

This final chapter of Zechariah pictures the Day of the LORD, describing the desperate circumstances that Jerusalem will be in when Christ returns. He will rescue the Jews by giving them a way of escape as He fights against the nations that have gathered to destroy Jerusalem.

The first verse of this chapter sets the context of the chapter as it begins with the bold declaration “Behold, the day of the LORD cometh.” The “Day of the Lord” is referred to many times in the Bible, sometimes by name and other times by a description of what will happen. The name describes the day when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to establish His kingdom on earth and take control of the planet from men and Satan. It is this day that is referred to in what is commonly called “the Lord’s prayer” where it says “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” When Jesus Christ returns the kingdom of God will have come and His will finally will be done on earth.

² For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

“For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle” - Verse 1 indicates clearly that the “Day of the LORD” is being described in this chapter and that the possessions of the Jews will be plundered, implying that the Jews will be defeated. However, in this verse the LORD states that He will be the One Who gathers the nations against Jerusalem for a battle. The LORD will create the circumstances (“the fire”) that refine His people (as described in Zech. 13:9) causing them to realize that He is their only hope.

“and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled [plundered; spoiled], and the women ravished [to lie down]” - All hope that the Jews might have had in defending themselves or external human help will be lost when the city is captured, their homes looted, and the women are raped. The LORD will allow circumstances to become so desperate for the Jews that they will have no choice but to call on Him.

“and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city” - Half of the inhabitants of the city will be captured and will be led out as prisoners of war. As for the remainder of the people, the expression “cut off” typically carries the idea of death, but here it could mean that the remainder of the people will not be “cut off” (or separated) from the city. Either the verse is saying that the second half of the inhabitants will not be killed or else that the second half will not be forced to leave the city.

³ Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. ⁴ And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

“Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle” - Zechariah seems to be referring to the times that the LORD intervened in the past and fought for Israel, resulting in the total and complete victory for the LORD over the enemies of Israel. The LORD will once again fight for Israel and His victory will be as certain as it has been in the past.

“And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east” - Fulfilling the prediction of the angels when Christ ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives, Christ will return to the same place from which He left. **Acts 1:11** “Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”

“and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west” - When Christ returns and sets foot on the Mount of Olives the mountain will split and the split will run from the east to the west.

“and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south” - The halves of the mountain will move in a north/south direction, creating a gap in between running from east to west. It will not be a mere crack in the mountain but the split will create a large valley which will provide a path for the Jews to escape Jerusalem and their enemies.

⁵ And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.

“And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal” - The Jews will escape Jerusalem and their enemies through the newly formed valley that leads to Azal. The location of Azal is unclear, but it will apparently be far enough away to give the Jews a place of refuge until the danger is past.

“yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah” - This earthquake is not recorded in the Bible, but it was obviously a notable one for it to be referenced in this way. The point of the reference seems to be that, just as during an earthquake the city is not a safe place to be, so also the Jews will flee the city to safety.

“and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints [holy ones] with thee” - Zechariah seems to be saying “This is the way the LORD my God shall come” accompanied by the “saints.” The identity of these saints is unclear since the Hebrew word means “holy ones” and some scriptures predict that angels will accompany the Lord at his return and other scriptures seem to predict that it will be redeemed people. The “fine linen, white and clean” mentioned in Rev. 19 is associated with the bride of Christ (**Rev. 19:8** “And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”). It may be that both angels and the redeemed of God will accompany Christ at His return.

Jude 14, 15 “¹⁴ And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, ¹⁵ To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

Matt. 25:31 “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:” (Jesus continues by describing how He will judge the nations)

Rev. 19:11, 14 “¹¹ And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. ¹⁴ And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.”

⁶ And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: ⁷ But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.

These two verses can be challenging to interpret. What it seems to be describing is that while the Jews are fleeing through the newly formed valley between the northern and southern halves of the Mount of Olives, there will be darkness over the earth, yet not complete darkness. Verse 6 says “the light shall not be clear [*precious; glorious*], nor dark,” indicating that it will not be light where you could see well but neither will it be dark. This twilight situation seems to reflect the predictions concerning the Day of the LORD by Jesus (Matt. 24:29), Joel (Joel 2:31), and John (Rev. 6:12-13). Verse 7 indicates that the details of this day where it will be neither day nor night will be known only to the LORD. It also seems to say that by the evening time, when it should normally be dark, there will be light. Either this is indicating that the period of darkness has ended or that the light will be that emanating from the glory of Christ Himself. This will certainly be true of the New Jerusalem (**Rev. 21:23** “*And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*”).

⁸ And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. ⁹ And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

“And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem” - In Ezekiel 47, an angel shows the prophet the river of living water that will flow from the millennial temple. This verse is referring to that river.

“half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea” - Ezekiel 47 only deals with the fork of the river that will flow east toward what is current the Dead Sea. This verse indicates that the other fork will flow west into the Mediterranean Sea.

“in summer and in winter shall it be” - The river will flow at all times of the year, giving life wherever it flows, as described in Ezek. 47.

“And the LORD shall be king over all the earth” - Every ruler in the world will submit his/her authority to Christ as the King of kings (Rev. 17:14, 19:16).

“in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one” - There will be one religion in the world: the worship of the LORD. There will be no worship of Allah, Buhda or some generic entity called “God.” All worship will be focused on the single name of Jesus Christ.

¹⁰ All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses. ¹¹ And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

The hilly and mountainous area around Jerusalem (Geba is 6 miles north of Jerusalem and Rimmon is south of it) will become flattened into a plain and Jerusalem itself will be “lifted up” on a mountain to make it more prominent. The landmarks mentioned seem to specify the four corners of the city. Verse 11 state that Jerusalem will be inhabited and that those who dwell there will be safe because the city will never again be destroyed.

¹² And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.

Zechariah returns to the point in time when the LORD fights for Israel against their enemies and describes how the LORD will destroy those who would attack Jerusalem. “Their flesh shall consume away [*decay; dissolve*] while they stand upon their feet” implies a quick death with the flesh either dissolving completely from the bones or else shriveling up into a dried mummy-like state. Since an angel calls to the fowls of the air to come feast on the flesh of the dead in Rev. 19:17-18, it would seem that the flesh will not dissolve away completely. Perhaps this will be a benefit during the cleanup, as Ezekiel 37:12 says that it will take seven months to bury the dead. This plague may minimize the stench and health hazards from the decomposing bodies.

¹³ And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour.

The LORD will cause the people of the armies to fight among themselves and kill each other similar to other occasions when the LORD has come to Israel's aid (Judges 7:22; 1 Sam. 14:15-20; 2 Chr. 20:23).

¹⁴ And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance.

The LORD will empower the Jews to defend themselves and they will be allowed to collect the spoils of the dead armies that had gathered to destroy them.

¹⁵ And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague.

The flesh-consuming plague will not be limited to humans but any animals that the armies brought with them will also die as a result.

¹⁶ And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

The survivors of the nations that wanted to destroy Jerusalem will worship the LORD and keep the Feast of Tabernacles. These survivors could be soldiers that the LORD chose not to kill (perhaps they had no choice, being in the military) or it could be civilians “back home” that had nothing to do with the battle of Armageddon. The Feast of Tabernacles was instituted in the OT for Israel to remember when the LORD “tabernacled” with them during their 40 years in the wilderness. The world will celebrate the fact that the LORD will be living among them.