

# On That Day

## *Part I of The Second Burden of Zechariah*

- <sup>1</sup> Behold, a day is coming for the LORD, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst.
- <sup>2</sup> For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city.
- <sup>3</sup> Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle.
- <sup>4</sup> On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.
- <sup>5</sup> And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.
- <sup>6</sup> On that day there shall be no light, cold, or frost.
- <sup>7</sup> And there shall be a unique day, which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but at evening time there shall be light.
- <sup>8</sup> On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter.

- <sup>9</sup> And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one.
- <sup>10</sup> The whole land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem shall remain aloft on its site from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the former gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses.
- <sup>11</sup> And it shall be inhabited, for there shall never again be a decree of utter destruction. Jerusalem shall dwell in security.
- <sup>12</sup> And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples that wage war against Jerusalem: their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths.
- <sup>13</sup> And on that day a great panic from the LORD shall fall on them, so that each will seize the hand of another, and the hand of the one will be raised against the hand of the other.
- <sup>14</sup> Even Judah will fight at Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be collected, gold, silver, and garments in great abundance.
- <sup>15</sup> And a plague like this plague shall fall on the horses, the mules, the camels, the donkeys, and whatever beasts may be in those camps.
- <sup>16</sup> Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths.
- <sup>17</sup> And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them.
- <sup>18</sup> And if the family of Egypt does not go up and present themselves, then on them there shall be no rain; there shall be the plague with which the LORD afflicts the nations that do not go up to keep the Feast of Booths.
- <sup>19</sup> This shall be the punishment to Egypt and the punishment to all the nations that do not go up to keep the Feast of Booths.

- <sup>20</sup> And on that day there shall be inscribed on the bells of the horses, "Holy to the LORD." And the pots in the house of the LORD shall be as the bowls before the altar.
- <sup>21</sup> And every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holy to the LORD of hosts, so that all who sacrifice may come and take of them and boil the meat of the sacrifice in them. And there shall no longer be a trader in the house of the LORD of hosts on that day.

## **Zechariah 14:1-21**

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### **The Apocalypse**

“THAT'S GREAT, IT STARTS WITH AN EARTHQUAKE. Birds and snakes, an aeroplane, and Lenny Bruce is not afraid. Eye of a hurricane, listen to yourself churn ... World serves its own needs, listen to your heart bleed. Tell me with the Rapture and the reverent in the right, right ... It's the end of the world as we know it. It's the end of the world as we know it. It's the end of the world as we know it, and I feel fine.”<sup>1</sup> “I see the bad moon arising. I see trouble on the way. I see earthquakes and lightnin'. I see bad times today. I hear hurricanes ablowing. I know the end is coming soon.

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<sup>1</sup> R.E.M., “The End of the World as We Know It.”

I fear rivers over flowing. I hear the voice of rage and ruin.”<sup>2</sup> “99 dreams I have had. In every one a red balloon. It's all over and I'm standin' pretty, in the dust that was a city. If I could find a souvenir, just to prove the world was here...”<sup>3</sup> “I’m breaking in, shaping up, then checking out on the prison bus. This is it, the apocalypse. Whoa!”<sup>4</sup>

The apocalypse is embedded in humanities consciousness. As you can see, plenty of people like to sing about it. It seems like every other movie is about imagining what it would like to live through: The Terminator Series, the Mad Max series, Omega Man, Last Man on Earth, The Book of Eli, and pretty much any zombie movie. And Americans can’t get enough of it.

Maybe I watched one too many of these movies growing up, but I remember many years ago reading our passage today and thinking that one of the verses in it described the bomb. In fact, I was inspired to read it on top of Uncompahgre Peak when I looked over its thousand-foot sheer drop off. I would read a chapter from the Bible

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<sup>2</sup> Creedence Clearwater Revival, “Bad Moon Rising.”

<sup>3</sup> Nena, “99 Red Balloons.”

<sup>4</sup> Imagine Dragons, “Radioactive.”

on top of every 14er, and Zechariah 14 was the one I chose for that mountain. I don't think it was the mountain's fault. I still picture vs. 12 in my mind. “And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples that wage war against Jerusalem: their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in the sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths.” If you go to the internet, you will find plenty of prophecy experts that say Zechariah is describing a nuclear holocaust, and that is what I thought was being predicted here too.

But this makes me want to think out loud for a moment about other religions. Every religion has some form of the apocalypse. In Norse paganism it is Ragnarök and the death of the gods. In Hinduism it is Pralaya. In Buddhism, the future appearance of the Buddha will occur at Maitreya, after a long degeneration of society when all law will be forgotten. In Islam is it Yawm ad-Din, the day of judgment. The Greeks, the Mayans, the Egyptians, the Babylonians, all had a view of the end of the world.

Now, in pagan religions, time is often viewed as cyclical. Like a wheel, it goes up and down and back up

again, always starting over. One could even argue that it is essentially meaningless, since there is no real Creator/creature distinction and whatever disasters await the future just sort of “happen” because of karma or fate or something. There is no High God to judge anyone for anything. All is God; God is All. Only in the biblical religions and spinoffs does time seem to flatten out like a line with a beginning and an end that ushers in an eternal state.<sup>5</sup> And so more than the brute horror of the future apocalypse, it is the judgment *of God* and how you will fall out in it that becomes the focus.

One more thing before we get into this. What do people do with this knowledge? Well, they often scare themselves senseless. Some of you grew up in the 50s with

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<sup>5</sup> This is basically what I was taught at seminary. I think it is essentially true, however it is curious that in something like a Greek cyclical time of as recounted by someone like Hesiod you have a series of “ages.” A Golden age, a Silver age, a Bronze age, a Heroic Age, and an Iron age. There are clearly overlapping ideas with biblical breaks in history (Eden-Flood; Flood to Abraham; Abraham to Christ; Christ to the Second Coming). I think the main difference is that Scripture—though seeing breaks in history like this—really breaks history since the fall into just two ages: the present age and the age to come. The former is physical and temporal with spiritual beings involved in it. The later is spiritual and eternal, with the physical restoration coming in the future. The main difference, again, however, is that God judges according to his own nature and his law, whereas though man is held to some kind of “law” standard with the Greeks, there really isn’t a judgment from God at the end. How could there be? It is classic polytheism (or henotheism).

the school drills that had you hide under the deck in case of nuclear bomb. Others grew up in the 60s-80s cold war where everyone thought that any minute Russia could end the world. Today, without that immediate threat, many completely mock it. Then there are truly evil people, cultists of various religious origins who feed off the blood of their own victims like vampires. Remember Jim Jones and the People's Temple, the Mason Family, Waco and the Branch Davidians, Aum Shinrikyo and the Tokyo subway, or Heaven's Gate and the comet Hale-Bop? Or how about the present day doomsday cult known as ISIS? All are apocalyptic doomsday cults. All ended in mass death. This makes the discussion of the apocalypse all the more important to think through.

## A Day for Yahweh

Zechariah 14, the last chapter and last section of the final "burden" of Zechariah, has been dubbed "**The Final Battle.**" The first verse uses the word "**day,**" a word used **21 times** in this burden and eleven times in this chapter to describe what is coming. "**Behold, a day is coming for the LORD.**" This is different from what is normally said, "of

the LORD.” This time it is “for” the LORD. Literally it reads, “a day is coming to/for Yahweh.” This is his day; it is for him. This right here sets the biblical apocalypse apart from pagan apocalypses. For even if some of the imagery of what happens on that day is similar, in the Bible this is Yahweh’s day and it is done for him. It is a day when he will show himself to be Judge, and also when he will show himself to be the Deliverer.

### *The Final Battle*

The Final Battle begins on a note of grace: “when the spoil is taken from you will be divided in your midst” (Zech 14:1). But what is it talking about then the spoil is taken from you? It refers to all of the little “d” days of the LORD throughout history, whenever God’s people have been plundered by pagan peoples. But it has in mind a specific day in the future: “For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle.” It then describes the horrors of this battle: “... and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city” (Zech 14:2).

Now, Zechariah does not tell us when this battle is going to occur. We saw last week that there are lots of suggestions about these kinds of prophecies: future, past, spiritual, historical. Most Preterists take this to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.<sup>6</sup> Some take our entire chapter that way. Jesus seems to have predicted this battle saying, “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near” (Luke 21:20) and then gives various descriptions of what that war would entail. Without question, when you read what Josephus says about what happened in that war to what Jesus says, Jesus got it right.<sup>7</sup>

However, this does not preclude the idea of a Final Battle to which 70 AD was only a type. Notice the language again of “I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle.” Does this sound familiar at all? When Satan is released from his prison (his “binding” is “so that he may not deceive the nations”) Revelation says that he

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<sup>6</sup> For example “Zechariah 14 Fulfilled: A Preterist Commentary,” *Preterist Bible Commentary* at: <http://revelationrevolution.org/zechariah-14-fulfilled-a-preterist-commentary/>, last accessed Sept 29, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> I detailed this many years ago in the sermons from Matthew 24.

will, “... come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea” (Rev 20:8). Sure, in one sense Satan gathers the nations (Revelation) and in the other God does (Zechariah), but all that means is that Satan is God’s instrument, under his authority, even if he does this with very different motives that the LORD has.

When you learn that Revelation can be read as a series of repeating cycles, suddenly, this allows you to see parallels of this Final Battle from earlier in the book. “I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army” (Rev 19:19). Similarly, and probably more famously, “And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon” (Rev 16:16). I am of the view that all of these chapters are talking about the same battle and that this battle is still future to us.

Zechariah 14’s Final Battle is somehow related to the Battle that was prophesied earlier in ch. 12. There we read about, “On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as

great as the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo” (**Zech 12:11**). Megiddo and Armageddon are probably related to one another (the latter being Mt. Megiddo or Mt. of Assembly). In the earlier chapter, the thought was on the First Coming. In this one, it seems to be on the Second, as it uses the usurping of Satan back in **Isaiah 14:13** as a prototype of the final war that he wages against the church. In Isaiah, Satan sought to to usurp the divine council by sitting on the “Mount of Assembly” above all the stars of God. “Mt. of Assembly” is what Armageddon means.<sup>8</sup> In Revelation, he will now assemble the nations literally possessed by the dark hordes of hell and deceived by powerful signs that create a strong delusion in their hearts (**Rev 16:14**) against God’s people in the Last and Final Battle.

What terrible wrath the devil holds against the church. In Revelation 12 his wrath is terrible because he knows

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<sup>8</sup> I believe this came up earlier in our study of Zechariah, but John clarifies in the verse that “Megiddo” for him means “assembly,” “they assembled” in the place that in Hebrew is Mt. Megiddo.” This refers back to Isaiah 12:14 and the Mt of Assembly that the king of Babylon (and Satan himself) tried to usurp. The Hebrew there is *har meod*, and through the changing of Hebrew (*hr m’d*) to Greek (*hr mgd*; without the vowels where “g” transliterates the silent ‘ or ḡ in Hebrew) you get the English Armageddon.

that his time is short (12:12). Therefore, he pursues the woman who had given birth to the male child (13). He prowls around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1Pe 5:8). All this while presently being bound from deceiving the nations, which is the very thing that makes him so angry, for when the gospel comes and the darkness lifts, people are snatched out of his kingdom and brought into salvation in the kingdom of Christ. Therefore, when he is let loose upon the world and allowed to deceive on last and terrible time, all of his rage and anger are vented on the people of God. Zech 14:2 barely begins to scratch the surface of what he will do. Josephs' description of the fall of Jerusalem will seem like a peaceful walk in a pleasant valley. There are reasons why the Armageddon conjures such horror in people's minds.

But beloved, look at what God does. “The the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle” (Zech 14:3). This clearly refers to the Angel of the LORD, the Commander of the Hosts of Heaven. Revelation describes him as a Shining Warrior riding a white horse with all the angels of heaven following

in his wake (**Rev 19:13-14**). Zechariah says the same thing. “Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him” (**Zech 14:5**). In fact, according to Jude, this prophecy goes all the way back to Enoch, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones” (**Jude 1:14**; cf. **1En 1:9**).

Revelation says that at that climactic moment of human history, fire comes down from heaven (like Sodom) and consumes God’s enemies and the devil will be thrown into the lake of fire (**Rev 20:9-10**). This is the moment in Zechariah when one of the great images of the OT pops up. “On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward” (**Zech 14:4**). Again, you have different views of this in Christian interpretation. Some Preterists point to an obscure comment by a first century Rabbi whom some claims to have seen the Shekinah leave the Second Temple in 66 AD

and settle on the Mt. of Olives, thus fulfilling the prophecy.

This would actually be a literal interpretation, since Jesus and the Shekinah are One. However, that comment is actually very unclear and most people take this as a physical prophecy of the bodily return of Jesus Christ on the Mt. of Olives. The Mt. of Olives is actually where Jesus ascended into heaven ([Acts 1:12](#)). There angels then told the disciples, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven” ([Acts 1:11](#)). How they do not have [Zechariah 14:4](#) in mind is beyond me. This is especially true, and this escapes the notice of so many, when we consider that this isn’t “God” in his essence who is going to stand on the Mount in Zechariah.<sup>9</sup> Rather, it is the Warrior-Angel Yahweh.

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<sup>9</sup> Contrary to [T.V. Moore](#), “It is impossible for us to take this whole passage literally, for God cannot literally place his feet on the Mount of Olives.” Cited in James Montgomery Boice, *The Minor Prophets: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 564. Boice does not notice that Yahweh in Zechariah 14 is the Angel, but he does comment on the created angel’s comments to the disciples in Acts about Jesus’ return.

This is all the more interesting, perhaps, when we consider that from the perspective of amillennialism, the moment Jesus returns is the moment of the resurrection from the dead. Why is that interesting? Because the oldest cemetery in Judaism, containing 120,000 bodies and dating back 3,000 years, where tradition says that Zechariah himself was buried, is found on the mountainside of the Mt. of Olives. This seems to be the theme of the next part of burden.



It says that the Mt. of Olives will be **split in two from east to west** (**Zech 14:4**). Again, some take this very literally, as if there will be an earthquake of tremendous proportions and will literally shake the mountain in two (see the earthquake imagery of **vs. 5**). I think this is probably much more like other Apocalyptic language that simply teaches us about the greatness of that coming. We see this for example in **Isaiah 40:4**, “**Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places plain.**” But this is was a physical conflagration, for Luke cites this very verse about the preaching of John the Baptist prior to the making known of Messiah (**Luke 3:5**). Honestly, I don’t know what it is all going to look like when the Lord Jesus returns in glory from a physical stand point. I don’t know how anyone else could either.

### *The World to Come (14:6-11)*

I do know what it will look like from **a spiritual stand point**, or maybe better, an eternal standpoint. I say “eternal” because Zechariah does not see a millennium of bliss prior to Jesus’ return. Jesus’ Second Coming here

ushers in the Eternal State.<sup>10</sup> Zechariah goes on to explain: “On that day there shall be no light, cold, or frost. And there shall be a unique day, which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but at evening time there shall be light” (**Zech 14:6-7**). This sounds peculiarly like the special day in Joshua, “The sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation took vengeance on their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in the midst of heaven and did not hurry to set for about a whole day. There has been no day like it before or since, when the LORD heeded the voice of a man, for the LORD fought for Israel” (**Josh 10:13-14**). But it also sounds like Revelation: “And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever” (**Rev 22:5**). This is the eternal state.

It is next described as a time of “**living waters**” that flow out from Jerusalem. It is a return to Edenic paradise. This is the same image that Ezekiel 47 describes as it

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<sup>10</sup> Even James Boice who is Premillennial, understands that what takes place next is the eternal state.

describes the third temple.<sup>11</sup> It shall flow all year, in summer as in winter (**Zech 14:8**), which is why the tree of life in **Ezekiel 47:12** and **Revelation 22:1** has leaves all year long. There will never be a time of spiritual drought or wondering “where is God” again. For we will be with Christ who gives the living water (**John 4:10**; **Jer 17:13**).

In this way, “The LORD will be king over all the earth.” “Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle” (**Ps 24:8** KJV). And when he comes with the angels of heaven arrayed in their fine linen, with the sharp sword of his mouth, on his robe will be written, “King of kings and Lord of lords” (**Rev 19:16**). Therefore, it says in Zechariah, “On that day the LORD will be one and his Name one” (**Zech 14:9**).

This statement probably has the Shema in mind (the difficult to translate, “Hear O Israel, the LORD your God, the LORD is one”). But there may be more going on here. This reminds me of Paul’s strange phrase in Galatians,

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<sup>11</sup> For example compare, “Half of them [the living waters] to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea” (**Zech 14:8**) and “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, and enters the sea; when the water flows into the sea, the water will become fresh. And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live” (**Ezek 47:8-9**).

“Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one” (Gal 3:20). The intermediary he is talking about is somehow between God and Moses, and yet for some reason he inserts this parenthetical comment that God is one. Why would he do that? I believe it is because the intermediary in mind is Jesus, who is also God. How can there be an intermediary between God and Moses and yet that intermediary also be God because God is one? Jesus is the answer. In the same way, on the Great Day, all eyes will see Christ, they will see his kingdom, they will know he is king,<sup>12</sup> and they will simultaneously know that he, the Name, and God are One. One: Father, Son (and Holy Spirit). This is the exaltation of Christ on the Day that part of us all longs to see.

The eternal state continues to be pictured for us, “The whole land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem shall remain aloft on its site from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of

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<sup>12</sup> The Targum reads, “*And the kingdom of the Lord shall be revealed upon all the inhabitants of the earth; at that time they shall serve before the Lord with one accord, for his name is established in the world; there is none apart from him*” (italics are the Targum’s interpretation, regular font is the biblical text).

the former Gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepress" (10). Here you get the mixture of the divine mountain ("aloft") of Genesis 2 and the eternal city ("Jerusalem") of Revelation 21—the bookends of Scripture. God dwells on the Mt. Zion and will do so forever. His people will live with him aloft on that mountain, for the city coming down out of heaven is the bride, his people, his church. He will be in their midst.

Thus it says, "And it shall be inhabited, for there shall never again be a decree of utter destruction. Jerusalem shall dwell in security" (11). The Warrior-King will rule and protect and lead, and the people will prosper and as we will see shortly, worship. It is a glorious vision of Christ that gives peace and comfort to his people.

### *The Judgment to Come (14:12-15)*

But before this, we return to the [theme of judgment](#). As I said, part of us longs for the Day. Another part does and yet does not. For that Day is a day of judgment upon the nations. [Vv. 12-15](#) describe this. "And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples that wage war against Jerusalem: their flesh will rot while

they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths” (12). A nuclear bomb? Perhaps the opening up of the Ark of the Covenant in Indiana Jones? Whatever it describes, it is very bizarre language, even for an OT prophet. But it certainly is a terrible picture of the judgment of God and of everlasting horror, like people turning into zombies for eternity. What a ghastly fate awaits the enemies of God’s people.

“And on that day a great panic from the LORD shall fall on them, so that each will seize the hand of another, and the hand of the one will be raised against the hand of the other” (13). Like the wars of the Conquest, God goes before his people, sending terror into the hearts of their enemies, causing them to turn on themselves and destroy themselves, which his church is protected from harm. No, this is not a picture people like to paint of the LORD: A warrior doing harmful things to people. But this is the picture he paints of himself. For he loves his people and is very jealous for them. He will fight against his enemies until everyone is put under his feet. Though he puts up

with the slander, mockery, violence, intolerance, hatred, spite, and abuse now, on that day he will vindicate his great Name. You do not want to be on that side of the war. These do all things for themselves, they look out for number one, and they will all turn on each other as Adam turned on Eve and Cain turned on Abel.

“Even Judah will fight at Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be collected, gold, silver, and garments in great abundance” (14). The prophets often talk about how on that last day the nations will be forced to give tribute to God. They will lose all of what they have worked so hard in this life to attain. And they will have to give it all to the church. Isaiah 60 is an entire chapter devoted to this theme. Their wealth will all be for naught. This is why Jesus commands us not to store up treasures on earth, but in heaven. Those who desire heaven will must not desire the things of the earth. This is especially tempting here in the richest nation in earth’s history, but you must not give in. Instead, you must have their eyes focused on eternal wealth: faith in Christ, worship of Almighty God, good works that please the Father as they

are done out of thankfulness, the fruit of the Spirit. If this is your desire now, then on that day, God will give you the treasures of the nations and they will be left empty handed.

“And a plague like this plague shall fall on the horses, the mules, the camels, the donkeys, and whatever beasts may be in those camps” (15). Does God suddenly hate all equines? Is he angry at four footed hooved mammals? Of course not. The context is war. These are the **ancient equivalent of the modern tank**, cargo ship, truck, and car. These were those things that carried warriors and supplies to camp. The point is that God will destroy all of their ability to wage war on Him and his people. They will be rendered completely powerless to fight against God. They won't be able to gather together and they won't be able to continue any kind of extended effort, because their shipments and war-bands will cease.

What does this judgment section do in your heart? Does it create anger? Does it make you wonder what kind of an evil God this is who would do such a thing to such nice people? Does it do anything? The final section of the book describes what it will cause in the hearts of God's

people on that day. As such, it is a fitting way to end our study of the most quoted OT prophet in the NT.

### *The Worship to Come (14:16-21)*

“Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths” (16). Contrary to what our friends who meet in this same building on Saturday would probably say, this is not a return to the types and shadows of OT feast days. No. The reality has eclipsed the shadow. Jesus is greater than the feast days. King Jesus is shown to be victorious. Therefore, I believe the prophet is using a very appropriate picture from the OT to teach us about how God’s people will worship him.

The Feast of Booths was the great culminating feast of the Jewish calendar. It took place at the end of the harvest and the end of the year. It was sometimes called the Feast of Ingathering. Thus, it is a perfect as an illustration for the eternal state. On that great day, one group will gather in rebellion to attack God and his Messiah at Armageddon. Another group will gather to worship him. So we might

call this the anti-Armageddon. These are the only two gatherings that there really will be.

The purpose is obvious: “And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them” (17). Again, see how the King is Yahweh of Hosts. The King is Jesus. Jesus is Yahweh of Hosts. These two verses mention the survivors and anyone from the nations. This refers to the OT remnant which in the NT is explained as God’s elect to salvation, first from the Jews, then from the Gentiles. All of God’s people will worship him together, without hostility, without racism, without tribal quarrels, without favoritism, but as equals who have all been saved by the LORD. Men strive for unity today, but not the unity around God’s throne. Christians are to strive for unity around the throne, in worship. When we fall down, we are to repent and get back up. But the hope here is that on that day, nothing will stop God’s people from worshiping him in spirit and in truth, together as one, forever.

Anyone who will not do this willingly, will have the same kind of fate as the one described in the last chapter of

Revelation. It describes the dogs outside the celestial city who have no part in salvation. Here too, those who will not worship will not be blessed with rains, so important for life. Instead, they will live eternal lives of spiritual drought and toiling anguish. This is a **plague from God**. It is a picture of hell.

“And if the family of Egypt does not go up and present themselves, then on them there shall be no rain; there shall be the plague with which the LORD afflicts the nations that do not go up to keep the Feast of Booths. This shall be the punishment to Egypt and the punishment to all the nations that do not go up to keep the Feast of Booths” (18-19). This verse reinforces the former by recalling the events of days long ago in the Exodus. The **Egyptians**, the chief enemies of God in that day, were plagued with 10 Plagues. Now they are being called to repent and worship Christ. It is an open invitation, even as the thread hovers over that if they will not, more plagues are in store. These are words that smell like death to those who are perishing, but for those who are given life, they are the fragrance of grace and justice. What do they smell like to you?

“And on that day there shall be inscribed on the bells of the horses, ‘Holy to the LORD.’ And the pots in the house of the LORD shall be as the bowls before the altar. And every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holy to the LORD of hosts, so that all who sacrifice may come and take of them and boil the meat of the sacrifice in them. And there shall no longer be a trader in the house of the LORD of hosts on that day” (20-21). And so now the prophet finishes the Burden of Yahweh on the note of salvation and sanctification.

God will purify his people from all sin, so that there will be no more sin and all who are purified will be able to worship God without stain or need for sacrifice. Zechariah is not describing a reinstitution of animal sacrifices, but is pointing us to the cross that the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus which purifies us from all unrighteousness. But we still sin, and so this looks forward to the removal of sin even from our bodies. And thus, with the total picture in view, the sacred/secular distinction is obliterated. All is made new and all becomes holy to the LORD. The universe is fully his and is made new. His people are totally purified and are

his temple. There is no more weeping or crying, for the old order of things has passed away. His enemies are put under his foot. He reigns from sea to sea. His glory covers the earth.

This is the consummation. This is the life to come. This is the Burden of Yahweh fully unloaded so that all who trust in him will never be put to shame. The judgment is coming. Salvation is already here. The world has its view of The End, but it is a hopeless and meaningless end. God's word tells us why the end is coming. Believe and have faith in the Coming of the Son of God, and look to rejoice rather than weep on that day.