20). Finally, all "unclean spirit[s]" will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit along with Satan (Rev20:1-3; Cp., Isa24:21-22).
- [3] The context of "prophesy[ing]" in this verse is the false "prophets" of v2; in view are those who "speakest lies in the name of the LORD". No false prophet will ever again be tolerated in the land of Israel. In the Kingdom, false prophets will be executed as was commanded under the Law of Moses (cf. Deut13:1-9; 18:20).
- [4] The false "prophets" will repent of their "prophes[ying]", and they will no longer wear a "rough garment" (Lit., *hairy* garment; Cp., 2Kgs1:8; Matt3:4) in order to appear as a prophet.
- [5] When confronted, the false "prophet" will deny having formerly been a prophet, attempting to claim he was a simple farmer. Such attempts to deceive in order to escape judgment will fail.

--- MESSIANIC INTERLUDE BEGINS ---

- [6] As an example of the ultimate false prophet, who attempted to portray himself as righteous rather than diabolical, this verse is an allusion to Judas Iscariot (it is also yet another instance of 1st and 2nd coming prophecies smeared together, out of order, with no indication in the text that they will be events separated by thousands of years; see PROPHETS AND PROPHECY in the introductory section of the notes; p. 2). He associated himself with the "friends" of the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn15:15), yet betrayed Him (Jn13:2). The prophetic import of this verse should not be missed; here is a clear prophecy that Messiah would be betrayed by a "friend", and that His death would include "wounds" in His "hands" (i.e., crucifixion¹⁶; Cp., Ps22:16; Jn20:27).

Text Note. Unbelieving Jewish and liberal Christian scholarship have gone to extraordinary lengths to confuse the translation as "hands" (KJV) in an attempt to obscure a clear Messianic prophecy that unequivocally points to Jesus Christ. Modern English versions of the Bible have suffered serious corruption under such pseudo-scholarship. Rather than "in thine hands" (KJV), the Hebrew phrase is rendered as: "between thine arms" (ASV), "on your chest" (HCSB/CSB), "on your back" (ESV), "on your chest and back" (TLB), "between your arms" (NASB), "on your body" (NIV), "between your arms" (NKJV), "on your chest" (NRSV), and "on your back" (RSV). As the KJV, Young's Literal Translation properly renders it as "in thy hands". There should be absolutely no controversy concerning this Hebrew word (*yad*), as it is translated "hand" 1,359 times in the O.T. (e.g., Gen8:9).

- [7] With the Messiah and His betrayal at His first coming introduced in v6, that prophetic subject is continued. It is the LORD speaking, and He prophesies the death of "my shepherd" (i.e., Messiah). He refers to the Messiah as "the man who is my fellow"; this expression juxtaposes the humanity and deity of Messiah. Messiah will be a

¹⁶ Note that at the time in which this prophecy was recorded by Zechariah (i.e., 6th century BC), the Roman Empire did not yet exist, much less practice crucifixion as a form of execution; the mode of execution under the Law of Moses was stoning.

"man", but He is also referred to as "my fellow" by the LORD; the Hebrew word translated "fellow" means *relation* or *associate*, and in this context carries the connotation of one whom the LORD considers to be His equal. Upon the death of Messiah, His "sheep" (i.e., disciples) will be scattered; this verse is quoted as a fulfillment of prophecy by Jesus Himself (Matt26:31; Mk14:2). Having "smit[ten]" the "shepherd", the LORD will then "turn [His] hand [**against**]"¹⁷ the little ones", a prophecy of the persecution and martyrdom of the Jewish apostles/disciples of Jesus (cf. Jn15:18-20; Act8:1-4).

--- MESSIANIC INTERLUDE ENDS ---

- [8] Returning to the cleansing of the nation of Israel, no unbelieving Jew will be allowed to enter the Messianic/Millennial Kingdom (cf. Jn3:3-7). During the Tribulation, those Jews who refuse to acknowledge Jesus as both "Lord and Christ" (Act2:36; Rom10:9), and thus remain unconverted, are "rebels" that will be "purged out" (Ezek20:33-38). Tragically, the unbelieving Jews will comprise "two parts" (i.e., two-thirds) of the nation, with the remaining "third" being the believing remnant (Rom9:27).
- [9] The "third part" of Jews alive during the Tribulation "shall call upon my name" and be saved (Joel2:32; Rom10:13). This believing remnant of Jews will be supernaturally preserved through the Tribulation to enter the Kingdom as the regenerate nation of Israel (Rom11:26).

CHAPTER 14

THE RETURN OF MESSIAH

While some of Zechariah's prior revelations included allusions and interludes concerning the first coming of Messiah, Zechariah 14 is wholly devoted to the second coming of Messiah and the righteous Kingdom He will establish on earth, which is the grand theme and overarching purpose of the plan of God¹⁸ (Gen1:26; Ps2:6-13; Rev19:15; cf. Matt6:9-10).

- [1] During "the day of the LORD", near the end of the 7-year Tribulation in the military campaign that is Armageddon, the enemies of Israel will take "spoil" from the Jews who remain in Jerusalem (Cp., Matt24:15-20).
- [2] Scripture records the city of Jerusalem being conquered/destroyed three times in history: 1) by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC (2Chron36:17-20), 2) by Titus in 70 AD (Luk21:20-24), and 3) by Antichrist during the Tribulation (Zech14:1-2). During Armageddon, when the LORD will "gather all nations against Jerusalem" (Cp., Zeph3:8), the city will fall to the forces of Antichrist; Jewish homes will be looted, and Jewish women will be raped. Half of the Jews in the city will be

¹⁷ The phrase "turn my hand upon" is a Hebrew idiom meaning *against* (e.g., Ps81:14; Isal:25; Ezek38:12; Amos1:8).

¹⁸ While the personal salvation of individuals is vitally important, in the overall plan of God it is simply a necessary means to a desired end; saved people are needed to populate the Kingdom of God.

taken into "captivity", the other half will remain in Jerusalem as a "residue" (i.e., remnant).

- [3] "Then", "the LORD" Himself in the Person of Messiah, will "go forth [from heaven]". This is the **SECOND COMING**, in which the Lord Jesus Christ descends to earth leading the armies of heaven (Rev19:11-21; cf. Ps118:10-11; Isa29:7-8; 34:2-3,5-6,8; 63:1-6). The Lord Jesus will "fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle", an allusion to the conquest of the Promised Land in the days of Joshua in which the preincarnate Jesus personally fought on behalf of the nation of Israel (cf. Josh5:13-14; 10:13-14).
- [4] When the Lord Jesus returns, He will physically¹⁹ "stand" upon "the Mount of Olives", returning to the very place from which He ascended in 32 AD, as was promised (Act1:10-12). At this time, an massive earthquake will split the Mount of Olives in two, creating a brand new valley running east to west; this would create a level path for Jesus from the Mount of Olives to the eastern gate of the city of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem's Eastern Gate. When Messiah returns, He will enter Jerusalem through its eastern gate (Ezek44:1-2). The eastern gate of Jerusalem is also known as the Golden Gate or the Beautiful Gate (Act3:2). The eastern gate was sealed by Suleiman the Magnificent, Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, in 1540 AD, ostensibly as a symbolic act of denial that the Jewish Messiah would ever enter Jerusalem.



¹⁹ A host of pseudo-Christian cults (e.g., Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Harold Camping) have falsely predicted a date for the return of Christ; when it failed to transpire on the predicted date, they all revised their teachings to assert that Christ's return happened, but it was spiritual and invisible. Scripture teaches that the return of Christ will be physical and visible to the entire world (Zech12:4; Matt24:30; Rev1:7).

[5] The newly created "valley" will also provide a way for the Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem to flee from the city. This future flight from the city is compared to a similar escape from "the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah" (cf. Amos1:1); "Azel" is apparently the city in which the Jews took refuge at that time.

The "LORD, my God, shall come" in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and "all the saints" (Cp., 1Thess3:13; Jud14) who come with Him include: 1) all believers from the Church Age (i.e., the Body/Bride of Christ which was completed at the Rapture, after which "shall we ever be with the Lord"; 1Thess4:17), and 2) a myriad of angels (Matt16:27; 25:31; for examples of holy angels referred to as "saints", see Deut33:2-3; Job15:15; Ps89:5-7). O.T. "saints" (primarily Israel) are probably not included, as their resurrection occurs after the Tribulation ends (in preparation for the inauguration of the Kingdom; Dan12:1-2).

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MESSIAH'S KINGDOM ESTABLISHED ON EARTH

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WORSHIP IN MESSIAH'S KINGDOM

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