

## Bible Study: Zech 14 Return of the King

Author: Zechariah, son of Berechiah (a priestly family)

Audience: Post-exilic Jews

Date: 520-518 BC (chapters 1-8), 480-470 BC (chapters 9-14)

Location: Jerusalem

Theme: God's future plans for His people

Genre: Prophetic/apocalyptic

### Outline

The Battle of Jerusalem (14:1-15)

The nations worship the LORD (14:16-21)

### Observation

- (1) Jerusalem falls to the nations during the day of the LORD
- (2) God will gather all nations against Jerusalem; half go into exile
- (3) Yahweh Himself will fight (cf. Exodus and Pharaoh's army)
- (4) His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, and it splits in two
- (5) You (Jerusalemites) shall flee east through the valley to safety
- (5) Yahweh comes with all the holy ones
- (6) The sun, moon and stars are darkened, dimmed
- (7) There will be illumination, but not truly daytime or night
- (8) Living water flow out of Jerusalem to the eastern and western seas
- (9) Yahweh alone shall be king over all the earth, He alone shall be worshipped
- (10) Jerusalem shall rise up higher while the surrounding land is flattened
- (11) People dwell in it safely; no more curse (*herem*, devoted to destruction)
- (12) Yahweh strikes the enemy with a plague; their flesh instantly rots away
- (13) God's enemies will panic and start to kill each other
- (14) The Jews rise up to retake the city and plunder the wealth of the enemy
- (15) The enemy's pack animals and livestock are devoted to destruction
- (16) All nations will worship Yahweh, observe the Feast of Tabernacles
- (17) Attendance at the Feast of Tabernacles is mandatory or no rain
- (20) Jerusalem is wholly sanctified for the worship of Yahweh

### Interpretation

What important cross-references exist for this passage?

Yahweh will gather all nations to Jerusalem (cf. Dan 11:40-45, Rev 14:14-20, 16:12-16)

Yahweh will go forth to fight the nations (cf. Joel 3:9-17, Rev 19:11-21)

Yahweh will stand on the Mount of Olives (cf. Acts 1:10-12)

Yahweh will come with all His holy ones (cf. Mt 24:27-31, 25:31, 1Th 3:13, 4:16-17, Rev 19:14)

Yahweh will provide streams of living water (cf. Ezek 47:1-12, Rev 22:1-2)

Yahweh will exalt Jerusalem, level the surrounding countryside (cf. Isa 2:1-4)

Yahweh will be worshipped by all the nations (cf. Isa 66:23, Ezek 45:21, 25, 46:3)

NOTE: Zech 14 makes an important Trinitarian connection between Yahweh, the one true God of Israel, and the Messiah. Viewed through NT eyes, the apostles would have easily recognized the implication regarding the deity of Jesus Christ.

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What are living waters?

“Life-giving waters” (Zech. 14:8) was a reference to flowing water as opposed to stagnant water.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the main point here is that “living” (fresh or running) water will not dry up in the summer, as most Palestinian streams do in the “hot, dry season.”<sup>2</sup>

Why would God kill the enemy’s livestock?

Verse 15 adds that a plague similar to that of vv.12-13 will strike the beasts of burden, thus preventing their use for escape.<sup>3</sup>

Why would horses have bells?

It was quite common among ancient nations to have bells hung around the necks of horses, both for ornament and to accustom warhorses to noise. Some commentators believe that the Hebrew word *metsloth*, rendered bells, were not bells as we know them, but small pieces of metal resembling cymbals, which made a tinkling noise by striking against each other as the horses moved. Others prefer bells as we know them.<sup>4</sup>

### Application

A verse to memorize: Zech 14:16-17

An example to follow: keeping God’s annual Holy Days

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<sup>1</sup>Robert B. Hughes and J. Carl Laney, *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary*, Rev. Ed. of: New Bible Companion. 1990.; Includes Index., The Tyndale reference library (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 382.

<sup>2</sup> Expositor’s Bible Commentary on Zech 14:8

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>James M. Freeman and Harold J. Chadwick, *Manners & Customs of the Bible*, “Rewritten and Updated by Harold J. Chadwick”--Cover.; Includes Index., Rev. ed.]. (North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1998), 394.

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Dan 11:40 "At the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow *them* and pass through.

41 "He will also enter the Beautiful Land, and many *countries* will fall; but these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon.

42 "Then he will stretch out his hand against *other* countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape.

43 "But he will gain control over the hidden treasures of gold and silver and over all the precious things of Egypt; and Libyans and Ethiopians *will follow* at his heels.

44 "But rumors from the East and from the North will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many.

45 "He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain; yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

Rev 14:14 Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud *was* one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand.

15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe."

16 Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle.

18 Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe."

19 So the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered *the clusters from* the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God.

20 And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.

Rev 16:12 The sixth *angel* poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east.

13 And I saw *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs;

14 for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.

15 ("Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.")

16 And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.

Joel 3:9 Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare a war; rouse the mighty men! Let all the soldiers draw near, let them come up!

10 Beat your plowshares into swords And your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak say, "I am a mighty man."

11 Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations, And gather yourselves there. Bring down, O LORD, Your mighty ones.

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Joel 3:12 Let the nations be aroused And come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, For there I will sit to judge All the surrounding nations.

13 Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the wine press is full; The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great.

14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.

15 The sun and moon grow dark And the stars lose their brightness.

16 The LORD roars from Zion And utters His voice from Jerusalem, And the heavens and the earth tremble. But the LORD is a refuge for His people And a stronghold to the sons of Israel.

17 Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, Dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain. So Jerusalem will be holy, And strangers will pass through it no more.

Rev 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it *is* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

12 His eyes *are* a flame of fire, and on His head *are* many diadems; and He has a name written *on Him* which no one knows except Himself.

13 *He is* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean, were following Him on white horses.

15 From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God,

18 so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great."

19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

20 And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.

21 And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Acts 1:10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them.

11 They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.

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Mt 24:27 "For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

28 "Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

29 "But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

30 "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.

31 "And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

Mt 25:31 ¶ "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.

1Th 3:13 so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

1Th 4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

Ezek 47:1 Then he brought me back to the door of the house; and behold, water was flowing from under the threshold of the house toward the east, for the house faced east. And the water was flowing down from under, from the right side of the house, from south of the altar.

2 He brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate by way of *the gate* that faces east. And behold, water was trickling from the south side.

3 When the man went out toward the east with a line in his hand, he measured a thousand cubits, and he led me through the water, water *reaching* the ankles.

4 Again he measured a thousand and led me through the water, water *reaching* the knees. Again he measured a thousand and led me through *the water*, water *reaching* the loins.

5 Again he measured a thousand; *and it was* a river that I could not ford, for the water had risen, *enough* water to swim in, a river that could not be forded.

6 He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen *this*?" Then he brought me back to the bank of the river.

7 Now when I had returned, behold, on the bank of the river there *were* very many trees on the one side and on the other.

8 Then he said to me, "These waters go out toward the eastern region and go down into the Arabah; then they go toward the sea, being made to flow into the sea, and the waters of *the sea* become fresh.

9 "It will come about that every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes, will live. And there will be very many fish, for these waters go there and *the others* become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes.

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Ezek 47:10 "And it will come about that fishermen will stand beside it; from Engedi to Eneglaim there will be a place for the spreading of nets. Their fish will be according to their kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea, very many.

11 "But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt.

12 "By the river on its bank, on one side and on the other, will grow all *kinds of trees* for food. Their leaves will not wither and their fruit will not fail. They will bear every month because their water flows from the sanctuary, and their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing."

Rev 22:1 ¶ Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb,

2 in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve *kinds of fruit*, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Isa 2:1 ¶ The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2 Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it.

3 And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

4 And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war.

Isa 66:23 "And it shall be from new moon to new moon And from sabbath to sabbath, All mankind will come to bow down before Me," says the LORD.

Ezek 45:21 "In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall have the Passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten.

25 "In the seventh *month*, on the fifteenth day of the month, at the feast, he shall provide like this, seven days for the sin offering, the burnt offering, the grain offering and the oil."

Ezek 46:3 "The people of the land shall also worship at the doorway of that gate before the LORD on the sabbaths and on the new moons.