

# Zechariah 12 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

[Zechariah 12:1](#)  
[Zechariah 12:2](#)  
[Zechariah 12:3](#)  
[Zechariah 12:4](#)  
[Zechariah 12:5](#)  
[Zechariah 12:6](#)  
[Zechariah 12:7](#)  
[Zechariah 12:8](#)  
[Zechariah 12:9](#)  
[Zechariah 12:10](#)  
[Zechariah 12:11](#)  
[Zechariah 12:12](#)  
[Zechariah 12:13](#)  
[Zechariah 12:14](#)

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Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission

[Zechariah Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

[Another Zechariah Chart](#)

ZECHARIAH					
("Yahweh Remembers")					
<a href="#">Click for EXCELLENT TIMELINE of Zechariah - Go to Page 43</a>					
<a href="#">Other Timelines on Zechariah</a>					
Zec 1:1-6	Zec 1:7-6:8	Zec 6:9-6:15	Zec 7:1-8:23	Zec 9:1-11:17	Zec 12:1-14:21
Return to Me Zec 1:3	Messianic Kingdom Visions	The Branch	Four Messages	Two Oracles or Burdens	
Zechariah 1-6			Zechariah 7-8	Zechariah 9-14	
Apocalyptic			Ethical Prophecy	Predictive Prophecy	
			1) Rebuke 2) Reminder 3) Restoration 4) Return	1) Burden Against the Nations 2) Burden For Israel	
Call to Repentance	Eight Visions ( <a href="#">Picture</a> )	Crowning of Joshua	Question of the Fasts ( <a href="#">Calendar</a> )	First Burden: Rejection of Messiah	Second Burden: Reign of Messiah
The Way of Salvation	Messianic Kingdom Visions	The Bringer of Salvation	Commands Concerning Present Things	Oracles (Burdens) Concerning Future Things	
	Behold the man...the Branch		Love, Truth and Peace	The Day of the Lord	
PICTURES			PROBLEMS	PREDICTIONS	

ISRAEL'S FORTUNE	ISRAEL'S FASTING	ISRAEL'S FUTURE
<i>"My house will be built in Jerusalem"</i> Zec 1:16	<i>"Let your hands be strong"</i> Zec 8:9	<i>"HOLY TO THE LORD"</i> Zec 14:20
PLACE: JERUSALEM		
Written During the Building of the Temple 520-518BC		Written after the Temple Was Completed circa 480-470BC

## J Vernon McGee's Outline of Zechariah

### I. APOCALYPTIC VISIONS (messianic and millennial)

#### Second burden: Prophetic aspects connected with second coming of Christ, Zechariah 12-14

**Zechariah 12** — The final siege of Jerusalem and the lifting of the siege. "Jerusalem" is mentioned 10 times. "In that day" is mentioned 7 times and is a reference to the day of the LORD, specifically the Great Tribulation Period.

- Zec 12:1-3 — Jerusalem is to be a constant irritant to all the nations that presume to make decisions that affect it. God's policy for the nations is "hands off" Israel (too bad the United Nations is not aware of this). All the nations in the Great Tribulation will march against Jerusalem — and be destroyed.
- Zec 12:4-9 — Jerusalem will be delivered in the final siege by the coming of the Lord personally.
- Zec 12:10-14 — They will know Him by the print of the nails in His hands. This is the One they rejected and delivered to be crucified. This will be a real day of atonement.

**Zechariah 13** — What will the return of Christ mean to Israel?

- Zec 13:1 — The **Remnant** will turn to the redemption of Christ for their salvation.
- Zec 13:2-5 — The false prophet and his followers will be taken (see Revelation 19:20-[note](#)). This is the end of all false religion.
- Zec 13:6, 7 — The nail-scarred Christ will be present. His followers will not desert Him but will rally around Him.
- Zec 13:8, 9 — These are those who come out of the Great Tribulation and have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.

**Zechariah 14** — Features and facts connected with the coming of Christ to the earth.

- Zec 14:1-7 — This is the consummation of the campaign of Armageddon and the return of Christ.
- When Christ returns to this earth, He will touch down on the Mount of Olives (Zec 14:4). This is the same place from which He ascended into heaven. There will be great physical changes in the topography of the land. There will be a great earthquake at His coming (Zec 14:5). There will be changes in the lighting of the earth (Zec 14:6, 7).
- Zec 14:8 — There will be a new waterway through Jerusalem, making it a seaport city.
- Zec 14:9 — The Lord Jesus Christ will reign over the earth.
- Zec 14:10, 11 — The land will become the land of milk and honey.
- Zec 14:12 — This is a living death against the enemies of God.
- Zec 14:16-21 — The people of the earth, both Jew and Gentile, will go to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. This feast will mean that every man is dwelling safely under his own vine and fig tree. True holiness will be on the earth. Every pot and pan will be holy.

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## Charles Feinberg's Outline: The Future of the World Powers, Israel, and the Kingdom of Messiah Zec 9-14.

### A. The First Burden, Zec 9-11.

1. Judgment on the Land of Hadrach, Zec 9:1-8.
2. Israel's King of Peace, Zec 9:9,10.
3. The King's Mission in Relation to Israel, Zec 9:11-17.
4. Additional Blessings for Israel, Zec 10:1-12.

5. The Rejection of the Good Shepherd and the Rule of the Wicked One, Zec 11:1-17.

## **B. The Second Burden, Zec 12-14 .**

1. Israel's Conflict and Deliverance, Zec 12:1-14 .

2. Israel Cleansed of Her Sin, Zec 13:1-6 .

3. The Shepherd Smitten and the Sheep Scattered, Zec 13:7, 8, 9 .

4. The Great Consummation: Israel's Deliverance & God's Earthly Kingdom, Zec 14:1-21

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## **SECOND BURDEN: ZECHARIAH 12-14 - Walter Kaiser**

- Cleansing Judah and Jerusalem of Foreign Invaders (Zechariah 12:1-9)
- Mourning for the Pierced One (Zechariah 12:10-13:1)
- Cleansing the Land of False Prophets (Zechariah 13:2-6)
- Slaughtering the Shepherd and Scattering the Sheep (Zechariah 13:7-9)
- Waiting for the Second Coming of Messiah (Zechariah 14:1-15)
- Worshipping the Lord as King Over All (Zechariah 14:16-21)

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## **Charles Feinberg summarizes his Zechariah studies...**

"And throughout the prophecy there is presented to us on every page the spotless, blemishless Holy One of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah and King of Israel. See Him in..."

1. Chapter one as the **Riding One**;
2. Chapter two as the **Measuring One**;
3. Chapter three as the **Cleansing One**;
4. Chapter four as the **Empowering One**;
5. Chapter five as the **Judging One**;
6. Chapter six as the **Crowned One**;
7. Chapter seven as the **Rebuking One**;
8. Chapter eight as the **Restoring One**;
9. Chapter nine as the **Kingly One**;
10. Chapter ten as the **Blessing One**;
11. Chapter eleven as the **Shepherding One**;
12. Chapter twelve as the **Returning One**;
13. Chapter thirteen as the **Smitten One**;
14. Chapter fourteen as the **Reigning One**.

Borrow Feinberg's [Minor Prophets - Zechariah commentary on page 272](#)

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**Walter Kaiser** - "Zechariah is not only the longest of the books of the twelve Minor Prophets, it is one of the most frequently quoted. There are seventy-one quotations from or allusions to Zechariah in the New Testament. One third of these appear in the Gospels and thirty-one are found in the book of Revelation (including twenty from chapters 1-8 and eight from chapters 9-14). Of all the Old Testament books, Zechariah is second only to Ezekiel in its influence on the book of Revelation." — Mastering the Old Testament

**Charles Swindoll** - "Zechariah is second only to Isaiah in its number of messianic passages. Among Zechariah's explicit references to Christ are the **angel of the Lord** (Zech 3:1-2); the **righteous Branch** (Zech 3:8; 6:12-13); the **King-Priest** (Zech 6:13); the **cornerstone, tent peg, and bow of battle** (Zech 10:4); the **good shepherd** who is sold for thirty pieces of silver (Zech 11:4-13); the **pierced One** (Zech 12:10); and the **coming Judge and righteous King** (Zech 14)." —

**George Klein** - "One of the great ironies concerning the book of Zechariah is its relative obscurity to the **modern church** contrasted with its profound significance to the **early church**. Unfortunately, students of the Bible rarely study Zechariah today. However, strong reasons exist for suggesting that the book ascended to a place of paramount importance to the writers of the New Testament and to the early church at large. "The book of Zechariah exerted a profound influence over the New Testament, particularly in the realm of Messianic passages—a point long noted by New Testament scholars. Several important themes from the book figure prominently in the New Testament. One of the most important of these is the shepherd-king. From Zech 9:9 the King who rode into Jerusalem on a "donkey" reemerges in Matt 21:5 and John 12:15. C. H. Dodd even suggests that Zechariah provided the Gospel writers with material of equal importance to the very testimonia [their eyewitness accounts] of Christ's ministry." — NAC, 61-2

**Zechariah 12:1** The burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel. Thus declares the LORD Who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him,

- Circa, B.C. 500
- **The burden of the word of the LORD:** Zec 9:1 La 2:14 Mal 1:1
- **concerning Israel:** Isa 51:22,23 Jer 30:10,16 50:34 Eze 36:5-7 Joe 3:19,21 Ob 1:16,17
- **the LORD Who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth** Job 26:7 Ps 102:25,26 104:2 136:5,6 Isa 40:12,22 42:5 Isa 44:24 45:12,18 48:13 51:13 Jer 10:12 51:15 Heb 1:10-12
- **forms the spirit of man within him:** Ge 2:7 Nu 16:22 Ec 12:7 Isa 57:16 Jer 38:16 Eze 18:4 Heb 12:9

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### Walter Kaiser's Scripture Outline

- His Authenticating Word (Zech 12:1)
- His Intoxicated Enemies (Zech 12:2)
- His Immovable City (Zech 12:3)
- His Astonishing Deliverance (Zech 12:4–9)

### John MacArthur's Summary of Zechariah 12

- the siege of Israel
- the shielding of Israel
- the sorrow of Israel
- the salvation of Israel

### Andy Woods Zechariah 12

Zechariah 12 (Israel's Physical & Spiritual Salvation)

#### Israel's physical deliverance (Zech 12:1-9)

- The nations that will attack Israel (Zech 12:1-3)
- The God who will protect Israel (Zech 12:4-9)

#### Israel's spiritual deliverance (Zech 12:10-14)

- God's Spirit: the cause of revival (Zech 12:10a)
- Israel's remorse: the result of revival (Zech 12:11-14)

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## Introduction

Too many people avoid studying this great book because it is filled with symbolism and eschatology. Even Martin Luther who penned two commentaries on Zechariah published his first one in 1526 and stopped at the end of Zechariah 13 without explanation! Luther's second commentary on Zechariah was written one year after his first but still had minimal explanation of Zechariah 14. In fact in the second commentary Luther wrote these words regarding Zechariah 14 "*Here, in this chapter, I give up. For I am not sure what the prophet is talking about.*" (from "Lectures on Zechariah" 1527). In fact someone has written that there are at least seven different interpretations of Zechariah 14! Of course, there is only one correct interpretation.

Keep in mind as you read the Word of God in Zechariah 12-14, that these three chapters should be studied as a coherent unit (take a moment and study the two summary charts above noting especially the last columns on "Predictive Prophecy" composed of two "burdens," Zechariah 9-11 for the nations and Zechariah 12-14 for the nation of Israel). In other words from Zechariah 12:1 to Zechariah 14:21 God is giving us a unified message concerning the nation of Israel. I love Warren Wiersbe's title of Zechariah 12-14 - **Redeemed, Refined, and Restored**, referring of course to the literal nation of Israel and wonderfully summarizing the "terminal" history of Israel in these last 3 chapters. GOD IS ABSOLUTELY, DEFINITELY NOT FINISHED WITH THE NATION

OF ISRAEL. Don't believe anyone who attempts to spin the fairy tale of [replacement theology](#), for it is a lie that originates from the one in whom there is no truth (Jn 8:44). Think about it. If there is no literal, geographic nation of Israel in need of redemption, then there is no need for the Redeemer to return and stand on the Mount of Olives which is in front of Jerusalem on the east. (Zechariah 14:4). So shun this genre of false teaching that is sadly spreading like leaven in the modern church which has only a very limited understanding of or interest in Bible prophecy (I have literally heard young church leaders say things like "It's too divisive," "It's too difficult to understand," "There are too many interpretations, so how can anyone know which is correct," etc, etc). And some add why study prophecy? It's not practical for daily Christian living? (See Adrian Rogers' rebuttal - Profiting from Prophecy) And yet to shun Bible prophecy is like taking an ax and lopping off a major portion of the Bible, for prophecy composes some 25% of Scripture and of that percent some 80% has already been fulfilled! How can anyone dispute God's eternal lovingkindness for the nation of Israel, when He sovereignly, omnipotently brought the nation back into existence in May, 1948 ([read of this miracle](#)), against all odds, and accomplishing a miracle that is unparalleled in the history of the world (well, not exactly, the Resurrection being the greatest miracle)! So why would we doubt that the God of Truth and Power would not perfectly fulfill the last portion of His predictive prophecy literally packed with as yet unfulfilled promises for His Chosen People and the nation of Israel! (See also [Messianic Prophecies](#))

And recall that the prophet's name **Zechariah** means "**Yahweh remembers**" a name which is filled with hope and assurance and serves as a constant reminder to the Jews who must have felt abandoned by God during their 70 years of Babylonian captivity. As we will discover in Zechariah 12-14, **Yahweh remembers His immutable covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob** and in his great covenant love (lovingkindness) or **hesed** He will not forget His Chosen People. As alluded to above, it is a sad day in evangelicalism when many in the evangelical church choose to believe that God is finished with the nation of Israel, and the OT promises given to Israel have now passed on to the Church. This false teaching is often referred to as [replacement theology or supersessionism](#). And despite the fact that the 76 of 77 uses of the term '**Israel**' in the New Testament clearly refer to the literal nation of Israel, those who espouse replacement theology teach that Paul's phrase "**Israel of God**" in Galatians 6:16 does not refer to the literal nation (like all the other 76 mentions!) but to a so-called "**Spiritual Israel**" (see also [spiritual Israel](#), see [example of how the literal truth is twisted](#)) which is their "synonym" for the Church! It goes without saying that supersessionists have considerable difficulty in attempting to interpret predictive passages like Zechariah 12-14 which even in the first verse written by a Jewish prophet, to the Jewish nation clearly states "The burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel" not "spiritual Israel" but literal Israel! (Zech 12:1)

**David Baron**, a Messianic Jew wrote a commentary on Zechariah in 1918 and entitled Zechariah 12 "**Israel's Final Conflict And Great Deliverance**." He clearly saw this chapter as applying to Israel and not to the Church.

**James Montgomery Boice** - The last three chapters of Zechariah contain a second "oracle," or "burden" (Hebrew massa') of the prophet, corresponding to the burden of chapters 9–11. But in the first section the burden is laid upon Hadrach, a Gentile nation, while in the second section the burden is laid upon Israel. This points to the chief difference between the two oracles. To go back to the words of **David Baron** (in [Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah](#)), the first oracle concerns "the judgment through which Gentile world power over Israel is finally destroyed and Israel is endowed with strength to overcome all their [sic] enemies," while the second concerns "the judgment through which Israel itself is sifted and purged in the final conflict with the nations and transformed into the holy nation of Jehovah."

**Boice** quotes **Feinberg** - Charles Feinberg says, "The actual events, world-embracing in character, which are presented include the world confederacy against Jerusalem; the victory of God's people, empowered of the Lord; the conviction of Israel nationally by the Spirit of God; the presentation of Christ as their rejected Messiah; the national Day of Atonement; the cleansing of the hearts of the nation; the purging of the land from idolatry and false prophets; parenthetically, the crucifixion of the Messiah; the time of Jacob's trouble; the partial success of the nations invading Palestine and besieging Jerusalem; the appearance of the Messiah for his people; their rescue and his coming with his saints; the changed and renovated Holy Land; the establishment of the Messianic kingdom; the punishment of the nations for their futile assault on Israel; the celebration of the kingdom feast, the Feast of Tabernacles; and the complete restoration of the people of God to a holy nation." **It would be hard to find a more complete treatment of the events of the end times in all Scripture.**

**Charles Feinberg** comments on the exceptional importance of **Zechariah 12-14** - "As a portion of the prophetic Scriptures it is second to none in importance in this book or in any other Old Testament book. It is indispensable to an understanding of the events of the last days for Israel—the time of the Great Tribulation

and the establishment of God's kingdom on earth."

**Steven Cole** looking ahead writes that "Zechariah 11 predicts Israel's rejection of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and her subjection during the Tribulation to the worthless shepherd. This will plunge the nation into a time of severe testing, described by Jeremiah 30:5-7+ as "**the time of Jacob's distress**." Daniel 12:1+ calls it "a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time." This time of testing culminates in [the Battle of Armageddon](#) (Joel 3:9-16; Rev. 16:16-21; Zech. 12:1-9; 14:2-3) (**ED**: More accurately the campaign of Armageddon - [SEE NOTE](#)), when God will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle. At the last minute, just before Israel is annihilated, God will supernaturally rout the enemy and deliver His people. Our text describes the physical deliverance of Israel in Zechariah 12:1-9, and the spiritual deliverance of Israel in Zechariah 12:10-14. The great military victory that God will achieve for His helpless people illustrates the great spiritual salvation that He also brings. Both sections emphasize the truth that God is mighty to save His people according to His purpose. ([Zechariah 12 Sermon](#))

**A Caution** - The discerning reader needs to be wary of which commentary he or she reads when studying the predictive prophecies in Zechariah 12-14. For example, the older work, the Pulpit Commentary has a comment on Zechariah 12:3 which at first sounds reasonable but then merges with a ridiculous conclusion - "This (the phrase **all the nations of the earth**) indicates that the struggle spoken of is no mere local conflict, waged in Maccabean or other times, but the great battle of the world **against the Church**, which shall rage in the Messianic era." Beloved, that assertion is taking this phrase totally out of [context](#) (remember **Context is King** in interpretation) and is clearly erroneous. The immediate context (Zech 12:2) clearly states that this conflict is **against Jerusalem...against Judah**. It is NOT **against the Church**, who will not be present during the horrible events in these last days leading up to the Return of the Messiah, days which John describes in detail in Revelation 6-19, where he makes not a single mention of the Church! See discussion of when the rapture occurs. [See 151 pages of articles on pre-tribulation rapture](#), also [overview of pre-tribulation rapture](#).

## THE LITTLE APOCALYPSE OF ZECHARIAH

**Arnold Fruchtenbaum** writes that "The Greek title for the Book of Revelation is "The Book of the Apocalypse." The Book of Revelation deals with the subject of prophecy or eschatology, which is the study of the events of the Last Days. The last three chapters of the Book of Zechariah deal with the same or similar material as that found in the Book of Revelation, therefore, these three chapters can be called "**The Little Apocalypse of Zechariah**."

Given the fact that Zechariah 12-14 is **concerning Israel**, it should come as no surprise that a **keyword** (see [importance of observing key words](#)) in this unit is **Jerusalem**, found 23 times in 20 verses with 11 of these occurrences in Zechariah 12:

- Zech. 12:2; Zech. 12:3; Zech. 12:5; Zech. 12:6; Zech. 12:7; Zech. 12:8; Zech. 12:9; Zech. 12:10; Zech. 12:11; Zech. 13:1; Zech. 14:2; Zech. 14:4; Zech. 14:8; Zech. 14:10; Zech. 14:11; Zech. 14:12; Zech. 14:14; Zech. 14:16; Zech. 14:17; Zech. 14:21

Other **key words** in Zechariah 12-14 include:

- **LORD** - 26x in 22 verses - Zec 12:1 Zec 12:4 Zec 12:5 Zec 12:7 Zec 12:8 Zec 13:2 Zec 13:3 Zec 13:7 Zec 13:8 Zec 13:9 Zec 14:1 Zec 14:3 Zec 14:5 Zec 14:7 Zec 14:9 Zec 14:12 Zec 14:13 Zec 14:16 Zec 14:17 Zec 14:18 Zec 14:20 Zec 14:21
- **God** - 4x in 4 verses - Zec 12:5, 8, 13:9, 14:5
- **That day** - 17 times in 16 verses - Zec 12:3 Zec 12:4 Zec 12:6 Zec 12:8 Zec 12:9 Zec 12:11 Zec 13:1 Zec 13:2 Zec 13:4 Zec 14:4 Zec 14:6 Zec 14:8 Zec 14:9 Zec 14:13 Zec 14:20 Zec 14:21
- **Nations** - 8 times in 8 verses - Zec 12:3 Zec 12:9 Zec 14:2 Zec 14:3 Zec 14:14 Zec 14:16 Zec 14:18 Zec 14:19

Notice that by simply observing the [key words](#) the general theme of the prophecy of Zechariah 12-14 comes into focus so that we can see that this great prophecy deals with the relationship of the the **LORD GOD** with the nation of **ISRAEL**, its capital **JERUSALEM** and the Gentile **NATIONS** of the world **IN THAT DAY**.

Below is a simple summary of the major events alluded to in Zechariah 12-14 which occur **IN THAT DAY** which is actually many individual days all composing the general time period known as the **Day of the LORD**. Notice that Zechariah's prophecies span "two ages," (or two kingdoms) the "age (kingdoms) of man" and the "age (kingdom) of Messiah." And so we find that Zechariah in some sections describes the *last days* of Jerusalem in this present evil age (Gal 1:4+) and in other sections he describes the *first days* of



Jerusalem in the Millennial Age. Notice also that Zechariah's prophecies are not strictly chronological from chapter 12 to 14, but skip around somewhat as exemplified by the fact that one will encounter several descriptions of the "Campaign of Armageddon" in all three chapters. If you keep these thoughts in mind, you will be less likely to be confused by the incredible events described in Zechariah 12-14 "The Little Apocalypse of Zechariah."

One could summarize Zechariah 12-14 as describing the return of Messiah, the conversion of Israel and the establishment of the Kingdom of God. The following table expands on the events that will occur in the fearful, glorious Day of the LORD.

## IN THAT DAY THE DAY OF THE LORD

- The Campaign of Armageddon - Nations Gather Against Jerusalem (Zec 12:2-5)
- Day of the LORD includes [Great Tribulation](#) (Mt 24:15, 21+), [Time of Jacob's Distress](#) (Jer 30:7), [a time of distress](#) (Da 12:1)
- Jerusalem Initially Captured by the Nations who Slay 2/3's of Israel (Zec 14:1-2, 13:8)
- Messiah Returns to Defend Jerusalem and Defeat the Nations (Zec 12:6-9, 14:3, 12-15)
- Messiah's Return Brings a National Day of Atonement in Israel (Zec 12:10-14, 13:1, 8-9)
- Messiah's Return Brings Cosmic & Topographical Changes (Zec 14:4-8)
- Messiah Establishes His Kingdom & Reigns as King Over All the Earth (Zec 14:9)
- Messiah's Kingdom Purged of Idols and False Prophets (Zec 13:2-6)
- Jerusalem Rises and Experiences Peace (Zec 14:10)
- Feast of Booths Celebrated in Messiah's Earthly Kingdom (Zec 14:16-19)
- Everything in Jerusalem is Holy to the LORD (Zec 14:20-21)

## THE SOVEREIGN GOD IS MIGHTY TO SAVE

**The burden of the word of the LORD** - The first **burden of the word of the LORD** in this last section of predictive prophecy was described in Zechariah 9:1-11:17 ([notes](#)) and was "against the land of [Hadrach](#), with Damascus." Zechariah 12-14 deals primarily with prophecy that is future to us (I write in 2017), and as such records the incredible events that will surround the Second Coming of the Messiah. Zechariah 13:7 is an exception as this passage is a prophecy that has been perfectly fulfilled in the past at Messiah's First Coming, being quoted by the Messiah Himself, the Good Shepherd Who gave His life for His sheep (Mt 26:31, Mk 14:27+, Jn 10:11+). But just as surely as that one prophecy has been fulfilled, rest assured that all of the predictive prophecies in Zechariah 12-14 will come to pass just as they are written for "God, Who cannot lie, promised long ages ago." (Titus 1:2+).

**Burden** in English is a weight to be borne or conveyed, in this case to be conveyed by God to His people to give them a word of encouragement and hope, in the Biblical sense, where "hope" is not "hope so" but "hope sure," and signifies an absolute assurance of future good or a certainty that God will do good to someone (in this case the nation of Israel) in the future.

[David Baron](#), on **burden** ([massa](#)) of the word of the LORD comments that

"inasmuch as this siege, or "straitness," ( a bad or difficult situation or state of affairs) and the solemn events of **that day** synchronize with the [Time of Jacob's Distress](#) (Jeremiah 30:7+), and covers the period of unparalleled sufferings and **tribulation** by means of which the Jewish nation is itself first purged as in a fiery furnace, the prophecy properly begins with the words massa debar Yehovah al Israel "the burden of the word of Jehovah upon (or over) Israel". The word [massa](#), as we have seen, when dealing with Zechariah 9:1 spoke entirely to prophecies which contain threatenings and announced judgments. But though it will be a time of unspeakable anguish for Israel, the climax of all their sufferings and tribulations through all the centuries since the commencement of "the times of the Gentiles," they "shall be saved out of it." Yea, in their greatest extremity, and in the time of their most dire need, God Himself in the person of their Messiah shall interpose on their behalf, and He will be "jealous for His land, and have pity on His people." ([Israel's Final Conflict And Great Deliverance](#))

**Cole** - "Burden" means a message from God that is weighted with important words of judgment and deliverance. We might say, "That's a heavy message." It is a burden "of the word of the Lord concerning Israel." This is further underscored by "Thus declares the Lord..." So before he even describes who the Lord is, Zechariah wants us to know that this is not his human word; it is the word of Almighty God.

**Burden** (oracle) ([04853](#)) (**massa'** from **nasa'** = lift up to carry or to bear) means that which is carried and thus primarily means a burden or load, focusing on the effort needed to transport something. **Massa'** is used in a figurative sense to refer to a prophetic utterance in Zechariah 9:1 and Zechariah 12:1. And "Since **massa'** derives from a verb meaning "to carry," its original nuance was that of a burdensome message, that is, one with ominous content." (NET Note) In the present context the message has ominous overtones regarding Jerusalem but these evaporate into a victorious message when the Messiah returns to in essence "remove the burden!" But until He comes Zechariah presents this prophecy as a "**burden**," something that weighs him down, because before the nation of Israel experiences their "national day of atonement," they will have to experience a time of grief, of trouble, of distress (cf Jer 30:7+).

**Concerning Israel** - Do not miss this -- this prophecy is ALL about Israel and not about the Church. If you miss this truth and replace Israel with the Church, this prophecy will become meaningless and incomprehensible! The Septuagint has "for Israel," which is significant because so much of the OT history (and subsequent world history) has been not "for" but "against" Israel. This is Yahweh's prophetic pronouncement of a new day for His Chosen People! And so it is clear that these profound prophecies deal with the nation of Israel in the end times. Notice also that the prophecy addresses not just Israel but Judah, so even if you are of the mindset that the Church is the "[Israel of God](#)", you still have to deal with the prophecies directed to **Judah** (Judah is mentioned 9x - Zech 12:2, 4, 5, 6, 7, Zech 14:5, 14, 21).

## HISTORY IS "HIS STORY!"

Zechariah begins this incredible prophetic section with a description of Jehovah that leaves no doubt that He is in complete control and able to complete what He begins. As Joshua said in his parting words to Israel "not one word of all the good words which the LORD your God spoke concerning you has failed; all have been fulfilled for you, not one of them has failed." (Joshua 23:14+). And not ONE WORD and NOT ONE OF THE GOOD PROMISES (cf Josh 21:45) which Yahweh gives to Israel in Zechariah 12-14 will fail - all will surely come to pass!

**Thus declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him** - (cf Isa 42:5; 44:24) It is fitting that God first gives His "credentials" that underscore He is able to carry out the incredible judgments and deliverance which are described in Zechariah 12-14. One of my favorite descriptive phrases of God is "**He is able!**" (See [God is Able](#)). That is what [Jehovah](#) is attesting at the very outset of this awesome prophecy - He is able to fulfill what He predicts! [Praise Him! Praise Him!](#)

Genesis 2:7+ Then the LORD God **formed man of dust** from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

To reiterate, the God Who began and completed the work of creation is in full control and has the power to fulfill what He predicts. God is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. (Rev 21:6, cf Rev 1:8) God made it all and He will end it all, but not before He saves His chosen remnant in Israel. Indeed, He is "mighty to save." (Play the song [Mighty to Save](#)). It is also notable that in the Hebrew text the verbs **stretches out**, **lays** and **forms** are all present participles which emphasizes that God is still actively, presently involved with His Creation. The false teaching of [Deism](#) (which included adherents like Benjamin Franklin) states that after God created the universe, He in effect backed away from Creation and let it continue on its own, so to speak. Deism was one of the "benefits" of the so-called age of Enlightenment which saw the popularization of anti-supernaturalism, deism, and, biblical criticism. So much for what the *enlightened* mind of man can accomplish! When Yahweh states what is going to transpire in the future, He has the power and the sovereign authority to bring it to pass.

**Charles Feinberg** - The majestic picture of the Lord as Creator and Preserver is presented to dispel all doubt and unbelief concerning the things predicted here. God is abundantly able to carry out what He purposes to do. (See Isa 42:5;) (Borrow [The Minor Prophets](#))

**Walter Kaiser** - There must be no doubt about the certitude of what is about to be announced, for it comes from the mouth of the Lord—the same Lord who demonstrated His creative power in creation and who formed everything that now exists. (Zechariah's use of the three participial verbs "stretches out" [the heavens], "lays the foundation" [of the earth], and "forms" [the spirit of man within him] are very reminiscent of Isaiah's style, e.g., Isa. 42:5.) The God who worked in creation in the past is the same Lord who continues to work in revelation, providence, and deliverance in the present and future. He who formed us and shaped us right down to our spiritual being is the One who will continue to shape and guide us by His Word and His Spirit up to the end of the age. He is Sovereign over the cosmos, over the earth, and over man himself. (Preacher's Commentary Series)

**Perowne** - In view of the wonderful and almost incredible promises that, follow, an appeal is made to the creative power of Jehovah, that so the people may not "stagger at the promise of God through unbelief," but be "fully persuaded that what He has promised, He



is able also to perform." (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges)

**Feinberg** adds "Every day God spreads out the heavens, every day he lays the foundation of the earth, which would wander from its orbit and fall into ruins if it were not upheld by his power." (Borrow [The Minor Prophets](#))

**Stretches out the heavens** - The Hebrew verb for **stretches** is *natah* which can mean to "put up a tent" as in Ge 33:19. The **heavens** refers to the atmosphere above the earth. It was idiomatically spoken of as an inverted bowl of stretched skin. Isaiah uses this verb repeatedly to emphasize God's omnipotence. And if you are a believer, you need to let this truth greatly encourage you, for you have access to His resurrection power as you learn to rely on His Spirit Who indwells you. Do you feel weak today? Good! You are in a perfect position to receive His power! (2 Cor 12:9-10-[note](#))! Read these descriptions of Your mighty God's power and be encouraged...

Isaiah 40:22; It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who **stretches** out the heavens like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.

Isaiah 42:5 Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and **stretched** them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it And spirit to those who walk in it,

Isaiah 45:12 "It is I who made the earth, and created man upon it. **Istretched** out the heavens with My hands And I ordained all their host.

Isaiah 51:13 That you have forgotten the LORD your Maker (THIS IS ONE OF OUR MAJOR PROBLEMS WHEN WE LET FEAR CREEP INTO OUR MIND - WE HAVE FORGOTTEN!), Who **stretched** out the heavens And laid the foundations of the earth, That you fear continually all day long because of the fury of the oppressor, As he makes ready to destroy? But where is the fury of the oppressor?

**Lays the foundation of the earth** - Yahweh (and in the context of this section Jesus Himself) is describing the fact of His creation as described in Job 38:4–6; Ps. 102:25–26 (quoted in Heb. 1:10–12), Ps 104:5; Isa. 48:13; 51:13, 16. The Hebrew word **erets** is translated **earth** here and is used repeatedly in this great predictive section - Zech 12:1, 2, 12, Zech 13:2, 8, Zech 13:9, 10, 17. The meanings of *erets* in these passages include (1) all the earth, Zech 12:1, 3; 14:9, 17, (2) inhabitants of a region, Zech 12:12; 13:8 and (3) a region, Zech 13:2; 14:10.

The inspired word of God in this verse refutes [Deism](#) by showing that God is actively, continually involved with His Creation! Paul affirms this truth writing of Jesus Christ that...

By Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and **in Him all things hold together** (the [perfect tense](#) describes the permanence of His holding hand!).(Col 1:16-17<sup>+</sup>)

**Comment:** This passage reminds me of the well known traditional American spiritual song ["He's Got The Whole World In His Hands"](#). If Jesus "let go" of the universe it would self-destruct! This is the same God who will deliver the nation of Israel in the end times!

The writer of Hebrews echoes Paul describing Jesus' ongoing power related to Creation...

And He (Jesus) is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and [\(present tense](#) = continually) **upholds all things** by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, (Heb 1:3<sup>+</sup>)

**Henry Morris** - Word of the LORD for Israel. These words introduce the last section of the book of Zechariah (chapters 12-14), one of the most remarkable prophetic sections in the Bible. Its climax is the great victory of God over all His enemies and the fulfillment of all His promises to Israel. As such, it appropriately begins with a reminder that the God of Israel is none other than the mighty Creator of the universe and of every human being.

**Criswell** - Cf. Isa. 42:5. This final section of promised blessing for Zion (chs. 12-14), as the Bible itself, begins with creation and ends with the Lord as the acknowledged King over all. The first nine verses describe Israel's triumph over the surrounding nations.

**Bob Utley** on **forms the spirit of man within him** - The Hebrew term "spirit" (BDB 924–926) can mean "breath," "wind," or "spirit." In Gen. 2:7 God's breath turned a clay-formed man into a living being (Nephesh). The "wind" of God (cf. Gen. 8:1, re-creation after the flood) and the "Spirit" of God (cf. Gen. 1:2, initial creation) are active forces of YHWH Elohim in Genesis. The unseen God is active initially and continually in creation. The physical material aspect of creation is only part of the wonder and scope of God's creative activities. God created/creates (first three PARTICIPLES are Qal ACTIVE) for the purpose of fellowship with mankind. We are partially like the animals of this planet (Nephesh) and also partially like God ("image or likeness," cf. Gen. 1:26). The "spirit" of

man means the unique person (cf. Ps. 139) with the potential of rebellion or fellowship.

**Deism** - In contrast to theism (belief in a single, personal creator and sustainer of all there is), deism teaches that whatever supreme intelligence created and/or organized the cosmos does not intervene in creation. The analogy of a watchmaker is frequently used to describe deistic thinking. According to deism, God simply wound up the watch of the universe, stepped back, and let it run. Things like prayer, [special revelation](#), and a personal relationship with God are nonsensical. The natural law, derived from man's study of nature through the sciences, is what governs morality and human conduct. Religious texts like the Christian Bible are perhaps helpful moral guides but not genuine revelation from God.

**Steven Cole** - Just outside of Madrid is a famous old monastery, the Escorial. The kings of Spain have been buried there for centuries. The architect who built the church made an arch so low that it frightened the king. Fearing that it would collapse, he ordered the architect to add a column to uphold the middle of the arch. The architect protested that it was not necessary, but the king insisted and so the column was built. Years later, the king died and the architect then revealed that the column was a quarter of an inch short of touching the arch, and that the arch had not sagged in the slightest. I have heard that tour guides still pass a lath between the arch and the column as mute proof of the architect's knowledge (Donald Barnhouse, Let Me Illustrate [Revell], p. 245). That arch illustrates our salvation, which comes totally from the Lord. It stands because of God, not because of anything that fallen sinners can add to it. But, like the Spanish king, people want to add something to help God out. The idea that salvation is totally from God is an affront to our pride. So even many that profess to believe in Christ as Savior are prone to think that their salvation rests at least partially on something that they must do, rather than completely on what God has done. We keep adding our columns, but God's Word clearly shows that God's salvation does not need our human support.

**Zechariah 12:2** "**Behold**, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah.

- a cup: Ps 75:8 Isa 51:17,22,23 Jer 25:15,17 49:12 51:7 Hab 2:16 Rev 14:10 16:19 18:6
- that causes reeling: or, slumber, Jer 51:57, or, poison, Jer 8:14
- when the (KJV): Zec 14:14

**NLT** "I will make Jerusalem like an intoxicating drink that makes the nearby nations stagger when they send their armies to besiege Jerusalem and Judah."

**NET** "I am about to make Jerusalem a cup that brings dizziness to all the surrounding nations; indeed, Judah will also be included when Jerusalem is besieged.

**Septuagint** - "Behold, I set Jerusalem as a doorway to be shaken by all the surrounding people, and in Judah there will be a fortified enclosure against Jerusalem. (Note - A bit misleading for Jerusalem and Judah will be on the same side, not opposed to one another).

## **A GREAT ATTACK ON JERUSALEM**

**Kaiser** entitles this verse "His intoxicating enemies." God is also Sovereign over Israel and her enemies. The Hebrew text emphatically begins "Behold I, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup of reeling to all the surrounding peoples." Verses 2 and 3 contain two metaphors for Jerusalem: an intoxicating cup and a heavy stone that will hurt all who try to lift it. (Ibid)

**Steven Cole** - If all that we had to go on was Zechariah 12:2-9, we might conclude that the battle will not be too bad for Israel. These verses show how God will strengthen the nation for battle so that her enemies will be defeated. But Zech 13:7-9 and Zech 14:2-3 reveal that things will get pretty desperate for Israel before the Lord intervenes. The city will be captured, houses plundered, women raped, and half of the city exiled before the Lord fights against the nations. Two parts of the land will be cut off and perish and the third part will be brought through the fire. Only after this will Israel be delivered. God will make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the nations (Zech 12:2). The nations will greedily consume Israel like a cup of wine, but instead of satisfying them, it makes them stagger and fall to the ground.

**Behold** - God is saying in essence "Hear ye, hear ye!" **Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to

something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

**Behold** (02009) ([hinneh](#)) is an interjection used almost 1000 times in the OT and conveys the meaning behold or look. See or listen with attention. **Hinneh** generally directs our mind to the text, imploring the reader to give it special attention. In short, the Spirit is trying to arrest our attention! Uses of **Hinneh** in Zechariah -

Zechariah 1:8; Zechariah 1:11; Zechariah 1:18; Zechariah 2:1; Zechariah 2:3; Zechariah 2:9; Zechariah 2:10; Zechariah 3:8; Zechariah 3:9; Zechariah 4:2; Zechariah 5:1; Zechariah 5:7; Zechariah 6:1; Zechariah 6:12; Zechariah 8:7; Zechariah 9:4; Zechariah 9:9; Zechariah 11:6; Zechariah 11:16; Zechariah 12:2; Zechariah 14:1

**I am going to make** - God is speaking and God is orchestrating the events in chapter 12 as emphasized by the **"I am"** here and the repeated use of **"I will"** in Zechariah 12:3, 4, 6, 9, 10). The sovereign God is in total control (cf **'stretches...lays...forms'** in Zechariah 12:1) declaring that He is going to accomplish His ends (**I am...**).

**John MacArthur** exhorts us to "remember that all the history of the world is the enacting of the sovereignty of God to one direct degree or another. God is involved in the flow of history and if this attack is to come on Israel, then it is God who makes it happen....God is making a promise. God is directing a prophecy. It's a prophecy of siege but it's also a prophecy of salvation. And God is behind the whole thing. And the reason this is emphasized is that the people who hear this prophecy will have the confidence to believe that it will come to pass. It doesn't depend on men. It depends upon an unchanging immutable God, a God who doesn't make plans and scuttle them, a God who isn't thwarted by some other power. When God says it and God plans to do it, it will be done. And this is why there is such emphasis on God." ([Zechariah 12 - Israel's Final Deliverance](#))

God will in essence allow the horrible **anti-Semitism** that has been smoldering for millennia to come to a head as the world sets its sights on the conquest and destruction of **Jerusalem**. How interesting that as I am writing these notes (December, 2017) President Donald Trump has ordered the U S Embassy to be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem which he will recognize as the legitimate capital of Israel. I would predict some "fireworks" from **all the peoples around!** Am I saying this is a fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy? No, but it could be a precursor events. Current events are interesting but should never be used to interpret Bible prophecy. This is the antithesis of what one's approach should be! Keep your eyes focused on the Word of Truth and then you will be able to discern the signs of the times using God's Word of Truth on prophecy.

#### Related Resource:

- [What is the cause of all the anti-Semitism in the world?](#)

**Constable** - The Lord would make Jerusalem like a cup of strong wine to the nations; when they tried to consume Jerusalem (a metonymy for all Israel), it would cause them to reel. Jerusalem had previously drunk the cup of the Lord's wrath (Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15-17, 28), but now it was the nations' turn to drink it. Their siege of Jerusalem would extend to all the surrounding territory of Judah. The time in view is after the Lord regathered the Israelites to their land (ch. 10).

## YERUSHALAYIM

As you ponder what is surely one of the most incredible prophecies in all of God's Word let me encourage you to pause for just a few minutes as you listen to the song [Yerushalayim](#) (Jerusalem) which is not a Christian but a Jewish song. Listen carefully to the words and you will surely be moved to "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem" (Psalm 122:6), a prayer that is answered in Zechariah 12-14.

#### [Come let us sing the song of a city](#)

Known for its beauty, splendor, and grace  
Come let us find the words to describe her  
She is not like, not like any other place

*Yerushalayim*, the place to live  
*Yerushalayim*, *harim saviv*  
*Yerushalayim*, *ir shel shalom*  
*Yerushalayim*, we're going home...

Dreams of Past splendor  
And whispers Of glory  
Your walls tell Your story,

Your soul  
Waiting so long

For the time when  
Our tears will be stilled,  
Our prayers fulfilled,  
(Ps 122:6)  
Our city rebuilt!

**In that day**  
**in Zechariah 12-14...**  
**Their tears will be stilled!**  
**Their city will be rebuilt!**

Notice that Zechariah 12:2-3 is a [parallelism](#) or parallel passages both of which describe the future siege on Jerusalem

Zechariah 12:2	Zechariah 12:3
I will make Jerusalem a cup	I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone
To all the peoples	For all the peoples

**Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around - Cup** is the Hebrew word ([sap/saph](#)) is better translated "basin" or "bowl." The Hebrew word for "cup" (kos) is a well-known symbol of God's wrath (Isa 51:17, Jer 13:13, 25:15-28, Ps 60:3, et al). It is almost like God is saying "A cup is too small to be "for all the peoples!" The picture is of all the Gentile nations of the world "drinking the basin" and becoming "intoxicated," reeling and staggering from drunkenness, all orchestrated by God's Hand of judgment. It's as if the nations will "not be able to walk a straight line" (so to speak) but will fail the test (using the analogy of testing for inebriation).

**MacArthur** paints the picture for us -- The nations are going to attack Jerusalem...There is going to be a great world war, the battle of the centuries. They are going to converge on Israel, they are going to attack Judah the surrounding countryside and they are going to have their sights set on Jerusalem... they are going to be like men greedily draining a wine goblet. They are going to come in "drink it up." But in the end, they are going to find themselves reeling and staggering around like helpless drunks, unable to claim the coveted prize. In fact they are going to be so disorganized and drunk that they are going to be easy prey for divine judgment. ([Zechariah 12 - Israel's Final Deliverance](#))

John gives us a similar picture of these last days of the final evil world system writing "I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus." (Rev 17:6+) Zechariah is painting a similar picture of the nations drunk with the idea of conquering Israel, but instead ending up like staggering drunks who are ripe for the judgment of God. While we don't have time to go into detail, it is worth noting that God's final wrath will be poured out as a series of Bowl Judgments and it is the pouring out of the Sixth Bowl which results in gathering together of "the kings of the whole world...for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty." (Rev 16:14-[note](#)) also known as the [Campaign of Armageddon](#). (See [video of discussion I did on Revelation Overview](#))

**Kaiser** - The "cup of drunkenness" (v. 2a) is often used in Scripture as a symbol of the divine judgment God brings on mortals. God's judgment reduces them to a state of helplessness and misery similar to that of a drunken, staggering, intoxicated man.... Isaiah warned: "Thus says the Lord, the LORD and your God, who pleads the cause of His people: 'See, I have taken out of your hand the cup of trembling, the dregs of the cup of My fury; you shall no longer drink it. But I will put it into the hand of those who afflict you, who have said to you, "Lie down, that we may walk over you." And you have laid down your body like the ground and as the street, for those who walk over' " (Isa 51:22-23). Zechariah actually uses the Hebrew word for "**bowl**," not "**cup**"; the larger vessel is needed to allow all the nations to get drunk. (Ibid)

**Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling** is paralleled with the next descriptive phrase **Jerusalem a heavy stone** (Zech 12:3). This figurative description of a **cup that causes reeling** is amplified by Zech 12:9 where God says He will "**set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.**"

Having drunk from the **cup**, the recipient nations are the object of God's wrath (Job 21:20) and they stagger with drunkenness, becoming so mad as to participate in the ultimate folly of their own destruction by coming against God's Holy City Jerusalem. And so here in Zechariah 12:2 the destruction of the nations begins with them being made drunk, spiritually speaking, so that they carry out a foolish attack on God's Holy City which will guarantee their destruction!

We see a similar description of Babylon as **cup**, the prophet writing that "Babylon has been a golden cup in the hand of the LORD, **Intoxicating all the earth**. The nations have drunk of her wine; Therefore the nations are going mad." (Jer 51:7) This prophecy will

ultimately be fulfilled in the last days preceding the Second Coming of the Messiah. Constable adds this comment on Jeremiah 51:7 "Babylon was responsible for seducing many other nations to join her in her sins. These nations had fallen under the power of Babylon and had behaved like drunkards (cf. Rev. 18:3-[see note](#)). She had given the cup of God's wrath to other nations, but now she would have to drink from it herself (cf. Jer 25:15-29)."

*Oh that the day might soon come when God would remember his ancient people, the Jews, and bring them back to their own land, as he certainly will do in the fullness of time*

**Spurgeon** writes "This is a promise of God's abounding mercy to His Chosen People Israel. When he comes to their aid, they shall be a cup of trembling to their enemies. Those enemies will try to swallow them, but they will find that they are drinking a cup of poison, which will cause their own death. Oh that the day might soon come when God would remember his ancient people, the Jews, and bring them back to their own land, as he certainly will do in the fullness of time (NOTICE THAT SPURGEON BELIEVED THAT PALESTINE WAS ISRAEL'S LAND AND THAT GOD WOULD BRING THEM BACK AS HE DID BY [RE-BIRTHING THE NATION ON MAY 14, 1948](#) - [read of this miracle](#)), and when he has done it, then it shall come to pass that all who fight against them shall find His people to be as a cup of trembling to them. **This promise, which is to be literally fulfilled to God's Chosen People, the seed of Abraham**, is also spiritually true to all believers. Christian, your enemies cannot really hurt you. If they could drink you up, as men drink a cup of wine, you would be a cup of trembling to them, they would find that they had taken in more than they wanted. All the persecutors of the Church of God, in smiting this stone, have themselves been broken on it. They have found that they have undertaken a task which has ended in their own destruction. Woe unto the man who fights against the Church of the living God! Victory must always come to the Lord's people, for greater is he who is with them than all that can be against them."

**MacArthur - Jerusalem** is pictured as a large basin (**CUP**) from which the nations will figuratively drink with eagerness, only to find themselves becoming intoxicated, disoriented, and thus easy prey for divine judgment at the end of [Daniel's 70th week](#) in the battle of Armageddon (**ED**: MORE ACCURATELY DESCRIBED AS A CAMPAIGN - [SEE NOTE](#)) when nations gather to attack Jerusalem

In Scripture the reception of God's judgment is often described as **drinking from His cup...**

Ps 75:7-8 But God is the Judge; He puts down one and exalts another. 8 For a **cup is in the hand of the LORD**, and the wine foams; It is well mixed, and He pours out of this; Surely all the wicked of the earth must drain and drink down its dregs.

**MacArthur** - The cup of wrath describes God's judgment which He forces down the throats of the wicked (cf. Job 21:20; Is 51:17; Jer 25:15-29; Mt 20:22; 26:39).

**Constable** - As Judge, God forces His enemies to drink from the cup that determines consequences. He forces them to drink all the wine of judgment that He has prepared for them. They cannot escape doing so or the consequences of doing so at His appointed time. In some ancient Near Eastern nations kings made convicted criminals drink poisoned wine.

Isaiah 51:17 Rouse yourself (INITIALLY YAHWEH IS ADDRESSING ISRAEL)! Rouse yourself! Arise, O Jerusalem, You who have drunk from the LORD'S hand **the cup** (sap/saph - same word as here in Zech 12:2) **of His anger**; The chalice of reeling you have drained to the dregs.

**MacArthur comments** - Jerusalem experienced the Lord's anger through her extended subservience to foreign powers with no human to deliver her (v. 18), but the punishment will end (Isa 51:22; 40:1, 2; cf. Isa 29:9). On the other hand, Babylon will drink from the cup of His anger forever (Rev 14:8-11-[note](#); Rev 16:19-[note](#)).

**Constable** - Jerusalem had drunk a powerful liquid at the hand of her God. He had given her punishment to drink for her sins (cf. Mark 10:38). She now lay in a state of stupor but needed to arise because the Lord had a future for her.

Isaiah 51:22 Thus says your Lord, the LORD, even your God Who contends for His people (ISRAEL), "Behold, I have taken out of your hand **the cup of reeling**, the chalice of My anger; You (ISRAEL) will never drink it again (THIS FUTURE HOPE IS WHAT ZECHARIAH 12-14 DESCRIBES). 23 "I will put it (**THE CUP OF REELING** - cf Zech 12:2) into the hand of your tormentors, who have said to you, 'Lie down that we may walk over you.' You have even made your back like the ground and like the street for those who walk over it."

**MacArthur** - Jerusalem was drunk through drinking the cup of God's wrath (63:6). But, in contrast to Babylon, which drank the fury of God's wrath to the last drop (Isa 51:17; Rev 18:6-[note](#)), Israel will have the cup removed before all the wrath is consumed. It will be handed to Israel's oppressors for them to drink the full fury (Isaiah 49:26; Jer 25:15, 26, 28; Zec 12:2).



**Constable** - The God offering Israel a comforting promise was her master, Yahweh, the God of the covenant, the God who had taken her to Himself, who consistently defends His people. He promised that the Israelites would never again experience the outpouring of His wrath as they had. Obviously the Jews have experienced worse persecution in recent history than they did during the Babylonian exile: the German holocaust, the Russian pogroms, etc. And they will undergo the worst trials of their history in the Tribulation (cf. Jer. 30:4–7-note "Time of Jacob's Trouble", cf. Da 12:1-note). I take it that God meant that He would not punish them as He had because He would provide the Servant to drink the cup of His wrath for His people. They would not have to suffer in the future as they had in the past because God would provide a Savior who would suffer in their place. That the Jews have suffered terribly and will yet do so is because they have rejected the Savior that God provided.

Jeremiah 25:15-17 For thus the LORD, the God of Israel, says to me, **"Take this cup of the wine of wrath** from My hand and cause all the nations to whom I send you to drink it (cf. ZECHARIAH'S DESCRIPTION IN Zechariah 12:2). 16 "They will drink and stagger and go mad (cf. ZECHARIAH'S PHRASE "CUP THAT CAUSES REELING") because of the sword that I will send among them." 17 Then I took the cup from the LORD'S hand and made all the nations to whom the LORD sent me drink it:...28 "And it will be, if they refuse to take the cup from your hand to drink, then you will say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "You shall surely drink!"

**MacArthur** on **then I took the cup...and made all the nations...drink it** - Obviously Jeremiah could not visit all the places listed from vv. 18–26, but in this vision he acted as if representatives from all those nations were present so he could make them drink in the message of wrath (v. 27), and understand there was no escape (Jer 25:28, 29).

**Constable** - The Lord instructed Jeremiah to take from His hand, figuratively, a cup of His wrath and to cause all the nations to whom the Lord would send him to drink from it. The cup is a common figure for the wrath of God in Scripture (cf. Jer 13:12–14; 49:12; 51:7; Job 21:10; Ps. 60:3; Isa. 51:17, 21–22; Lam. 4:21; Ezek. 23:31–34; Hab. 2:16; Mark 10:39; 14:36; Luke 22:42; John 18:11; Rev. 14:8, 10; 16:19; 18:6) (**Cup** is also a symbol of God's blessing cf. Ps. 16:5; 23:5; Luke 22:17, 20; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:24–25). This was another symbolic action that God prescribed to communicate to His people, though in this case the action was not literal. ([Expository Notes](#))

Habakkuk 2:16-note "You (BABYLON) will be filled with disgrace rather than honor. Now you yourself drink and expose your own nakedness. **The cup in the LORD'S right hand will come around to you**, And utter disgrace will come upon your glory.

**Constable** - As they (BABYLON) had made their neighbors drunk, so the Lord would give them a cup of judgment that would make them drunk. Yahweh's right hand is a figure for His strong personal retribution, giving back in kind what the person being judged had given (cf. Isa. 51:17–23; Jer. 25:15–17; Lam. 4:21; Matt. 20:22; 26:42; 1 Cor. 11:29). Having swallowed the cup's contents the Babylonians would disgrace themselves rather than honoring and glorifying themselves as they did presently. Their future disgrace contrasts with Yahweh's future glory (v. 14). They would expose their own nakedness as they had exposed the nakedness of others (v. 15). Nakedness involves vulnerability as well as shame (cf. Gen. 9:21–25). The Lord pictured Babylon as a contemptible, naked drunk who had lost his self-control and the respect of everyone including himself. ([Expository Notes](#))

Revelation 16:19-note The great city ([SEE DISCUSSION OF DESTRUCTION OF THE FUTURE REBUILT CITY OF BABYLON](#)) was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her **the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath**

**All the peoples** is translated in the NET Bible as "all the surrounding nations."

The Hebrew word for **cup** is more accurately "The word is used of the **bowl** or basin in which the blood of the Paschal lamb was caught, Ex. 12:22, of the bowls used in the Temple service, 1 Ki 7:50, and more generally, 2 Sa 17:28." (Perowne)

**Arnold Fruchtenbaum** comments that "Jerusalem is pictured here as a vast bowl, around which the Gentile nations will gather to drink. In the majority of cases when the word cup is used symbolically in the Old Testament, it is a symbol of divine judgment (Ps. 75:8; Is. 51:17, 21–23; Jer. 25:15–16; 51:7). As these Gentile nations come against Jerusalem, they will begin to drink from this vast cup, hoping to derive pleasure from it; but after drinking, they will run away reeling and staggering, no longer in control as they thought they would be." (Messianic Bible Study)



Listen to the Jewish song [D'ror Yikra \(Cups\) by The Maccabeats](#) - below is the English translation. The Hebrew word "D'ror" or "Deror" means freedom and liberty "referring to Shabbat and to the **FINAL REDEMPTION!**" ([Jewish Commentary](#)). Indeed, Jerusalem will be a **CUP** filled with God's holy wrath and which will be poured out on the nations for among other things their centuries long hatred of Israel. As the Messiah Himself said their "**redemption draweth nigh.**" (Luke 21:28-note) Enjoy this great acapella version. Who knows, we may even sing this song in the Messiah's Kingdom! Notice also the incredible reference to Bozrah and then read Isaiah 63:1-6-commentary.

Who is this who comes from Edom, With garments of glowing colors from **Bozrah**, This One who is majestic in His apparel, Marching in the greatness of His strength? "It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

## HE WILL PROCLAIM FREEDOM

He will proclaim freedom for all his children  
And will keep you as the apple of his eye  
Pleasant is your name and will not be destroyed  
Repose and rest on the Sabbath day.

Seek my sanctuary and my home.  
Give me a sign of deliverance.  
Plant a vine in my vineyard.  
Look to my people, hear their laments.

Tread the wine-press in Bozrah,  
And in Babylon that city of might  
Crush my enemies in anger and fury.  
On the day when I cry, hear my voice.

Plant, Oh God, in the mountain waste  
Fir and acacia, myrtle and elm  
Give those who teach and those who obey  
Abundance peace, like the flow of a river.

Repel my enemies, Oh zealous God.  
Fill their hearts with fear and despair.  
Then we shall open our mouths,  
And fill our tongues with Your praise.

Know wisdom, that your soul may live,  
And it shall be a diadem for your brow.  
Keep the commandment of your Holy One  
Observe the Sabbath, your sacred day.

Additional Comments on [D'ror Yikra \(Cups\)](#) - As alluded to above, there is an intriguing mention of Bozrah in the third stanza. Here is the Jewish Commentary on this line which reads in transliterated Hebrew "Deroch poorā betoch Batzra"

The meaning of the Hebrew word *poora* is vintage, and it is derived from *pōra* – branch. Here the analogy is that God will tread on Israel's enemies as one treads grapes, and it is based on Isaiah (Isaiah 63:1-3): "Who is this coming from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Botzrah...why is Your clothing so red, Your garments like his who treads grapes? – I trod out a vintage alone; of the peoples – no man was with me". (ED: WOE! HOW CAN THEY NOT SEE HIM?) Deroch poorā betoch Batzra vegam Bavel asher gavra – These are names of Biblical nations that were later on applied to different nations under whose rule Jews lived. It is interesting to note that in the Babylonian tradition the word Bavel was changed to Edom so as not to offend the hosting nation.....And just as the Jews are commanded to let their inner essence free on the Shabbat day so also God promises that when the time comes the captives in exile will be released, as in the comforting prophecy of Isaiah (Isaiah 61:1-2): "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me. Because the lord has anointed me. He has sent me as a herald of joy to the humble, to bind up the wounded of heart, to proclaim release to the captives, liberation to the imprisoned, to proclaim a year of the Lord's favor" (ED: O MY! THEY ARE ACTUALLY CROSS REFERENCING THE VERY WORDS SPOKEN BY YESHUA WHEN HE UNROLLED THE SCROLL AND READ THESE WORDS FROM ISAIAH 63 IN THE SYNAGOGUE! **Luke 4:18-22**-see commentary = "*THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE*

*POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD.” And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, “Is this not Joseph’s son?”). Final redemption (ED: AS DESCRIBED BY ZECHARIAH!) will bring with it spontaneous outburst of joy and singing, which the poet describes in the last stanza by alluding to Psalms (Ps 126:1-2): “When the Lord restores the fortunes of Zion – we see it as in a dream – our mouths shall be filled with laughter, our tongues, with songs of joy”. ([Commentary](#))*

**Cup** (05592)(**sap/saph**) refers to a "bowl" or "basin." "Cognates are attested in Ugaritic, the Samaritan Pentateuch and Phoenician. While there are a variety of terms for different types of containers and their uses throughout the OT, **saph** primarily refers to a shallow cup used both in the home and in the Temple for cultic rituals (cf. 2 Sa 17:28; 2 Ki. 12:13; Jer. 52:19). Apparently, 1 Ki. 7:50 demarcates between a mizrāq and a saph; both were types of gold bowls used in Solomon's temple. Exodus 12:22 assumes that every household had a **saph**, likely an earthen bowl, in which to pour the blood from the slain Passover lamb. **Saph** is used metaphorically in Zech. 12:2 to describe how the Lord will use Israel as "a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling" (NIV). "Cup" perhaps fits better in this case if it is viewed as something to be drunk from. However, it is also likely that the "cup of trembling" is poured out (as in Revelation) and thus, "bowl" works well." (Gilbrant)

How interesting that the same Hebrew word **sap/saph** is used of the basin to collect the blood of the blemish free lamb (pre-figuring Messiah) that resulted in the redemption of Israel from Egypt and now in the last days the same word is used again in the context of the redemption of Israel (by return of the Messiah, cf Ro 11:26) from Gentile dominion and oppression.

**Sap/saph** - basin(2), basins(1), bowls(1), cup(1), cups(2). - Ex. 12:22; 2 Sam. 17:28; 1 Ki. 7:50; 2 Ki. 12:13; Jer. 52:19; Zech. 12:2

Note that another Hebrew word **sap/saph** is translated as threshold or sill. The keeper of the threshold (1 Chr 9:19, 22) held an important office. Theologically, it becomes a symbol of God's presence in holy power (Isa 6:4) or judgment (Amos 9:1; Zeph 2:14). Below are the 22 uses.

Jdg. 19:27; 1 Ki. 14:17; 2 Ki. 12:9; 2 Ki. 22:4; 2 Ki. 23:4; 2 Ki. 25:18; 1 Chr. 9:19; 1 Chr. 9:22; 2 Chr. 3:7; 2 Chr. 23:4; 2 Chr. 34:9; Est. 2:21; Est. 6:2; Isa. 6:4; Jer. 35:4; Jer. 52:24; Ezek. 40:6; Ezek. 40:7; Ezek. 41:16; Ezek. 43:8; Amos 9:1; Zeph. 2:14

A **cup** is used elsewhere as a symbol for God's wrath (Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 13:13, et al), so what God is saying is that He is going to use Jerusalem like a "cup" to pour wrath on the Gentile nations. It is interesting that God used this same figure of speech in His declarations to Israel, the first bad, the second good

(Isa 51:17) Rouse yourself! Rouse yourself! Arise, O Jerusalem, You who have drunk from the LORD'S hand **the cup of His anger**; The chalice of reeling you have drained to the dregs.

(Isa 51:22) Thus says your Lord, the LORD, even your God Who contends for His people, "Behold, I have taken out of your hand **the cup of reeling**, The chalice of My anger; You will never drink it again.

**Reeling** (Hebrew - raal) is used only here in the OT and is related to the word ra'al which also occurs only once in Nah 2:4 and means to quiver or shake. The Greek Septuagint translates raal with the verb **saleuo** (from **salos** = wave) means to cause to move to and fro, cause to waver or totter, make to rock, shake or agitate as by winds or storms. It can refer to unexpected and disastrous shaking, of what would be thought to be stable, e.g. earth or sky shake. In Acts 16, saleuo is used literally of an earthquake (Acts 16:26). **Saleuo** described a ship at anchor slipping its mooring in the midst of a heavy wind. The Israel hating Gentile nations will be caused (passive voice - probably the divine passive in this context) to shake and totter, and ultimately to be crushed by the Stone that returns from heaven (see (Daniel 2:34-35-[see in depth commentary](#); Daniel 2:44-45-[see in depth commentary](#)))

**All the peoples** (nations) - Notice that both the Hebrew (**kol** = the whole) and the Septuagint (**pas** - all without exception) both emphasize that in essence the entire world (not including those who are saved at this time and there will be many Gentiles who are saved) comes against this tiny country in the Middle East! There has always been anti-Jewish sentiment smoldering among Gentiles, even those in the Church (and frankly I personally consider the false doctrine of Replacement Theology to be a clear, albeit subtle and somewhat passive, form of Anti-Semitism), in the last days this hatred of the Jews will even surpass that of the abominable Nazi regime in World War II! And this is clearly no accident. So let me ask again, why would all the nations come against Jerusalem? The first answer already alluded to is that God is in control (cf **I am going to make**) and He will allow this to happen to His Chosen People. The second reason (already alluded to above) as Messianic Jewish commentator Charles Feinberg says is that "In the time of our passage all the nations of earth will be **bitten by the virus of anti-Semitism**." But never forgot that God is in full control. While He will not cause sin, He is able to use sinful men to accomplish His purpose, in this case the redemption and restoration of

the nation of Israel.

In the Revelation, the apostle John explains how the nations will be **'bitten by the virus of anti-Semitism'** writing that

"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** (SATAN) and out of the mouth of the **beast** (ANTICHRIST) 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.....16 And **they gathered them together** to the place which in Hebrew is called **Har-Magedon**. (Rev 16:12-16+)

**David Guzik** writes that "The Arab peoples surrounding Jerusalem have a passion for possessing the city that is not justified by history. Muslims claim Jerusalem as their third-holiest city, but Jerusalem is not mentioned once in the Koran. In addition, "During the centuries when Jerusalem was under complete Arab control, no Arab ruler or Islamic leader ever made it the object of a religious pilgrimage - again a strange indifference toward a city which is now considered to be the third-holiest religious site in Islam after Mecca and Medina." (Dave Hunt) Jerusalem's importance to Muslims comes from the belief that in the Dome of the Rock shrine there is a rock where two significant things happened - where Abraham intended to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, and where Mohammed allegedly ascended into heaven. Though this tradition is firmly in the Muslim mind, it is of recent origin. It was invented by Yasser Arafat's uncle - Haj Amin el-Husseini, who was the past Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. He promoted this myth in the 1920's and 1930's to arouse Arab passions against the growing Jewish presence in Jerusalem. The verse in the Koran that describes Mohammed's trip to heaven is Surah 17:1: Glorified be He who carried His servant by night from the Inviolable Place of Worship to the Far Distant Place [al-Aqsa] of Worship the neighbourhood whereof We have blessed, that We might show him of Our tokens! The Islamic interpretation says that the Inviolable Place of Worship is Mecca, and this is accepted by all. It then says that the Far Distant Place of Worship is Jerusalem - but this has no substantiation because Jerusalem had never been a place of Islamic worship to that time, nor would it be for centuries afterward. Jerusalem isn't even mentioned by name in the Koran, so how could it be a place of worship according to the Koran? Most significantly, inside the Dome of the Rock hundreds of verses from the Koran are inscribed - and Surah 17:1 is not among them! The very passage that later supposedly justified the building of the Dome of the Rock is not even included among the hundreds of passages of the Koran inscribed in it! The Dome of the Rock (SEE TEMPLE MOUNT BELOW) was built not because of the Koran, but because the Muslim ruler Abdal-Malik wanted to gain revenue from pilgrims and worshippers, and because he wanted to prevent the rebuilding of a Jewish Temple. Islamic passion for Jerusalem is indeed like drunkenness. This is exactly fulfilled in modern Jerusalem. In recent peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Israel was willing to concede almost everything to the Palestinians in an amazing willingness to make peace. The only thing Israel would not concede was sovereignty over Jerusalem, and the entire deal was ruined over that one point. The problem between Jews and the Arab world has boiled down to one point: Jerusalem. If Muslim passion for Jerusalem is a mystery, the Jewish claim to the city is entirely Scriptural. "The very fact that Jerusalem is mentioned more than 800 times in the Bible makes it worthy of special attention. This unique city is the only one upon which God has bestowed His distinctive blessing and protection (Ps 132:13-14), and the only city for whose peace we are commanded to pray (Ps 122:6). God says He has chosen Jerusalem as the place where He has put His name forever (2 Chr 6:6; 33:7; Ps 46:4; 48:1-8; 87:3). The new heavens and new earth will contain 'the city of my God...new Jerusalem' (Rv 3:12; 21:2). That there will be a 'heavenly Jerusalem' (Heb 12:22) but no 'heavenly' New York, Paris, London, Damascus, Cairo, etc. speaks volumes." (Dave Hunt, The Berean Call - September 2000)

## TEMPLE MOUNT

Another factor that contributes to all the peoples is undoubtedly the fact that Jerusalem is the site of [Temple Mount](#), the most "valuable" and most contested plot of land in the entire world. Even in our day we can see the controversy over which nations have jurisdiction over Temple Mount. And there can be little doubt that this controversy will only continue and escalate as we move toward the conclusion of God's plan for Israel and the coming Day of the LORD. As the psalmist asked (Ps 2:1-see "[Why Do the Nations Rage?](#)") "Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing?" Indeed, the nations rage over [Temple Mount](#) and it will reach a crescendo in the last days before the Messiah returns.

Temple Mount with Dome of the Rock - click

**Tony Garland** has this interesting note on **Temple Mount**...

As of A.D. 2003, the two most dominant features visible upon the [Temple Mount](#) are the [Dome of the Rock](#) and the [Al-Aqsa Mosque](#). But this is from man's point of view. God recognizes neither of these structures as His Temple. Yet the piece of real-estate occupied by these buildings has great Biblical significance, for it is Mount Moriah. The importance of Mount Moriah is established by a number of key historical events which have taken place there:

**1. Abraham Offers Isaac** - It was here where Abraham's faith was tested when God instructed him to offer up his son Isaac in sacrifice (Gen. 22). See Abraham Offers Isaac.

**2. Site of Solomon's Temple** - In 990 B.C., King David was instructed by God to erect an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite which occupied this site. David purchased the land which later became the site of Solomon's Temple (2S. 24:18-25; 1Chr. 21:18-26; 2Chr. 3:1).

**3. The Crucifixion of Jesus** - On the very mountain where Abraham was asked to sacrifice his "only son" (Gen. 22:2, 12), God sacrificed His only Son.

For Islam, only the first of these events is significant. Even then, Islam claims that it was Ishmael, not Isaac, who was offered up by Abraham (see Dome of the Rock). Although ample evidence exists that Islam recognized the [Temple Mount](#) to have been the historic site of Solomon's Temple in the past, more recently it has served Islamic political interests for some to deny any previous historical Jewish presence on the [Temple Mount](#). For Judaism, only the first two events are of significance, since Judaism rejects the idea that Israel crucified her Messiah, God in the flesh. All three events are of great significance to Christians, for they evidence the consistent purpose of God in their shared location

**When the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah-** The NIV translates it as "Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem."

This **siege** is described again in Zech 14:1-5-note

**Behold** (ATTENTION GRABBING), a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. 2 For **I will** (GOD IS IN TOTAL CONTROL OF THIS LAST ACT IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT) gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle (CP. "MAKE JERUSALEM A CUP THAT CAUSES REELING"), and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. 3 Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. 4 In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. 5 You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him! (A Testimony of Jesus Christ).

**Siege** ([04692](#))(**matsor** from [tsûr/sur](#) - to confine, enclose) is a masculine noun indicating a siege, battle tactic in which an army surrounds a city and cuts off all supplies so that the enemy army is forced to surrender for lack of food and water. It indicates a methodical attack on people, city, or country in order to overcome and conquer it or to the period of time when this occurs (Ezek. 4:8; 5:2); siege (Mic. 5:1[4:14]; Zech. 12:2); with *bô'* it expressed the idea of coming into a state of siege (Deut. 20:19; 2 Ki. 24:10; 25:2; Jer. 52:5); the distressful time of the siege (Deut. 28:53, 55, 57; Jer. 19:9). It indicates also the entrenchment or features of the siege itself: engines of siege (Deut. 20:20); a rampart or defense structure (Eccl. 9:14; Zec 9:3); a besieged city (Ps 31:21; 60:9).

**Matsor** - 25x in 25v - besieged(3), defense(1), fortified(1), fortress(1), rampart(1), siege(17), siegeworks(1). Deut. 20:19; Deut. 20:20; Deut. 28:53; Deut. 28:55; Deut. 28:57; 2 Ki. 24:10; 2 Ki. 25:2; 2 Chr. 8:5; 2 Chr. 11:5; 2 Chr. 32:10; Ps. 31:21; Ps. 60:9; Jer. 10:17; Jer. 19:9; Jer. 52:5; Ezek. 4:2; Ezek. 4:3; Ezek. 4:7; Ezek. 4:8; Ezek. 5:2; Mic. 5:1; Nah. 3:14; Hab. 2:1; Zech. 9:3; Zech. 12:2

[Wikipedia](#) says a "**siege** is a military blockade of a city, or fortress, with the intent of conquering by attrition, or a well-prepared assault. This derives from sedere, Latin for "to sit".[1] Siege warfare is a form of constant, low-intensity conflict characterized by one party holding a strong, static, defensive position. A siege occurs when an attacker encounters a city or fortress that cannot be easily taken by a quick assault, and which refuses to surrender. Sieges involve surrounding the target to block the provision of supplies and the reinforcement or escape of troops (a tactic known as "investment"[2]). This is typically coupled with attempts to reduce the fortifications by means of siege engines, artillery bombardment, mining (also known as sapping), or the use of deception or treachery to bypass defenses."

**Jerusalem** - The city which stands upon Mount Moriah, where Abraham offered Isaac and where Solomon's Temple was built. This is where Messiah Jesus was crucified and where He will return to overthrow the nations who gather against her in the time of the end (Zec. 12:2-11; 14:2)

## SUGGESTED SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN THE CAMPAIGN OF ARMAGEDDON

### Proposed Sequence of Events

from Arnold Fruchtenbaum

[Campaign of Armageddon](#)

(Click map to enlarge)

Arnold Fruchtenbaum suggests a sequence of events as follows:

- 1. The Assembling of the Allies of Antichrist** - When the sixth bowl is poured out, the Euphrates river is dried up and the kings of the earth are gathered to the valley of Jezreel (Rev. 16:12-16-[note](#); Joel 3:9-11-note).
- 2 The Destruction of Babylon** - Babylon is rebuilt on the banks of the Euphrates to become the world economic capital (Zec. 5:5-11). While the Antichrist is away at Megiddo, Babylon undergoes catastrophic destruction (Isa. 13-note, Isaiah 14; Jer. 50, 51; Rev. 15:8-[note](#); Rev 17:18-[note](#); Rev 18:1ff-[note](#); Rev 19:2-[note](#)).
- 3. The Fall of Jerusalem** - The Antichrist receives news that his capital city has been destroyed and moves south against Jerusalem (Zec. 12:1-3-[note](#); Zech 14:1-9-note; Micah 4:11-5:1-note). The Jews will put up a mighty defense, but Jerusalem will eventually fall (Zec. 14:2-note).
- 4. The Armies of the Antichrist at Bozrah** - The Jewish remnant flees to the mountains (Mt 24:15-note) and then to the wilderness in Edom (see Sheep in Bozrah). The armies under Antichrist will move against the Jews in Bozrah (Micah 2:12-note).
- 5. The National Regeneration of Israel** - The Jews confess their national sin, the rejection and crucifixion of Messiah Jesus (Lev. 26:40-42-note; Jer. 3:11-18; Hos. 5:15). They then plead for His return (Ps. 79:1-13; Isa. 64:1-12; Hos. 6:1-3; Zec. 12:10-13:1; Zech 13:7-9-note; Mt. 23:39).
- 6. The Second Coming of Messiah** - Christ returns to Bozrah, where the remnant have been preserved (Isa. 34:1-7; Isa. 63:1-6 [See in depth commentary](#); Mic. 2:12-13-note; Hab. 3:1-19-note; Zec. 12:7-[note](#); Rev. 19:11-18-[note](#)).
- 7. The Battle from Bozrah to the Valley of Jehoshaphat** - Christ fights the forces of Antichrist from Bozrah continuing all the way back to the eastern walls of Jerusalem, which overlook a section of the Kidron Valley, also known as the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Antichrist is destroyed. (Joel 3:2, 12-13-note; 2Th. 2:8; Zec. 14:12-15-note; Rev. 14:19-20-[note](#); Rev 19:20-[note](#)).
- 8. The Victory Ascent Up the Mount of Olives** - This is not the initial return of Christ, for He will save the tents of Judah first (Zec. 12:7-[note](#)). Nor will his initial return be to the same place He ascended, the Mount of Olives, but merely in the same manner (Acts 1:11 = "will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven"). His ascent to the Mount is attended by cataclysmic events associated with the seventh bowl judgment (M 24:29-note; Zec 14:4-5-note; Rev. 16:17-21-[note](#)).

Dwight Pentecost suggests a less detailed sequence of events as follows focusing more on the prophecies in Daniel:

- 1. Covenant with Antichrist** - Prince of Roman empire [the Antichrist] makes a covenant with Israel for a seven year period (Da 9:26-27-[note](#)). (Although this covenant is broken three and one-half years later.) See Events of the 70th Week of Daniel.
- 2. Invasion of Palestine** - The King of the North and the King of the South invade Palestine (Da 11:40-[note](#)).
- 3. Antichrist Responds** - Because of his covenant with Israel, the Antichrist will come to Israel's defense (Da 11:40-45-[note](#)).
- 4. News from East and North** - News from the east and the north troubles the Antichrist (Da 11:44-[note](#)). Perhaps it is the approach of the kings of the east (Rev. 16:12+). (The troubling news may be the destruction of Babylon, although Pentecost does not mention this.)
- 5. Headquarters in Palestine** - The Antichrist moves his headquarters into the land of Palestine and assembles his armies there (Da 11:45-[note](#)).



**6. Christ Returns** - Before he can engage the kings from the east, Christ returns. All the armies combine to fight against God (Rev. 19:19-[note](#)).

**7. Antichrist and Armies Overthrown** - The armies and the Antichrist are destroyed without human means (Da 9:25-[note](#); Da 11:45-[note](#); Rev. 19:20-[note](#)).

#### Here is another proposed sequence of events related to the Campaign of Har-Magedon.

While this sequence can be "authenticated" from Scripture, it is merely a proposal and not a meant to be a definitive description of the cataclysmic end times events.

- 1). Gathering of the nations (Gentiles) in the valley of Megiddo against Jerusalem (Rev 16:16)
- 2). Babylon is destroyed (Rev 18:1-24)
- 3). The armies in #1 invade and conquer Jerusalem, but they know that there are still a remnant of Jews that have fled into the wilderness (Rev 12:6, 13-17 where the "woman" = Israel). (Zechariah 12:1-14:21 is a "unit" which describes the capturing of Jerusalem, but then the final triumph of the Messiah).
- 4). After conquering Jerusalem, the Antichrist moves with his armies south towards Edom seeking the Jewish remnant that had fled Jerusalem (cp Jesus' warning - Mt 24:15-21, describing the Great Tribulation, the last three and one half years when Antichrist rules the world seeking especially to destroy Israel.)
- 5). John describes Jesus' triumphant return in Rev 19:11-16. But to where does the Lord return? Isaiah 63:1-6 ([See in depth commentary](#)) supports the premise that Messiah returns first to the area of Edom whose capital city was Bozrah.
- 6). As Christ returns to Edom, the Antichrist's armies approach from Jerusalem. The Messiah victoriously treads down His foes and marches straight through them northward, His garments becoming soaked with their blood that rises as high as the bridle on the horses for 200 miles (Rev 14:20).

**Note that several passages support the premise that when Christ returns, He first comes to the region of Edom.**

(a) Isaiah 34:1-7 ([see discussion](#))

(b) Isaiah 63:1-6 ([See in depth commentary](#))

(c) Habakkuk 3:3-[note](#) - God comes from Teman (Edom), and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His splendor covers the heavens, and the earth is full of His praise.

In addition Messiah makes a Highway of holiness (Isaiah 35:8) on which the redeemed follow Him in His triumph.

7). Christ comes up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the Valley of Decision, where the nations have been gathered (Joel 3:2, 12-14) and He walks up to the Mount of Olives and stands on the Mount (Zechariah 14:1-4) as KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS AND VERY GOD OF VERY GOD. And when He does all the nations that are in the Valley of Jehoshaphat are judged by Christ, Who separates the sheep from the goats. All of those who have not received the MARK OF THE BEAST and have taken care of His brethren, the Jews, will enter into His kingdom, but the goats who have not will be cast "into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels." (Mt 25:41)

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Megiddo - click

## ARMAGEDDON

**Dr Tony Garland** has an excellent summary of the [Campaign of Armageddon](#) which is often incorrectly called "The Battle of Armageddon." Below is just the Dr Garland's introduction.

The words "**the Battle of Armageddon**" are almost a household phrase. Like the "number of the Beast" and "666," it is a phrase which is familiar to many people who have almost no knowledge of anything else recorded in Scripture.<sup>1</sup> The reason these phrases are so widely known is because of the seemingly sensational aspects of what Scripture records concerning the Tribulation, and especially its conclusion, when the kings of the earth are gathered "to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon" (Rev. 16:16). The events are of such magnitude that they are difficult to conceive of, even in



our day of powerful weaponry and great potential for devastation. They would seem to record the end of history as we know it. Along with a widespread familiarity with the phrase "the Battle of Armageddon" are some common misconceptions concerning what the phrase entails. The two most notable misconceptions are: (1) the phrase describes a battle; (2) the battle is fought exclusively at Armageddon. The student of Scripture will find that neither of these common beliefs are accurate: rather than being a single battle at a single location, a more lengthy military engagement is involved spanning a region nearly 200 miles long. So where did the idea of a "battle" come from? It originates from an unfortunate translation of a passage in the book of Revelation: "For they are spirits of demons performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" [emphasis added] (Rev. 16:14, NKJV cf. KJV). The term for battle in this verse is πόλεμον [polemon], which more correctly denotes an extended engagement rather than a single battle.<sup>2</sup> This is reflected in the more accurate rendering found in the NASB: "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" [emphasis added] (Rev. 16:14, NASU). The "battle" of Armageddon is in fact a more lengthy "war." In order to emphasize its broader scope, a number of commentators have taken to referring to it by the phrase we have used, the military "campaign of Armageddon." Even in this phrase there is some imprecision because significant battles which comprise the campaign take place elsewhere than the site associated with Armageddon:

While the term "Battle of Armageddon" has been commonly used, it is really a misnomer, for more than one battle will be taking place. For this reason, many prophetic teachers have stopped employing that term and are using the term "Campaign of Armageddon" . . . But this too, is a misnomer because there will be no fighting in Armageddon itself; all of the fighting will take place elsewhere. . . . It should be noted that the passage says nothing of a battle in this valley, for no fighting will take place here. The valley of Jezreel, guarded by the Mountain of Megiddo, will merely serve as the gathering ground for the armies of the Antichrist. (Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#).)

For Tony Garland's full discussion of this topic click [The Campaign of Armageddon](#).

**Zechariah 12:3 "It will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it."**

- **It will come about in that day** Zec 12:4,6,8,9,11 2:8,9 10:3-5 13:1 14:2,3,4,6,8,9,13 Isa 60:12 Isa 66:14-16 Eze 38:1-39:29 Joe 3:8-16 Ob 1:18 Mic 5:8,15 Mic 7:15-17 Hab 2:17 Zep 3:19 Hag 2:22
- **I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples** Da 2:34,35,44,45 Mt 21:44 Lu 20:18
- though: Zec 14:2,3 Mic 4:11-13 Rev 16:14 17:12-14 19:19-21 20:8,9

## NATIONS INJURED TRYING TO CARRY A HEAVY STONE

**Kaiser** entitles this verse "His immovable city," adding that "But the city will not budge. Jerusalem will prove to be such a heavy stone that all nations that attempt to lift it will hurt themselves or, more literally, **herniate themselves**." (Ibid) (Bolding added)

**It will come about** - Stop there! God said it and that settles it! What He says will come to pass, whether we believe it or not, or whether we fully understand it or not.

**That day** - 17 times in 16 verse - Zec 12:3 Zec 12:4 Zec 12:6 Zec 12:8 Zec 12:9 Zec 12:11 Zec 13:1 Zec 13:2 Zec 13:4 Zec 14:4 Zec 14:6 Zec 14:8 Zec 14:9 Zec 14:13 Zec 14:20 Zec 14:21. This begs the question "What day?" In the context of Zechariah 12-14 this "day" is when the nations of the world come against Israel. In the Timeline below this event will occur in the last 3.5 years **in the box with red highlight** of the so-called Tribulation ([see diagram](#)).

This day describing the final siege of Jerusalem is one of the days that will occur in the **Day of the Lord** which includes the events of the three and one-half year period of the [Great Tribulation](#), (synonymous with the [Time of Jacob's Distress](#) described in Jer 30:7 and "**a time of distress**" described in Daniel 12:1-note). And so the Day of the Lord includes the final Gentile [campaign of Armageddon](#) which is abruptly terminated by the Second Coming of Messiah and is followed by the [Millennial Reign of Messiah](#), which in turn is followed by the destruction of the created universe as we know it. Peter describes the annihilation of the universe writing that "the **day of the Lord** will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up." (2 Peter 3:10-note) Clearly that day in Zechariah 12-14

refers to the [Campaign of Armageddon](#) which will take place at the end of the Great Tribulation.

The prophet Joel describes this same great day

"For behold, in those days and at that time, When I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem (BEFORE HER RESTORATION THERE WILL BE A TIME OF REFINING), 2 I will (AGAIN NOTICE GOD IS IN CONTROL OF THIS GREAT DAY) gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there on behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; and they have divided up My land....Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations, and gather yourselves there. Bring down, O LORD, Your mighty ones. 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. (Joel 3:1-2, 11, 12)

Messianic Jewish writer [David Baron](#) writes "The phrase **that day** which is mentioned no less than 14 times in these last three chapters, is indeed "**the day of the Messiah**," but it is the day not of His first advent in humiliation, but of His manifestation in glory. It is, therefore, pre-eminently called a **day for Jehovah** the day set apart and appointed by Him not only for the display of His majesty and vindication of the holiness and righteousness of His character and ways, but it is **the day** of the manifestation of His Divine might and glory in the destruction of Israel's enemies, and the salvation of His own people. ([The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah](#))

**James Montgomery Boice** asks the question about whether this passage refers to our times or end times? - But to what period do they belong? And to what people? They obviously follow the first coming of Jesus Christ, for 12:10–14 describes a universal repentance in which people mourn for "the one they have pierced" (v. 10). But does that concern events shortly after Jesus' death, perhaps events accompanying the first preaching of the gospel at Pentecost or shortly thereafter? Does it refer to the expansion of Christian preaching and church growth throughout all subsequent ages? Or does it relate to something special to happen at the end of this age? Quite a few Reformed thinkers pick the second possibility and see the blessing of these chapters as belonging to the church, not to Israel nationally. This is probably the majority view in Reformed circles, due to the more basic conviction that the people of God are one, the church being an extension of Israel, and that reversion to a day of national Jewish blessing would be a step backward from the fulfillment of all prophecy in Christ. Unfortunately for this view, the chapter does not speak generally about "the people of God" or even merely about "Israel." It repeatedly stresses the names of Jerusalem and Judah. And when it talks about Israel's repentance, it does so by reference to the specific Jewish clans or tribes: "the clan of the house of David and their wives, the clan of the house of Nathan and their wives, the clan of the house of Levi and their wives, the clan of Shimei and their wives, and all the rest of the clans and their wives" (vv. 12–14). There is probably no more specifically Jewish prophecy in the book. But if these chapters refer to Jews specifically and not to the church as the New Testament Israel, then the events to which they refer must be future. For it is certain that there has not yet been a national repentance by Israel nor an enjoyment by them of the blessings here enumerated. And if this is the case, then the battle referred to in Zechariah 12:1–9 must be the last great battle, Armageddon, and the repentance of verses 10–14 a time of national salvation prior to the second coming of the Lord. Indeed, when the chapters are viewed in that light, the repeated "on that day" is seen quite naturally to refer to that last and great day of the Lord's return in judgment. These chapters are a prophecy of the events of those end times.

**Spurgeon** is more honest than many modern preachers who regard these promises as fulfilled to the church - This is true **literally**, but it is also true spiritually. As the Church of God is to be a cup of trembling to its enemies, so is it also to be a burdensome stone. They do not like it, they cannot bear it. They would, if they could, get rid of the spiritual Church of God; but they cannot get rid of it. There it is: — a stone, cut out of the mountain without hands, which will grow until it fills the whole earth, and breaks in pieces everything that opposes it. Those who set themselves against God, and against his Christ shall find themselves crushed to atoms by this mighty stone.

**I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples**- Literally "a stone of burden." It is a heavy stone which is difficult to lift. Notice again the **I will** signifies that it is the sovereign Lord Who will bring these events to fruition. As an aside, if He is in control of the end of this age, then He is surely in control of the "middle," and thus He is in control in your life, even though your life may seem out of control. [Have you yielded your will to His good and acceptable and perfect will?](#) (Ro 12:2).

## I WILL

As mentioned earlier there are 6 "**I will**" statements by God in Zechariah 12, signifying the [omnipotent power](#) of God Almighty, the LORD of armies, will bring the incredible events of this chapter to fruition. It's as if God said "I said it and **I will** accomplish it for My chosen nation of Israel!" And everyone who loves what God loves will shout :

**Thank You Lord!**

**Hallelujah!**  
**Mranatha (Come Lord)!**  
**Hosanna (Save now)!**  
**Amen (So be it)!"**

**All who lift it will be severely injured** - Those who seek to harm Israel will be harmed as described below. So Jerusalem is pictured as a heavy stone which the Gentiles attempt to "lift" (to destroy), but they will end up being crushed by that stone, for the Stone Himself will return and crush them (Da 2:34-35-[note](#), Da 2:44-45-[note](#)).

**Severely injured** is the Hebrew sarat which means to incise or scratch. While past history had resulted in the nation being uprooted by various conquerors, in this ferocious finale, the battle of the ages (more accurately "of this present age"), Jerusalem will prove to be too "heavy" to conquer, "so "heavy" with God's glory and so rooted in his promises that no nation will be able to move them." (NET)

**MacArthur** adds that this metaphor is saying that "anybody that tries to lift it is going to get a hernia....Notice the phrase "cut in pieces?" (IN KJV)...Literally it says "shall grievously injure themselves." And the simple meaning in the Hebrew is to rupture, to tear's oneself, an injury perhaps sustained from lifting something too heavy." (To herniate means to project through a rupture or tear in the wall of a body cavity.") ([Zechariah 12 - Israel's Final Deliverance](#))

There is a clear example of divine intervention and deliverance when Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem in 701 BC as recorded in Second Kings:

Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, "He will not come to this city or shoot an arrow there; and he will not come before it with a shield or throw up a siege ramp against it. 33 "By the way that he came, by the same he will return, and he shall not come to this city," declares the LORD. 34 "For I will defend this city to save it for My own sake and for My servant David's sake." 35 **Then it happened that night that the angel of the LORD went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men rose early in the morning, behold, all of them were dead.** 36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned home, and lived at Nineveh. (2 Kings 19:32-36)

**Duane Lindsey** explains how a **heavy stone** will result in **the peoples** being **severely injured** - The defeat of the [Armageddon armies](#) is thus likened to a man who drinks more than he can hold, or tries to move a weight heavier than he can lift. Those who attack Jerusalem will do so to their own ruin. (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

**Kaiser** comments "Some believe Psalm 118:5–6, 10–12 apply to the type of situation Judah will face in that day."

From my distress I called upon the LORD; The LORD answered me and set me in a large place. 6 The LORD is for me; I will not fear; What can man do to me? 10 All nations surrounded me; In the name of the LORD I will surely cut them off. 11 They surrounded me, yes, they surrounded me; In the name of the LORD I will surely cut them off. 12 They surrounded me like bees; They were extinguished as a fire of thorns; In the name of the LORD I will surely cut them off.

**Spurgeon** - When God comes to defend his own, then, however despised the people may be, however despised Israel may be, God will make it to be a cup of trembling to them. He will make it to be a burdensome stone which they cannot endure, and they will be glad to be rid of it. I remember a story in one of the legends of the old saints concerning a holy woman who was taken away from her place of retreat by the ungodly, with a view of forcing her into sin. The legend runs that as they carried her, she was quite unable to resist their power, but she became heavier and heavier, so that they could not carry her and were obliged to set her down and then she went back to where she was; and I believe that the legend pictorially sets forth what happens when a true child of God is carried captive by temptation and sin. Bye-and-bye, God comes and makes them to be a burdensome stone, and they are obliged to lay them down.

The **apostle John** describes the incredible carnage to **all the peoples** in Revelation 19:15-21-[note](#)

From His (THE MESSIAH, THE SAME ONE WHO POURS OUT THE SPIRIT OF GRACE AND SUPPLICATION ON ISRAEL) 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." 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 mid-heaven, "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.**

**And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it-** This confederacy represents a global ganging up of Gentiles against the tiny nation of Israel. **All the nations** is mentioned again in Zechariah 14:2-note which describes the same event. This global gathering against Israel will transpire in the last half (last 3.5 years) of [Daniel's Seventieth Week](#), also known as the [Great Tribulation](#), a tribulation which is triggered by the abominable event in Matthew 24:15-note. Other synonyms are Jeremiah's phrase the "**Time of Jacob's Distress**," (Jeremiah 30:7-note) and Daniel's phrase a "**Time of Great Distress**" (Daniel 12:1-note).

The prophet Joel describes what will transpire **in that day**, a fearful day writing

Blow a trumpet in Zion ([play](#)), And sound an alarm on My holy mountain ([TEMPLE MOUNT](#))! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, For the **Day of the Lord** is coming; Surely it is near, 2 **A day** of darkness and gloom, **A day** of clouds and thick darkness. As the dawn is spread over the mountains, So there is a great and mighty people (THE COMBINED FORCES OF THE ARMIES OF ALL THE WORLD); **There has never been anything like it**, Nor will there be again after it to the years of many generations. 3 A fire consumes before them and behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them but a desolate wilderness behind them, and nothing at all escapes them. 4 **Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; and like war horses, so they run.** 5 With a noise as of chariots they leap on the tops of the mountains, like the crackling of a flame of fire consuming the stubble, like a mighty people arranged for battle. 6 Before them the people are in anguish; all faces turn pale. 7 They run like mighty men, They climb the wall like soldiers; and they each march in line, Nor do they deviate from their paths. 8 They do not crowd each other, They march everyone in his path; When they burst through the defenses, They do not break ranks. 9 They rush on the city, They run on the wall; They climb into the houses, They enter through the windows like a thief. 10 Before them the earth quakes, The heavens tremble, The sun and the moon grow dark And the stars lose their brightness. 11 The LORD utters His voice before His army; Surely His camp is very great, For strong is he who carries out His word. The **Day of the Lord** is indeed great and very awesome, And who can endure it? (Joel 2:1-11-note)

**Henry Morris on heavy stone** - For many centuries, **Jerusalem** and its people have been "an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations" (Deuteronomy 28:37), "a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places" (Jeremiah 24:9). But "**in that day**," it will become "a burdensome stone" to all these peoples, and God will judge the nations in relation to their treatment of Israel. Many such nations have already been judged (ancient Assyria, imperial Rome, Czarist Russia, Nazi Germany). The kingdom of the Beast will have its turn as well." (Luther Works, Volume 20).

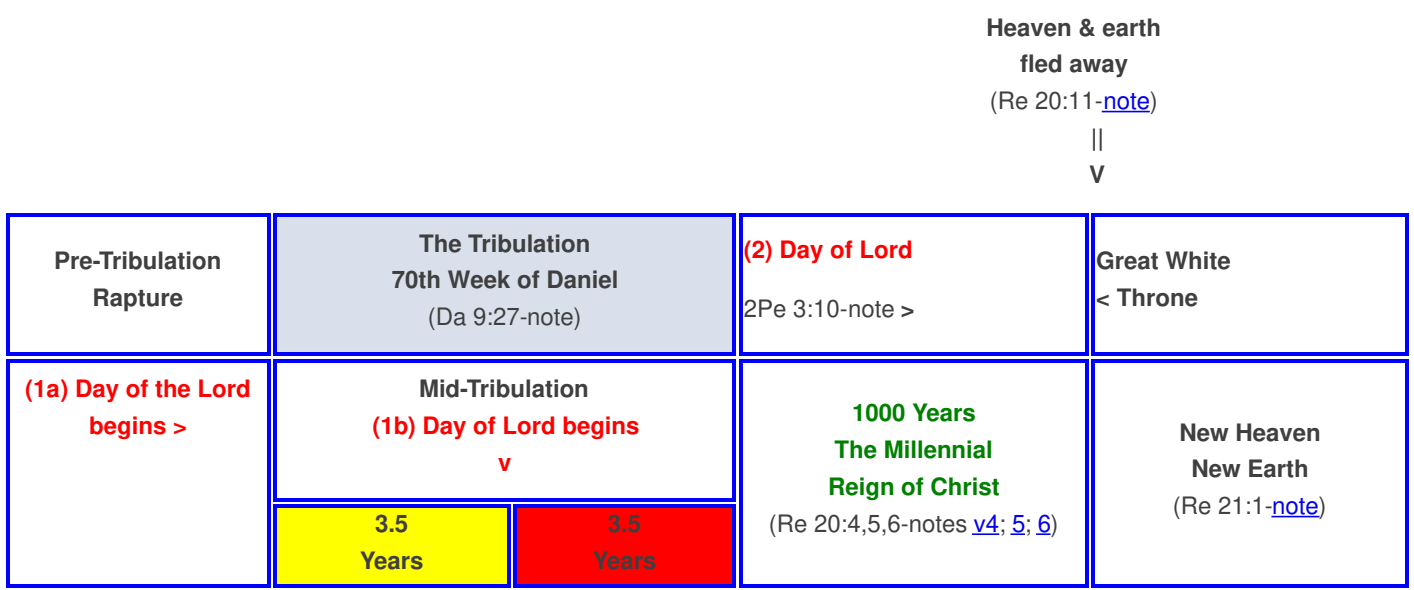
As mentioned earlier, one needs to be very cautious reading commentaries on predictive prophecy as the following comments by **Martin Luther** make plain (thankfully he gave up and did not even attempt to explain Zechariah 14!). Luther wrote that the **heavy stone** is "Another metaphor, which means the same thing. The apostles are to be a **heavy stone** or a rock of oppression for all nations; that is, Christianity shall not be crushed; but all who try to crush it shall themselves be crushed, some by grace, others by disfavor." Notice how Luther replaces Israel (to whom this is clearly addressed in Zech 12:1) with Christianity (aka, the church), taking this figure of speech [totally out of context](#)! Remember that even when a phrase is clearly a figure of speech, it still has a literal meaning (sometimes easy to discern from context, sometimes not so easy) and is never to be used as a license to let one's imagination run wild with non-contextually accurate interpretations of the text! It is also important to note that in his later years, Martin Luther became frustrated that the Jews would not receive the Gospel. As a result Luther wrote a few books against the Jewish people entitled Against the Sabbath Keepers, Against the Judaizers, and On the Jews and Their Lies. In the final work, Luther denounced them completely by advocating for "burning down synagogues in every town and forcing Jews to convert or die." (See [Martin Luther and Anti-Semitism](#)) Guess who picked up on this German icon's message? You guessed it, Adolph Hitler in [Mein Kampf](#), using Luther's vitriolic writings to support his satanically inspired "[Final Solution to the Jewish Question](#)". The message is clear when reading commentaries on Zechariah 12-14 (including the one you are reading now!) - **Be a Berean** (Acts 17:11-note).

**Perowne** has an interesting note on **heavy stone** (or "burdensome stone") suggesting Jerusalem will have this name in the end times "because, as it immediately follows, it proves too heavy for every one who attempts to lift it, and slipping from his grasp wounds and lacerates him. There may possibly be a reference to the custom, if indeed it existed so early as the time of Zechariah, which Jerome describes as prevailing in Palestine in his days. "It is the custom," he says, "in the cities of Palestine, and to the present day throughout all Judea the ancient practice is observed, that in villages, towns and forts round stones of very great weight are placed, at which the youth are wont to exercise themselves, and according to their differing strength to lift them, some to the

knees, others to the navel, others to the shoulders and head; some exhibiting the greatness of their strength, raise the weight above their head with both their hands straight up.” (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges)

**Fausset** says, "The Jews fell on the stone of offense, Messiah, and were broken; but the stone shall fall on Antichrist who 'burdens himself with it' and grind him to powder." Jerome who lived in Palestine said that it was a local custom to test the strength of young men by having them lift a **HEAVY STONE**. Those who would crush the **CITY OF GOD & GOD'S PEOPLE** will be crushed as was Sennacherib seige in 701BC. 2 Kings 19:35 Then it happened that night that the angel of the LORD went out, and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men rose early in the morning, behold, all of them were dead.

A TIMELINE OF  
THE DAY OF THE LORD



When does the  
Day of the Lord begin?

You will read descriptions in some commentaries that state the **Day of the Lord** follows the **rapture** of the church **(1a)** ("pre-tribulation rapture"- see discussion of when the rapture occurs) (1Th 4:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18-see notes 1Th 4:13; 14; 15; 16; 17; 18), the event which most evangelicals feel immediately precedes the last seven years of Seventy Weeks of Daniel, and is popularly known as the **Tribulation**, although nowhere in Scripture is this seventieth week of 7 years specifically designated "the Tribulation" (let me know if you find a passage that contradicts this conclusion - remember that "the Great Tribulation" only refers to the last three and one-half years of this seven year period). The alternative inception date is Mid-Tribulation **(1b)**.

First, we must understand the basic timing of this last "Seven Year Period" (Daniel's Seventieth Week) which can be divided into two 3.5 year segments, a conclusion based upon study of Da 9:27 (see notes).

**Daniel** records the following prophecy he received from the angel Gabriel in answer to fervent prayer...

And **he** (the Antichrist) will make a firm covenant with **the many** (the Jews/Israel) for **one week** (one seven year period), but in **the middle of the week** (after 3.5 years) he will **put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering** (in the rebuilt Jewish temple) and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate." (Da 9:27-note)

The Lord Jesus quoted from Daniel 9 as He explained the timing of the events immediately preceding His triumphant return because He wanted the Jews (and all mankind) living during the tumultuous time of Daniel's Seventieth Week to have an easily identifiable event that would indubitably signal the beginning of the the Great Tribulation which represents the final outpouring of God's wrath during the last 3.5 years of the Seventieth Week of Daniel...

Therefore when you see the **ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION** (referring to the Antichrist or some



desecrating action he makes) which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet (reference to Da 9:27-note, also in Daniel 11:31, 12:11), **standing in the holy place** (indicates the Jewish Temple will be rebuilt, cf Re 11:1, 2- see notes [Re 11:1](#); [11:2](#)) (let the reader understand)... there will be a **Great Tribulation**, (a specific 3.5 year period synonymous with the "Time of Jacob's Distress" in Jer 30:7-note, click other synonyms) such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall... but immediately after **the tribulation** (the Great 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, and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky (Sign = the Lord returning on the clouds), 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. 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." (Matthew 25:15-31)

Now keeping in mind the timing of this dramatic event described by Daniel and Jesus, read Paul's second letter to the saints at Thessalonica where he addresses the false teaching that the persecution the Thessalonians were now experiencing was part of the great tribulation. He references the same crucial historical event as Daniel and Jesus in order to assure these fearful saints...

"Now we request (plead, implore, beg of) you, brethren, with regard to the coming (parousia) of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him (Paul refers not to two events but one event - the rapture he had written about in 1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18-see notes 1Th 4:13; 14; 15; 16; 17; 18), that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure (literally "mind") or be disturbed (frightened) (false teaching about the Rapture and the Day of the Lord appears to have had a devastating impact on the Thessalonian saints) either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the **day of the Lord** has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy (a very specific presumably identifiable time of rebellion against God) comes first, and the **man of lawlessness** (the Antichrist) is **revealed** (apokalupto = literally has the veil removed exposing to open view what he had before hidden regarding his evil character. The aorist tense points to a definite time, a specific historical event), the son of destruction (apoleia = ruin not annihilation), who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he **takes his seat in the temple of God** (which Jesus referred to as "standing in the holy place"), displaying himself as being God." (2Th 2:1-3.4-[note](#))

When does Paul state that the **Day of the Lord** will begin? First, he says "the apostasy" will occur. Then he states when and where "the man of lawlessness" will be revealed. Specifically he states that the revelation of the Antichrist must precede the **Day of the LORD**. Although many favor the Day of the Lord beginning at point (1a) in the above diagram (after the pre-tribulation rapture), when one compare Scripture with Scripture, there is certainly support for considering the beginning for the **Day of the Lord** at the midpoint of the 7 Year period of Daniel (1b).

**Zechariah 12:4 "In that day," declares the LORD, "I will strike every horse with bewilderment and his rider with madness. But I will watch over the house of Judah, while I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness**

- **In that day:** Zec 12:3,6,8,9,11 Isa 24:21
- **I will smite:** Zec 10:5 14:15 De 28:28 2Ki 6:14,18 Ps 76:5-7 Eze 38:4 39:20
- **I will watch over :** Zec 9:8 1Ki 8:29 2Ch 6:20,40 7:15 Ne 1:6 Isa 37:17 Jer 24:6 Da 9:18 Ac 17:30

## **MESSIAH' SECOND COMING BRINGS JUDGMENT AND REDEMPTION**

**In that day," declares the LORD, "I will strike every horse with bewilderment and his rider with madness**- This description parallels and amplifies "Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling." **I will strike** is Messiah's prophetic promise to Israel that He will directly intervene with supernatural power in this final showdown with Israel's enemies in the future [Time of Jacob's Distress](#) (Jeremiah 30:7-[note](#)) .

**Charles Feinberg** notes that "Since cavalry always formed a large part in Eastern warfare, the enemy will be well supplied; but God will incapacitate them, turning this source of strength into a detriment and weapon of destruction. The horses of the enemy will be smitten with terror then with blindness (to lead their riders to their doom), and the horsemen will be struck with insanity. Such will be the confusion and tumult created by God in the midst of the enemy, while His eyes will be turned toward Jerusalem and her people with great favor and compassion. Little do the nations of earth realize how they incur the wrath of God against them when they



touch Israel for harm, let alone seek to wipe them completely from the face of the earth." ([The Minor Prophets](#))

**Spurgeon** - The chief strength of Jerusalem's enemies lay in horses and chariots; but God bids his people not to fear them, for he knows how to overcome all power, whether it be the power of cavalry or the power of infantry. He knows how to smite every horse with astonishment, and every rider with madness, for, "as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth even for ever," and he can protect them against the most powerful foes that may assail them.

**Every horse with bewilderment** - Have you ever ridden on a horse that was spooked? I have and was thrown off into a thorn patch! Bewildered horses are not good in battle! In the ancient world cavalry and horses were the most powerful and feared instruments of warfare, but here we see that Messiah neutralizes this aspect of the Gentiles' armed forces. "This intervention by God on behalf of His people is reminiscent of His action during (1) the Exodus; (2) conquest and settlement of Canaan; and (3) the fall of Mesopotamian capitals." (Utlely)

There is an interesting parallel between Zechariah 12:4 and Deut 28:28 in the curses of the Jews, for both of these passages have 3 rare words in common - **blindness** (ivvaron from avar = to make blind) and **bewilderment** (timmahon from tamah = to be astounded or dumbfounded), are only used twice in the OT and **madness** (shiggaon) is only used three times (2 Ki 9:20 being the third use). I am not sure what the significance of this unusual repetition of rare words is, but in each case, what was formerly given as a curse to Israel (in Dt 28:28) is here in Zechariah prophesied to be a curse to the Gentiles (or their horses).

**Bewilderment** includes a sense of fear...nothing worse than a spooked horse...he cannot be controlled and is virtually useless. This is followed by **blindness** and on the steep slopes of Jerusalem and Judah the horses undoubtedly will lead many riders to their death as they ride over cliffs and fall into the deep wadis.

One might ask if **horses** here refers to literal horses or is meant to symbolize modern warfare? The simple answer is one cannot be dogmatic, but is certainly possible Zechariah is referring to literal horses.

**The LORD** - This is Yahweh or Jehovah and specifically is the Messiah Who will strike Israel's enemies. The Septuagint translates Jehovah with the phrase "[kurios pantokrator](#)" which literally reads Lord Almighty.

[Pantokrator](#) is a significant Name for the Messiah as in the New Testament, and with one exception (2 Cor 6:18), it is restricted to the book of the Revelation, which fittingly describes Messiah's final and complete victory over His enemies and the enemies of Israel - Rev. 1:8; Rev. 4:8; Rev. 11:17; Rev. 15:3; Rev. 16:7; Rev. 16:14; Rev. 19:6; Rev. 19:15; Rev. 21:22. In Revelation 1:8-[note](#) we see the identity of the Pantokrator, for Jesus Himself declares "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty ([pantokrator](#))."

The verb **strike** is used twice in this passage and both times in the Septuagint is translated with the Greek verb **patasso**, which is the very verb used by John in His description of the returning victorious Messiah writing that "From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He **may strike** (potasso) 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** ([pantokrator](#)). (Rev 19:15-[note](#))

Tony Garland comments on **He may strike down the nations** - He should **strike** is pataxē : "Strike down, slay." "As inflicting a heavy or fatal blow." Nations is ethnē which can also be translated Gentiles. With one exception (Rev 11:2-[note](#)), the context in the book of Revelation indicates that the Jewish nation is included in this term. Those among Israel who reject Jesus as Messiah will be included among the slain at His Second Coming (Ezekiel 20:34-38). If Jesus literally and physically slays His enemies at His Second Coming (Rev. 19:21-[note](#)), how is it that the sword is figurative—coming out of His mouth? It represents the sword of the Spirit, the word of God: that which God has set forth as His spoken will (Eph. 6:17-[note](#)). Those who are slain meet their doom because they are judged by God's righteous word (Heb. 4:12-[note](#)). They have consistently violated its precepts and standards and their destruction has been prophesied. In many ways, the action of their slaying is the unavoidable result of what God has said. This is why Jesus slays His enemies with His lips: "He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked" (Isa. 11:4-[note](#)). His mouth is like a sharp sword (Isa. 49:2). Hence, when Antichrist is destroyed, he is consumed "with the breath of [the Lord's] mouth" (2 Th. 2:8). The ultimate reason they are slain is found in God's testimony—the law written in stone found in the ark of the covenant (Rev. 11:19-[note](#); Rev 15:5-[note](#)). The written law is His word, thus the weapon is said to come forth from His mouth. See Revelation 1:16-[note](#). They are actually slain twice by His word. First, the enemies of Christ are physically killed at His Second Coming (Rev. 19:21-[note](#)). This is the first death. Next, the enemies of Christ are judged by God's word before the Great White Throne and cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:12-[note](#)). This is the [second death](#).

**But** - What a glorious [term of contrast](#)! Consider the "**5P's**" - **P**ause to **P**onder the **P**assage then **P**actice it in the **P**ower of the Spirit.

This contrast is between utter destruction on the one hand for the Christ-rejecting Gentile nations (and tragically 1/3 of the Christ-rejecting Jews - Zech 13:8-9-note) and deliverance on the other hand for the repentant 2/3's [remnant](#) of Israel. O happy day!

**I will watch over the house of Judah, while I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness-** Messiah's return is divisive, bringing about the ultimate division between human beings who have yielded to and confessed Him as Lord and Savior (Ro 10:9-10) and those human beings who have repeatedly rejected His gift of salvation by grace through faith. While He opens His eyes toward Judah (and in fact spiritual opens the eyes of the remnant), He blinds the horses of those who reject Him. Clearly the striking of the horses blind would be a significant impediment to the peoples waging war.

**Charles Feinberg** adds that "In the same hour that God blinds the eyes of Israel's enemies [actually their horses], He will open His own upon the house of Judah in love and compassion to protect them." ([The Minor Prophets](#))

**Watch over** is [paqach](#) which means that Messiah will open His eyes upon the Jews! This is a Hebrew idiom for care and attentiveness. Solomon asks God "that Your eyes may be open toward this house night and day, toward the place of which You have said, 'My name shall be there,' to listen to the prayer which Your servant shall pray toward this place." (1 Ki 8:29; cf similar idea in 2 Chr 7:15; Neh. 1:6). God sees [Jacob's time of distress](#) in these last days and He will intervene with His perfect timing.

It is interesting to note that **paqach** is translated in the Septuagint with the verb [dianoigo](#) which is used for opening the heart of Lydia in Acts 16:14-note

A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord **opened** ([dianoigo](#)) her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

**Comment:** So in the same way that the Lord opened Lydia's heart (the "eyes of her heart"), so too Messiah whose eyes are open to Israel will one day open the eyes of the hearts of the Jews (cf Acts 26:18-note) so that they might have their spiritual blindness removed (see 2 Cor 3:14-16-note, cf 2 Cor 4:4-note) and be enabled to see that Jesus, the God-Man, is in truth their long awaited Messiah!

**Spurgeon** - It looked as if the Lord had been asleep, but now he says, "I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah," (Zech 12:4KJV)— I will look at them, and note their sufferings, pity their griefs, plan for their good, and come forth for their defense."

**Watch over** (KJV = "I will open Mine eyes," NET = "I will pay close attention") [06491](#)) ([paqach](#)) means to open especially in reference to one's eyes (either literal or figurative opening) and once to ears (Isa 42:20). The first use of paqach is figurative where the devil tempted Eve with the promise "your eyes will be opened" (Ge 3:5, 3:7). God figuratively (supernaturally) opened Hagar's eyes to see a well (Ge 21:19). God used Elisha to bring a dead lad back to life so that he literally opened his eyes (2 Ki 4:35). Elisha prayed for his servant's eyes to be figuratively (supernaturally) opened to see chariots of fire (2 Ki 6:17) and later he literally opened eyes of men blinded (2 Ki 6:20). Hezekiah prayed to God to open His eyes regarding his enemy (2 Ki 19:16, Isa 37:17). To open one's eyes is an idiom meaning to pay attention, to be watchful, to notice what is going on (2 Ki. 19:16; Dan. 9:18; Zech. 12:4); or to bring judgment on someone (Job 14:3).

In Daniel 9:18 the prophet asked God

O my God, incline Your ear and hear! **Open** (paqach) **Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your name;** for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion.

It is reasonable to consider that the words in Zechariah 12:4 (written in 520-518 B.C.) represent Jehovah's answer to that prayer offered some 15 years earlier by the godly prophet Daniel (written in about 537 B.C.).

**Zechariah 12:5 "Then the clans of Judah will say in their hearts, 'A strong support for us are the inhabitants of Jerusalem through the LORD of hosts, their God.'**

- **Then the clans of Judah will say in their hearts** Zec 12:6 Judges 5:9 Isa 1:10,23,26 29:10 32:1 60:17 Jer 30:21 33:26 Eze 45:8,9
- **the inhabitants of Jerusalem.** Zec 10:6,12 Ps 18:32,39 20:6,7 46:1 68:34,35 118:10-14 144:1 Isa 28:6 41:10-16 Joe 3:16 2Co 12:9,10

NET Then the leaders of Judah will say to themselves, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem are a means of strength to us through their God, the LORD who rules over all.'

**Then** - see [expression of time](#) - [then](#) - When? What has Zechariah just stated? That God will in effect "open His eyes on the house

of Judah." This marks the battle turning against the nations. As an aside Zechariah mentions Yahweh's eyes four times in his prophecy - Zech 3:9, Zech 4:10, Zech 9:8 and Zech 12:4. This reminds me of Pr 15:3 "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good."

**MacArthur** explains this verse - The governors of Judah outside and around are saying it is because of what God has promised to do for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that becomes our strength. God has chosen Jerusalem and because He has chosen Jerusalem and the nation around, the princes of Judah are confident that they too are invincible. Perhaps they'll sing Psalm 46:5 which says, "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved." ([Zechariah 12 - Israel's Final Deliverance](#))

**The clans** (chieftains, leaders) **of Judah will say in their hearts, 'A strong support for us are the inhabitants of Jerusalem through the LORD of hosts, their God.'** - Notice that at this time when the world's nations come against Israel, the leaders (clans) will recognize that the [LORD of the Armies](#) is on their side. God will so work in their hearts of the leaders that they will recognize clearly that it is not their own strength.

As **Feinberg** says "The will own their dependence upon the people of the land who in turn are strengthened by the LORD of hosts for the conflict. When the princes in Israel are so empowered (divinely so) the issue of the battle is certain." The figurative language in Zech 12:6 will underscore just how strengthened the army of Israel is.

Their "extremity" will be God's "opportunity!" He will show Himself great and mighty on Israel's behalf, even as prophesied by Isaiah **"In that day** the LORD will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, With His fierce and great and mighty sword, Even Leviathan the twisted serpent; And He will kill the dragon who lives in the sea....In the days to come (following the defeat of the armies of the world) Jacob will take root, Israel will blossom and sprout; and they will fill the whole world with fruit (see description in the [Millennium](#))." (Isaiah 27:1, 6)

Notice one other point -- the fact that Judah recognizes Jerusalem's strength is through the LORD of hosts. In effect they are recognizing that it is God Who is their ultimate strength. This suggests that some in Israel were beginning to move toward trust in Jehovah for their physical salvation, a trust which will soon be seen in their recognition of their need for spiritual salvation.

**MacArthur** says it this way "when the world arrives and all of a sudden they see themselves gaining the victory, they're going to know that the strength that they have seen is not the strength of men. And here is the first glimpse of the saving faith that comes to the hearts of Israel." ([Zechariah 12 - Israel's Final Deliverance](#))

**Clans** ([0441](#)) (**alluph** from **eleph** = 1000) means a chief, a chiliarch (leader of 1000) and is used "exclusively to describe a rank in the families or clans of Edom (Ge 36:15ff; Ex 15:15; 1 Chr. 1:51ff.). This usage probably also lies back of the Matthew reading in Matthew 2:6 where "princes" of Judah reflects a pointing 'allup in Micah 5:2" (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament) The Septuagint translates alluph in Zech 12:5 with the noun chiliarchos which described a commander of a thousand soldiers.

**Alluph** - 60x in 20v - chief(43), chiefs(14), clan(1), clans(2).

Gen. 36:15; Gen. 36:16; Gen. 36:17; Gen. 36:18; Gen. 36:19; Gen. 36:21; Gen. 36:29; Gen. 36:30; Gen. 36:40; Gen. 36:41; Gen. 36:42; Gen. 36:43; Exod. 15:15; 1 Chr. 1:51; 1 Chr. 1:52; 1 Chr. 1:53; 1 Chr. 1:54; Zech. 9:7; Zech. 12:5; Zech. 12:6

**Gilbrant** has a lengthy note on **alluph** -

This noun means "chief" or "chieftain," in the sense of the head of a clan. Most linguists suspect a different root for this noun than its sound alike of HED 443, associated with "thousand." Whatever the etymology, it is clear that this noun has a specialized and limited range. Of its 69 occurrences, 42 are in Gen. 36. Thirteen more are in 1 Chronicles 1. It occurs once in Exo. 15:15. The remaining three appearances are in Zech. 9:7 and 12:5f. In the Genesis, 1 Chronicles, and Exodus passages, the word refers exclusively to the clans descended from Esau, Issac and Leah's son and founder of Edom (the name Jacob gave him). The first two passages are lengthy genealogies. The Zechariah passages use this word to describe the clans of Judah. However, the word is altered slightly. Whether this altering is intentional or not, it is consistent, just as the spelling is consistent for the clans of Edom. Certainly, it is the similarity of the forms which is striking. Anthropologists have long recognized that genealogies serve a variety of functions. Their preservation and reproduction are intentional. Genesis 36 is presented for a purpose. One cannot escape the close relationship between the offspring of Esau and Jacob. The divine blessing of Israel was intended for Esau, but usurped by the younger brother (Genesis 27). Despite this, the relationship of the two is poignantly captured in Genesis 33, as Jacob returns to his homeland, and to his brother's welcoming arms. This family history is played out on the political history stage as well. The Israelites understood their local foreign relations in kinship terms, as a national mimicking of their family history. Thus, the relationship between Israel/Judah and Edom is understood

by the former as being extremely close, as the two are bound by more than geographical proximity. Indeed, the relationship between the nations is characterized as brotherhood (Deut. 2:4; Mal. 1:2). It is not shocking that there should be a word used exclusively to describe the kinship system in place in these two political entities. The term does not appear to be a technical one to differentiate between either political or kinship systems. Perhaps the slight variance of the term in Zephaniah, used of Judean clans properly describes the understanding of the relationship between these political entities. They are unique, being independent rather than identical.

**A strong support for us** ("The inhabitants of Jerusalem are a means of strength to us through their God," or "The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in Jehovah of hosts their God") - The Jewish leaders will recognize in their hearts that they have strong support supplied by those who are living in Jerusalem, who are themselves strong in or "through the [LORD of hosts](#), their God." (Reminds me of Paul's charge "Be strong **IN** the Lord" - Eph 6:10-[note](#)). The Septuagint translates "[LORD of hosts](#)" with the phrase "**en** (IN) [kurio pantokratori](#)" which reads "in the Lord Almighty." He is **mighty to save** (see Isaiah 63:1-note) and He supplies the strength for the battle! Are you trying to fight in your own strength? Stop! You will be frustrated and fail! Rely wholly on the Holy Spirit's dunamis/power (cf Acts 1:8-[note](#)).

**Feinberg** - "Contrast the unity of the nation with the confused and disrupted condition of their enemies (Zech 12:4)."

**Strong support** ([0556](#))('amtsah from amets = to to be stout, strong, bold, alert) is used only here in the OT.

**Jeremiah** echoes the words of Isaiah

'Ah Lord GOD! Behold, Thou hast made the heavens and the earth by Thy great power and by Thine outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for Thee, Who showest lovingkindness to thousands, but repayest the iniquity of fathers into the bosom of their children after them, O great and mighty God. [The LORD of hosts is His name](#); great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, giving to everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds. (Jeremiah 32:17-19-note)

In the next chapter Jehovah Himself gives an invitation to Israel (and to all who are in Christ) to...

'Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you **great and mighty things**, which you do not know.' (Jeremiah 33:3-note)

**Comment:** "**The Book of Consolation**". Recall that the preceding 29 chapters have brought a primarily negative message, but this chapter is like a breath of fresh air, this pleasant prophecy proceeding from Jeremiah 30 through Jeremiah 33 with [Jeremiah 30:3](#) serving essentially as a "summary" of this message of consolation. "A new day is about to dawn, and these chapters are filled with hope." (Michael Brown) E. W. Hengstenberg identifies Jeremiah 30-33 as "the grand hymn of Israel's deliverance." Below are in depth verse by verse commentaries that chronicle this incredible "**Book of Consolation**":

- [Jeremiah 30 Commentary](#)
- [Jeremiah 31 Commentary](#)
- [Jeremiah 32 Commentary](#)
- [Jeremiah 33 Commentary](#)

Rejoice in the truth that [Mighty is Our God \(play and sing along\)](#)!

Mighty is our God  
Mighty is our King  
Mighty is our Lord  
Ruler of everything

Glory is our God  
Glory is our King  
Glory is our Lord  
Ruler of everything

His Name is higher  
Higher Than any other name  
His power is greater  
For He has created everything

**Feinberg** explains it this way - God brings about victory in a twofold way: first, He overpowers and deprives the enemies of their strength, and then He empowers and fortifies His people to resist and conquer their foes. The prophet makes it plain that the victory will be supernatural. The Lord will work in the hearts of the leaders of His people, so that they will realize and acknowledge that the support given them from the inhabitants of the land is effective only because the Lord is sustaining and supporting His people. They will not assume that they are responsible for the success of their resistance of the vicious attack of the nations against them. The miraculous intervention of God on their behalf will convince the leaders of God's power exerted for their sake. ([The Minor Prophets](#))

**LORD of hosts** - see [Jehovah Sabaoth](#), the Name of God we find used in Scripture when some one (in this case one nation) is at "the end of their rope" so to speak -- Jehovah Sabaoth is the Strong Tower (Proverbs 18:10-[note](#)) which God has made available for those times when we are powerless, when our resources are inadequate, when there is no other help, even when the end seems near as was the case with the city of Jerusalem, completely surrounded by the blood thirsty armies of the entire world! Surely the situation in that day will look humanly hopeless! But it is especially during those times that one comes to appreciate that God is truly the LORD of the Armies and of all host of Heaven. In short, Jehovah Sabaoth speaks of God's available power in the time of trouble, in this case the [Time of Jacob's trouble](#).

**Zechariah 12:6** "[In that day](#) I will make the clans of Judah like a firepot among pieces of wood and a flaming torch among sheaves, so they will consume on the right hand and on the left all the surrounding peoples, while the inhabitants of Jerusalem again dwell on their own sites in Jerusalem.

- **like a firepot among pieces of wood:** Isa 10:16,17 Ob 1:18 Rev 20:9
- **so they will consume:** Zec 9:15 Ps 149:6-9 Isa 41:15,16 Da 2:34,35,44,45 Mic 4:13 5:5-8 Rev 19:19,20
- **on the right hand and on the left:** Isa 9:20 54:3 2Co 6:7
- **the inhabitants of Jerusalem again dwell on their own sites in Jerusalem** Zec 1:16 2:4,12 8:3-5 14:10,11 Ne 11:1-36 Jer 30:18 31:38-40 Eze 48:30-35

### **GOD'S POWER FOR JUDAH WHO IS OUTSIDE THE CITY**

**In that day** - The day when Jerusalem is besieged. The day when the [campaign of Armageddon](#) comes to a head so to speak.

**Spurgeon** - The literal prophecy is that the seed of Israel shall go back to their own land and shall prevail over their adversaries.

**NET Note - On that day** (referring to the [day of the LORD](#)) the Davidic monarchy will be restored and the LORD's people will recognize once more the legitimacy and divine sanction of David's dynasty. But there will also be a democratizing that will not give Jerusalem and its rulers undue priority over the people of the countryside (Zech 12:7).

Recall that Zechariah 12-14 is a unit, basically a "single" prophecy with subparts ("sub-prophecies" if you will) and we should not be surprised to encounter additional descriptions of this same battle/invasion by the nations (NB: not additional invasions) in Zech 13:8-9 (where 2/3's of the Jews will die before the Lord intervenes) and Zech 14:1-6.

**I will make the clans** (chieftains, leaders) **of Judah like a firepot among pieces of wood and a flaming torch among sheaves** I will make signifies that this will occur only at God's initiation and with the provision of His supernatural power (cf Zech 4:6, in NT see 2 Cor 3:5-6-[note](#)). Notice how often in Scripture we see the juxtaposition of divine sovereign will (providing desire and power) intimately and to me mysteriously integrated with human will and responsibility (cf this pattern of divine/human in Ps 127:1 and in NT the classic verses Php 2:12-[note](#) and Php 2:13NLT-[note](#)).

**Wikipedia** explains a [firepot](#) - Given the time-consuming nature of early firestarting, humans eventually began to use earthenware vessels, or fire pots, in which slow-burning fires could be kept alight indefinitely by using small quantities of fuel. Nomadic people could carry these small fires with them, using them to start larger fires for their evening camps.

Judah will be made by God to supernaturally be like one of these firepots and in effect "burn" the armies of the nations. And the picture of a flame immediately igniting a sheaf of grain and what does fire do but devour what is placed in it. That is what Judah will do to the Gentile armies.

**Kaiser** picks up on the metaphor commenting "With the sudden realization that Yahweh is their God, Judah will turn on her enemy like a fire igniting dry tinder or ripe sheaves (v. 6). Judah will be "like a firepan in the woodpile" (v6a)." (Ibid)

**Like a firepot...and a flaming torch** - The Spirit moves Zechariah (2 Peter 1:21-[note](#)) to record two [similes](#) which help paint the



picture of the absolute certainty of Israel's final, full victory over the hostile Gentile nations. Notice again that clearly Israel is enabled by God ("I will make...") to have such a total victory. I am reminded of the rebirth of Israel in May 14, 1948, when the nations surrounding Israel prepared their forces on the borders (Syria and Lebanese armies on the north, Jordanian and Iraqi armies on the east and Egyptian armies on the south - watch this dramatic event in [Israel Birth of a Nation Documentary](#)), with far superior manpower and equipment. There the enemies waited, encircling the tiny nation of Israel, which was poorly equipped for defense. They waited for Israel to proclaim her statehood, certain that they would utterly defeat Israel on **that day**. Well, the rest of the story is history as they say. The Arabs were soundly defeated and repulsed by the Israelis, and without a doubt in my mind I believe there was divine intervention in that battle against all odds!

Notice that both figures of speech relate to fire that wreaks the devastation inflicted by Israel on the Gentile armies. The devouring power of fire is well known especially among sheaves. We see this "fire power" in the story of Samson in Judges 15:1-5-note and with Absalom in 2 Sa 14:28-30+.

**Firepot** ([03595](#))(**kiyyor** from **kur** = smelter's furnace for the refining of metal, figuratively in Dt 4:20, 1 Ki 8:51, Jer 11:4 ~"affliction") is a pot or basin and is used most often in the OT to describe "the laver of bronze to be placed between the Tent of Meeting and the altar." Each laver of Solomon's Temple contained about 300 gallons so they were relatively large. In 2 Chronicles 6:13, it refers to a platform on which King Solomon stood and knelt in order to pray. The Septuagint translates **kiyyor** in Zech 12:6 with the noun **dalos** which is a [firebrand](#), a piece of blazing wood and in some uses even signified a thunderbolt!

**Gilbrant** - A loanword from Akkadian, this noun in turn is a loanword from Uartian. It also appears in Middle Hebrew and Jewish Aramaic. It denotes a type of "pot" or "basin" in Biblical Hebrew, although only the latter nuance is attested in other languages. **Kîyôr** refers to a "cooking pot" in a single biblical context (1 Sa 2:14). It occurs in the narrative of the abuses by the sons of Eli in regard to their roles as priests. They would have a servant take offerings for the priests from each boiling vessel by shoving a fork into the meat, quite apart from ritual demands. It may well be that the inclusion of a basin as a cooking vessel in this passage may underscore the lack of regard which the sons had for the sacred implements. They may have taken a vessel consecrated as a basin and turned it into (in essence) a common cooking pot. It may be that the Biblical Hebrew meaning for **kîyôr** is consistent with its usage elsewhere. The noun is used to denote sacred basins, used ritually (Lev. 8:11). These basins could be movable (1 Kings 7:30). In one context, Solomon builds a bronze **kîyôr**, from which he addresses the people and Yahweh during the dedication ceremony of the Temple. It may simply have been an unfilled basin, providing an elevated platform from which to speak. (Ibid)

**Kiyyor** - 23x in 20v - basin(6), basins(5), firepot(1), laver(9), pan(1), platform(1).Exod. 30:18; Exod. 30:28; Exod. 31:9; Exod. 35:16; Exod. 38:8; Exod. 39:39; Exod. 40:7; Exod. 40:11; Exod. 40:30; Lev. 8:11; 1 Sam. 2:14; 1 Ki. 7:30; 1 Ki. 7:38; 1 Ki. 7:40; 1 Ki. 7:43; 2 Ki. 16:17; 2 Chr. 4:6; 2 Chr. 4:14; 2 Chr. 6:13; Zech. 12:6

**Feinberg** explains that "The chieftains of Judah are likened to a pan of fire among wood or a burning torch among sheaves of grain. They will consume the enemy on every side. The figures convey the thoughts of the ease and completeness of their victory, as well as their irresistible might under God. The result for God's people will be that the inhabitants of Jerusalem will be enabled to dwell again in safety in their own city of Jerusalem."

**So** - This gives the logical conclusion of the figure of **the clans of Judah** likened to fire which destroys. They will consume the enemy thoroughly.

**They will consume on the right hand and on the left all the surrounding peoples**- Like fire consumes, Judah will bring about complete devastation of **all the surrounding peoples**. The Gentile armies laying siege and surrounding Jerusalem will be obliterated, even as fire destroys what it touches.

**While the inhabitants of Jerusalem again dwell on their own sites in Jerusalem**- The tide of the battle has shifted and the city can again be indwelt by the Jews. The city will remain intact and will not be moved. **MacArthur** says "Literally it says Jerusalem shall sit undisturbed, secure, shielded by God." ([Zechariah 12 - Israel's Final Deliverance](#))

So first God incapacitates those who have laid siege against Jerusalem and Judah ("I will strike every horse..." Zech 12:4) and then He empowers the house of Judah, demonstrating once again that 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says [the LORD of hosts](#)." (Zechariah 4:6).

**Zechariah 12:7 "The LORD also will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem will not be magnified above Judah.**



- **The LORD also will save the tents of Judah first** Zec 4:6 11:11 Isa 2:11-17 23:9 Jer 9:23,24 Mt 11:25,26 Lu 1:51-53 Lu 10:21 Joh 7:47-49 Ro 3:27 1Co 1:26-31 2Co 4:7-12 Jas 2:5 Jas 4:6
- **will not be magnified above Judah:** Job 19:5 Ps 35:26 38:16 55:12

While the previous passage would suggest the outcome of the battle was dependent on Israel and her leaders, this passage shows that it is Jehovah Who gives deliverance.

**The LORD also will save the tents of Judah first**- The tents of Judah would contrast with the fortified city of Jerusalem. These outlying tents would be more exposed to attack from the armies of the world and thus more helpless. God gives priority to the weak and defenseless, so that human glorying can have no basis. The human heart ever seeks self-glory, but God will wipe it out in this triumph. The salvation depicted here is deliverance physically from their enemies. If Jerusalem won the victory first, they would claim it was by their power. But the very fact that the feeble ones of Judah were able to devour the Gentile armies, means that Jerusalem cannot boast. They will recognize the hand of God behind their victory. God first defends the defenseless and then He defends Jerusalem. In essence this pattern of Judah first will serve as a humbling lesson to those in Jerusalem.

**Feinberg on Judah first** - God will work so that human pride will not be indulged. Compare 1 Cor 1:29, 31, 2 Cor 10:17. The Lord will deliver the defenseless country before the fortified and well-defended capital, so that both may realize that the victory is of the Lord.

**Arnold Fruchtenbaum** has an interesting analysis of the salvation of **the tents of Judah first** writing that "By using the expression the tents of Judah, Zechariah is pointing out that Judah will no longer be living in permanent abodes; rather, they will be living in temporary abodes outside the Land. According to Micah 2:12–13-commentary, the location of the majority of the Jewish Remnant will be Bozrah or Petra. According to this verse, the order in which God intends to rescue the Jerusalem Jews is: first, He will deliver the Jewish Remnant in Bozrah; then, He will rescue the Jews in Jerusalem (Refer to Point #4 and Point #8 on [Fruchtenbaum's proposed sequence of the Campaign of Armageddon](#)). This is the reason the prophet has made a distinction between the Jews of Jerusalem and the Jews of Judah. Furthermore, the reason God will save the tents of Judah first is so two other groups would not be magnified above Judah: the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The fact that the Messiah will come to save the Jewish Remnant in Bozrah is also brought out in Micah 2:13; Habakkuk 3:3; Isaiah 34:1–7; and 63:1–6-note. (The Messianic Bible Study Collection - Logos)

**Spurgeon** - God will begin by saving the most defenseless. The tents of the people were easily swept away by their powerful foes. "Therefore," says the prophet, "the Lord shall save the tents of Judah first." As for the people in the strongly defended city of Jerusalem he would protect them, but he would do it in such a way that they should not take the glory to themselves. God is always very jealous of his own honour. He will save us, but it will be in a way that shall prevent our pride from glorying in it. He will never allow one saved soul to be able to say, "I saved myself," or "I contributed to the merit which has brought me to heaven." No; God must have all the glory, — every jot and tittle of it; and all his people are glad that he should have it.

**Saves** (delivers) (03467)(**yasha'**) (See also **yeshua** from which we get our word "Jesus") is means to help, to save, to deliver, to move from distress to safety. The one who brings deliverance is known as the "savior." The root in Arabic is "make wide" which underscores the main thought of yasha' as to bring to a place of safety or broad pasture in contrast to a narrow strait which symbolizes distress or danger.

The **Septuagint** translates **yasha'** with the verb **sozo** which means to save, deliver, rescue, restore to wholeness.

**Yasha'** is the same verb used to describe Jehovah's deliverance of Israel from Egypt - "Thus the LORD **saved** Israel **that day** from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore." (Ex 14:30) Similarly here in Zechariah 12-14 we see that once again Jehovah saves Israel from the Gentile forces that sought a complete and final holocaust of the Jews!

The prophet Zephaniah used yasha' in the prediction of Israel's deliverance in the end times God Himself promising

"Behold, I am going to deal **at that time** (same time described here in Zechariah 12-14!) with **ALL** your oppressors, I will save (**yasha'**) the lame And gather the outcast, And I will turn their shame into praise and renown In all the earth (In the Millennial Reign of Messiah). (Zephaniah 3:19-note).

Zechariah uses yasha' 6 times Zech. 8:7; Zech. 8:13; Zech. 9:9; Zech. 9:16; Zech. 10:6; Zech. 12:7 and five refer to the future day when Israel will be delivered from the age long Gentile oppression and a remnant of the nation will be saved.

Zechariah 8:7 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Behold, **I am going to save My people** from the land of the east and from the land of the west;

**MacArthur comments** - The context assures that this return speaks of a worldwide regathering at the Second Advent of Christ. The return from Babylon cannot be in view also, since Israel had not been

scattered to the W until the diaspora engineered by the Romans in the first century A.D.

Zechariah 8:13 'It will come about that just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so **I will save you** that you may become a blessing. Do not fear; let your hands be strong.'

**Comment:** This speaks of the salvation described in Zechariah 12-14.

Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you (Messiah); He is just and **endowed with salvation**, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. 10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; And the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; And His dominion will be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.

**Comment:** Verse 9 refers to Messiah' first coming.

**NET Note** - The NT understands this verse to be a prophecy of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and properly so (cf. Matt 21:5; John 12:15), but reference to the universal rule of the king in v. 10 reveals that this is a "split prophecy," that is, it has a two-stage fulfillment. Verse 9 was fulfilled in Jesus' earthly ministry but v. 10 awaits a millennial consummation (cf. Rev 19:11-16).

Zechariah 9:16 And the LORD their God **will save** them in that day As the flock of His people; For they are as the stones of a crown, Sparkling in His land.

**Comment:** This is the final salvation of Israel described in Zechariah 12-14. Note repetition of the critical time phrase in that day and in context is when Messiah returns as the victorious King of kings.

Zechariah 10:6 "I will strengthen the house of Judah, And **I will save** the house of Joseph, And I will bring them back, Because I have had compassion on them; And they will be as though I had not rejected them, For I am the LORD their God and I will answer them.

**MacArthur** - Both the southern and northern kingdoms of Israel will be restored to a position of blessing, as the whole nation is restored in millennial blessing (cf. Jer 32:37).

**Cole** - God promises to "deliver the defenseless country ["tents of Judah"] before the fortified and well-defended capital, so that both may realize that the victory is of the Lord" (Charles Feinberg, God Remembers [American Board of Mission to the Jews], p. 225). Merrill Unger observes, "The Lord will manifest Himself in such deliverance as will honor faith, unite His people, and cause them mutually to make their boast wholly in the Lord, instead of partially in themselves" (Zechariah: Prophet of Messiah's Glory [Zondervan], p. 212, italics his). God promises further that the weakest of the inhabitants of Jerusalem will be like David and the leaders ("the house of David") will be like God, further described as like the angel of the Lord going before them.

**So that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem will not be magnified above Judah-** The Septuagint translates "**glory**" (tipharah) with [kauchema](#) which describes a boast or something to be proud of, suggesting that there would be a minimization of the natural tendency of the lineage of David (the dynastic line or "royal line" as in the NLT) to boast in their choice as the tribe from which Messiah originated. Similarly this would suppress the tendency of the inhabitants of Jerusalem to boast that they were the city of the King and His throne.

**Zechariah 12:8 "In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the LORD before them.**

- **In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem** Zec 2:5 9:8,15,16 Joe 3:16,17
- **the one who:** Isa 30:26 Jer 30:19-22 Eze 34:23,24 Joe 3:10 Mic 5:8 7:16 Heb 11:34
- **feeble among them:** Isa 49:7 53:3 Jer 27:10 Mic 7:8
- **the house of David will be like God:** Ps 2:6,7 45:6,7 110:1,2 Isa 7:13,14 9:6,7 Jer 23:5,6 33:15,16 Eze 37:24-26 Ho 1:7 3:5 Mic 5:2-4 Mt 1:23 Joh 17:21-23 Ro 1:3,4 9:5 1Ti 3:16 Rev 22:13,16
- **like the angel of the LORD before them:** Zec 3:1,2 Ge 22:15-17 48:15,16 Ex 23:20,21 Jos 5:13,14 2Sa 14:17-20 Isa 63:9 Ho 12:3 Mal 3:1 Ac 7:30-35

## **DIVINE DEFENSE AND POWER**

**In that day** - The day when the Lord intervenes directly in world history to rescue His Chosen People from the Anti-Semitic Gentile

nations. As discussed above, this day is generically the Day of the LORD, and in this context specifically is describing the last part of the [last 3.5 years](#) of the [Time of Jacob's Distress](#), when the nations of the world initiate their [campaign of Armageddon](#) in an attempt to obliterate Israel from the map. Speaking of maps, [BMW and Mercedes-Benz published maps](#) without Israel. Perhaps these companies need to review their German history!

**The LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem** - Divine defense will be given to Israel in that day!

**Defend** (01598)(**ganan**) means to protect or defend and all uses have Jehovah as its subject and either Jerusalem or the remnant of Judah and Israel as the recipients of the protection. The root idea of this word is "to build a hedge around." Thus the derived idea is one of protection or defense. Its use in 2 Kings, Isaiah and Zechariah is exclusively of God defending the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In six of eight occurrences the term is used to describe God's protection of his people from the Assyrian invaders (2 Ki. 19:34; 20:6; Isa. 31:5; 37:35; 38:6). Four uses are found in the account of Hezekiah's healing from a fatal disease in two parallel accounts (2 Ki. 19:34; 20:6; Isa. 37:35; 38:6). In response to Hezekiah's prayer, Yahweh promises to extend Hezekiah's life and protect the city of Jerusalem for fifteen years from Assyrian conquest. Two other usages appear in the context of the same historical crisis, as Isaiah proclaims to the people that they do not need Egyptian aid to protect them against Assyria, because Yahweh will protect the city (Isa 31:5).

The Septuagint translates **ganan** with **huperaspizo** which literally means to hold a shield over hence protect, preserve, keep someone safe (James 1:27)

**Ganan** - 8x in 7v - defend (6), protect (2). -- ; 2 Ki. 20:6; Isa. 31:5; Isa. 37:35; Isa. 38:6; Zech. 9:15; Zech. 12:8

2 Ki. 19:34 'For I will **defend** this city to save it for My own sake and for My servant David's sake.'

2 Kings 20:6 "I will add fifteen years to your life, and I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will **defend** this city for My own sake and for My servant David's sake.'"

Isaiah 31:5 Like flying birds so the LORD of hosts will protect Jerusalem. He will protect and deliver it; He will pass over and rescue it.

Isaiah 37:35 'For I will **defend** this city to save it for My own sake and for My servant David's sake.'

Isaiah 38:6 "I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will **defend** this city.'

Zechariah 9:15 (v14 for context - Then the LORD will appear over them, And His arrow will go forth like lightning; And the Lord GOD will blow the trumpet, And will march in the storm winds of the south. ) **The LORD of hosts will defend them.** And they will devour and trample on the sling stones; And they will drink and be boisterous as with wine; And they will be filled like a sacrificial basin, Drenched like the corners of the altar.

David had given a prophetic promise that God would help Israel writing

God is in the midst of her (i.e., Jerusalem, God's chosen earthly residence cf. Ps 48:1, 2; Is 60:14 = Ps 46:4 "the city of God, the holy dwelling places of the Most High"), she will not be moved; **God will help her** (Zech 14:3-note) when morning dawns. 6 The **nations** made an uproar (a commotion among the Gentiles who are in distress), the kingdoms tottered (Heb = mot = will shake and fall)(This will be fulfilled when the Stone, Christ, crushes the statute, the kingdoms of this world - cf Da 2:34-35, 44-45-note.); He raised His voice, the earth melted. 7 The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah. (Ps 46:5-7)

**And the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David**- David was known as a strong warrior and in that day in the Campaign of Armageddon, the **feeble** would be supernaturally enabled. Recall the song Israel sang when David was victorious "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands." (1 Sa 18:7). These **feeble** ones would be supernaturally enabled to fight like Israel's great warrior David.

**Feeble** (03782)(**kashal**) means to stumble, stagger, totter, cause to stumble, to overthrow, to make weak. **Kashal** is used literally of individuals falling or figuratively of cities and nations falling (Isa 3:8; Hos 14:1). People can fall by the sword (Da 11:33); or because of evil (P. 24:16); wickedness (Ezek 33:12); and iniquity (Hos. 5:5).

**R Laird Harris** on **kashal** - The verb is usually used of physical falling, but numbers of times the figurative use of failing or ruin occurs (Psalm 64:8; 2 Chr 25:8). However, the root is rarely used in the sense of the NT skandalizō "cause one to fall into sin." The nearest to this is Malachi 2:8 where the priests by their teaching "have caused many to stumble" (NIV). In Jerh 18:15 it says the idols made the people "stumble in their ways," but here the figure is the frequent one of a path representing the path of life. Pr 4:16 says the wicked cannot sleep "till they make someone fall" (NIV) which probably, like Jeremiah, refers to stumbling in the path of life. It is perhaps from this figure that the idea of causing someone to stumble into sin arose in the NT and in the Syriac usage of this root. (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

The **Septuagint** translates **kashal** with the verb [astheneo](#) which means to be weak or powerless. That the Lord supernaturally enables these feeble, weak, powerless Jews is a good reminder of from where our strength to fight the good fight comes - the LORD God Almighty, even as Paul had to learn and did learn to lean on (Who are you leaning on? Self or Savior?)...

And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in **weakness**." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my **weaknesses**, so that the [power](#) of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore ([term of conclusion](#)) I am well content with **weaknesses**, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Cor 12:9-10-[note](#))

**Kashal** - 58v - bring you down(1), bring down(1), brought down(1), cast down(1), downfall(1), fail(1), failed(1), failing(1), fall(4), fall down(1), feeble(3), feeble\*(1), overthrown(1), stumble(26), stumble badly(1), stumbled(12), stumbles(2), tottering(1), weak(1).

Lev. 26:37; 1 Sam. 2:4; 2 Chr. 25:8; 2 Chr. 28:15; 2 Chr. 28:23; Neh. 4:10; Job 4:4; Ps. 9:3; Ps. 27:2; Ps. 31:10; Ps. 64:8; Ps. 105:37; Ps. 107:12; Ps. 109:24; Prov. 4:12; Prov. 4:16; Prov. 4:19; Prov. 24:16; Prov. 24:17; Isa. 3:8; Isa. 5:27; Isa. 8:15; Isa. 28:13; Isa. 31:3; Isa. 35:3; Isa. 40:30; Isa. 59:10; Isa. 59:14; Isa. 63:13; Jer. 6:15; Jer. 6:21; Jer. 8:12; Jer. 18:15; Jer. 18:23; Jer. 20:11; Jer. 31:9; Jer. 46:6; Jer. 46:12; Jer. 46:16; Jer. 50:32; Lam. 1:14; Lam. 5:13; Ezek. 33:12; Ezek. 36:15; Dan. 11:14; Dan. 11:19; Dan. 11:33; Dan. 11:34; Dan. 11:35; Dan. 11:41; Hos. 4:5; Hos. 5:5; Hos. 14:1; Hos. 14:9; Nah. 2:5; Nah. 3:3; Zech. 12:8; Mal. 2:8

**And the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the LORD before them** - God promises to be with them, go before them, and give them supernatural strength. It is good for us to be reminded of what David learned in the day of battle

This day the LORD will deliver you (GOLIATH) up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for **THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S** and He will give you into our hands." (1 Sa 17:46-47)

**NET Note on be like God** - The statement the dynasty of David will be like God is hyperbole to show the remarkable enhancements that will accompany the inauguration of the millennial age.

The [Angel of the LORD](#) is a reference to the pre-incarnate Jesus found 53x in the OT (see below). He went before Israel for 40 years in their wilderness wanderings. **Constable** writes that "The Davidic rulers would also receive supernatural strength and would be like God, as the angel of the Lord who would go before them (cf. Ex. 14:19; 23:20; 32:34; 33:2, 14-15, 22; 1 Sa 29:9; 2 Sa 4:17, 20; 19:27)."

What is Zechariah saying? If they are like the angel of Jehovah, then they are like Messiah which means in essence that they will be enabled by His power!

**MacArthur** - You say, "Will we get to see that?" I think so. If I read my Bible right we're coming out of heaven just about that time on white horses which will give us a perfect view of the whole thing. So the feeble are going to be like David and the people who normally are like David are going to be like God, infused with the energy of the Messiah Himself, the angel of the Lord. ([Zechariah 12 - Israel's Final Deliverance](#))

**Fruchtenbaum on be like God, like the angel of the LORD** - those who are like King David will be able to fight like the angel of Jehovah. The verse brings out that this is not a common, ordinary angel, but the Second Person of the Trinity, the Messiah Himself. **So the Davids among the Jews will be able to fight with the power of the Messiah Himself.** (Ibid)

**Spurgeon** - What a blessed thing it is when the Lord strengthens all his people, so that the weakest amongst them are as strong as that ruddy-faced youth who smote Goliath, and the strongest of them are like the swift-winged angels of God (ED: AS NOTED THIS IS NOT JUST ANY ANGEL BUT THE [Angel of the LORD](#)), ready to do his bidding!

**Zechariah 12:9** "And **in that day** I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

- **I will set about to destroy:** Zec 12:2 Isa 54:17 Hag 2:22

## **DIVINE DESTRUCTION OF ALL ISRAEL'S ENEMIES!**

This is divine payback to all the nations who sought to destroy Israel.

**And in that day I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem**- Here we have a summary of verses 1-8 but the question is **What day?** Some commentaries refer this to the time of the Maccabees, this that event does not even remotely fit the context. This is clearly the last days because **all the nations** have never in the history of the world **come against Jerusalem** and Israel as this passage literally describes. Dods almost gets it correct writing "We look in vain for any historical occurrences in which the letter of this prophecy has been fulfilled to Israel after the flesh, unless it be the Maccabean period."

**MacArthur** on **I will set about** (KJV = I will seek) - The term "**will seek**" is a term that is used of a marksman who bends his bow with his eye focused on the target. He wants to hit the bullseye and nothing distracts him. The cup of iniquity is full and God comes in judgment. Read Revelation 16:1-21 and Revelation 19:1-21 and see how God begins to come in judgment, how Jesus splits the heavens with His coming, comes in glory and power with a flaming victory at hand with a sword dipped in blood and He comes to conquer. In summary, the first nine verses of the twelfth chapter describe prophetically Israel's great deliverance and the destruction of the armies of the world gathered against her. That's political salvation which prepares us for the next part which is spiritual salvation....In the political victory, what's the one thing that stands out? In my mind it is that they are going to recognize God at work. That's the beginning and makes an easy transition to Zechariah 12:10. ([Zechariah 12 - Israel's Final Deliverance](#))

**Feinberg** correctly states "we place the entire passage in the time of the Great Tribulation and more specifically in the War of Armageddon, when the nations of the earth will make their last frantic effort to blot Israel out of existence, only to be met by crushing defeat at the hands of the LORD of hosts Himself." (from God Remembers: A Study of Zechariah)

Indeed this passages summarizes the ultimate fulfillment of God's promise to Abram in Genesis 12:3 where He declared "And I will bless those who bless you, And **the one who curses you I will curse**. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." History has shown it is not a good thing to curse Israel, but it will be obvious that the nations of the world are either ignorant of the facts or disbelieve God's promise.

Fruchtenbaum - The order in which this judgment takes place is that God will first rescue the Jews in Bozrah or Petra, destroying many of the armies there; this is the sixth stage of the Campaign of Armageddon (see [stage 6 above](#)). Secondly, He will then rescue the Jews of Jerusalem; this is the seventh stage of the Campaign of Armageddon (see [stage 7 above](#)). As a result, He will destroy the final portions of the armies just outside Jerusalem in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. This destruction of all the nations that come against Jerusalem will comprise the sixth and seventh stages of the Campaign of Armageddon.

**Stephen Ger** - In order to reach Jerusalem, the nations will also have to assault the surrounding territory, Judah. The Lord will supernaturally energize the defenders of Judah, beginning with the outlying Judean settlements, and Jerusalem, enabling them to defeat their enemies. The people's natural capabilities will be supernaturally heightened as they are energized by the Lord to do battle (Zech 12:5-9). For one final time, the devastating fruit of the Abrahamic promise of divine retribution toward the enemies of the Jewish people (Gen. 12:3) will be harvested. ([Zechariah: Minor Prophet With A Major Message - Conservative Theological Journal 03:8 Apr 1999](#))

**Destroy** (demolish, exterminate) ([08045](#))(**shamad**) is a verb meaning "be destroyed, decimated, perished, overthrown, exterminated, i.e., pertaining to being in a totally ruined state, which can include death of a person or extinction of an entity." (Swanson) The destruction depicted by **shamad** usually involves a rather sudden catastrophe such as warfare or a mass killing.

The **Septuagint** translates **shamad** with the verb **exairo** which means to remove or drive away. This meaning reminds me of the words of Daniel's prophecy (**the wind carried them away**) in the description of what will happen to the Statue (representative of the nations of the world) when it is struck by the Stone (Messiah at His Second Coming)...

You (King Nebuchadnezzar) continued looking until a **Stone** was cut out without hands, and **it** struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and **crushed** them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were **crushed all at the same time and became like chaff** from the summer threshing floors; and **the wind carried them away** so that **not a trace of them was found**. But the **Stone** that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth (Messiah's [Millennial Kingdom](#)) (Da 2:34-35-[note](#))

**Cole** writes that in this verse "when the Lord says [literally] that He "will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem," it is not as if there is any doubt about the outcome! Zech 12:1 shows us God's omnipotent ability to do whatever He purposes to do. Rather, it is using human language in the sense of focusing full attention on the matter, so as to say, "When God sets His mind on doing it, it's a done deal!" (See Unger, p. 213.) God's reason for delivering His Chosen People **physically** (Zech 12:2, 9) is so that later He can save them **spiritually** (Zech 12:10-14), and all of this is for His glory. Many of God's people can testify that God saved their lives from physical death years before He later saved their souls from spiritual death. John Newton, the wicked slave trader, who was saved to become a pastor and hymn writer ("Amazing Grace"), more than once narrowly escaped death before his conversion. Once he fell overboard when he was drunk and was harpooned to get him back on deck, but he survived! If God has spared your life, but you have not yet come to Christ, He wants you to turn in faith to Him today! There is another lesson here: The



safest place for any of God's people is in the center of His will and purpose. When Zechariah wrote, many Jews were still in Babylon. Perhaps they thought, "It's just not safe to move back to Jerusalem. There is no army there and no wall around the city. The place is surrounded by hostile neighbors. I'll just stay here in Babylon." But Zechariah is showing them that even if all the hostile nations in the world are lined up against Jerusalem, it is the safest place in the world to be, because Almighty God has promised to destroy the nations that come against Jerusalem. This doesn't mean that we should throw caution to the wind, or that there are not times when God's servants should flee for their lives. But it does mean that God watches over His people (Zech 12:4), and that no one can touch them unless it fits with God's purpose. All the armies on earth can line up against God's people, but they will not thwart God's mighty purpose to save His people for His glory.

**Henry Morris** writes that **"In that day"** generally is synonymous with **"the day of the LORD."** Certainly in this context, it points forward to the great end-time invasion of Israel by the multi-national armies of the Beast (Isaiah 63:1-6; 3:2,9-12; Micah 5:5-15; Matthew 24:15-21; Revelation 12:13-15; 13:7; 16:13-16; 19:19).

**Thomas Constable** - "An [amillennial](#) explanation of the passage (Zech 12:9) follows.

Leupold writes "it covers all time from that in which the prophet spoke to the end of days. What is said concerning Judah applies to the people of God of all times. The claims made for Jerusalem's future find their ultimate fulfillment in **the true Zion of God—His church**; in fact, they can be applied to Jerusalem only insofar as she for a time harbored the church of God (ED: WOW! THE EXTENT TO WHICH ONE WILL GO WHEN THEY ARE NOT WILLING TO ACCEPT THE TRUTH THAT GOD IS NOT FINISHED WITH THE LITERAL NATION OF ISRAEL!). The whole passage speaks of God's sovereign care and protection of **the church** of the Old and the New Testaments through the ages and more particularly of the church's victory rather than the victory of Judah after the flesh."

**Zechariah 12:10** "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on **Me Whom** they have pierced; and they will mourn for **Him**, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over **Him** like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.

- **I will pour out on the house of David** Pr 1:23 Isa 32:15 44:3,4 59:19-21 Eze 39:29 Joe 2:28,29 Ac 2:17,33 10:45 11:15 Tit 3:5,6
- **the house of David:** Zec 12:7
- **the Spirit of grace:** Ps 51:12
- **and of supplication:** Jer 31:9 50:4 Ro 8:15,26 Eph 6:18 Jude 1:20
- **so that they will look on Me Whom they have pierced:** Ps 22:16,17 John 1:29 John 19:34-37 Heb 12:2 Rev 1:7
- **they will weep bitterly over Him:** Jer 6:26 Am 8:10 Mt 24:30 26:75 Ac 2:37 2Co 7:9-11

## **A REMARKABLE PROPHECY OF NATIONAL REPENTANCE**

Now we move from the previous nine verses which emphasized Israel's **physical deliverance** to this most wonderful passage which gives God's promise of Israel's **spiritual deliverance**.

You will notice I have several of the pronouns in **bold red font** and you may wonder if that has any significance? The answer is that the **red** is to symbolize the **Messiah** (and the shedding of His blood for sins), because it is crystal clear that in this passage we have the Lord Jesus Christ speaking one of the greatest prophecies ever given to the Nation of Israel.

**MacArthur** makes an interesting point - It's strange, isn't it?" Here they are, having just won the battle of the ages! The greatest victory has just been won and their reaction is national mourning. Why? Because they recognize that the very one who came back as their deliverer, was the same one they killed and they pierced when He came the first time. That's why they mourn. And that's the anguish of true repentance, beloved. when the comforter is come, He will reprove the world of sin, John 16:8, now listen to Jn 16:9, "concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me." So what is the sin? **They do not believe not in Me**. That is the one sin that the Spirit of God must convict a person of in order to bring them to salvation. And that's exactly the one Israel will be convicted of. They'll look on Me, says God, Whom they have pierced and mourn as if they were mourning the death of their only son. Sorrow for the sin of rejecting Christ. Beloved, that's where salvation begins, that is where it begins in your heart. Anybody who is to be saved must turn from the ultimate sin which is the sin of rejecting Jesus Christ, of not believing in Him. ([Zechariah 12 - Israel's Final Deliverance](#))

Dear reader let us pray for the peace of Jerusalem as the psalmist exhorts "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who



love you.: (Ps 122:6) (Play Paul Wilbur's [Shalom Jerusalem](#)).

**Feinberg** rightly remarks that The transition which Zechariah makes now from a physical deliverance to spiritual salvation for God's people is one which is in accord with the whole prophetic testimony of the Old Testament. God never contents Himself with effecting mere physical and temporal rescue; He ever desires truth in the inward parts." He adds "Nothing can excite to repentance like a view of the crucified Saviour."

Ponder that thought! When we are wrestling with sin in our life (and who isn't?), how potentially powerful is the impact on our willful heart if we by faith focus on our Redeemer and the great price He paid to redeem us from the penalty and power of sin in our lives! Looking to our glorious Jesus is a great antidote when we are being tempted by lust (and any sin) for "He is able (upon hearing their cry for help) to come to the aid of those who are (continually being) tempted." (Heb 2:18) John Piper echoes the powerful principle of pondering the Glorious One writing...

I close with an illustration from an article in Leadership (Fall 1982). It was unsigned, but written by a preacher who for ten years was in bondage to lust. He tells the story of what finally released him. It is such a resounding confirmation of what I am trying to say that I want to quote the key paragraph. He ran across a book by Francois Mauriac, What I Believe. In it Mauriac admitted how the plague of guilt had not freed him from lust. He concludes that there is one powerful reason to seek purity, the one Christ gave in the Beatitudes: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

*The thought hit me like a bell rung in a dark, silent hall. So far, none of the scary, negative arguments against lust had succeeded in keeping me from it . . . But here was a description of what I was missing by continuing to harbor lust: I was limiting my own intimacy with God. The love he offers is so transcendent and possessing that it requires our faculties to be purified and cleansed before we can possibly contain it. Could he, in fact, substitute another thirst and another hunger for the one I had never filled? Would Living Water somehow quench lust? That was the gamble of faith. (p. 43–44)*

It was not a gamble. You can't lose when you turn to God. He discovered this in his own life, and the lesson he learned is absolutely right: **The way to fight lust is to feed faith with the knowledge of an irresistibly glorious God.** (Ed: See 1 Th 4:5 where "lustful passion" equates with those "who do not know God" - thus the "antidote" for lust is "Know God!") Do you know God this morning? Are you growing week by week in the knowledge of God's greatness? Do you meditate on his Word day and night? Do you ponder the pictures of his Son in the gospels? Do you read solid books about his character and his ways? Do you look at everything in your day as his creation? Do you pray for a sensitive heart that can be ravished by the revelation of his glory? I call you to make those commitments now for the sake of your own soul and for the glory of God. (Read the full article [Battling the UNBELIEF of Lust](#))

**Feinberg** adds that "This Scripture is of vast importance for an understanding of the future of Israel. It is closely related to the passage in Romans 11:25–27. Just as God pours out refreshing showers upon the parched and thirsty ground (**ED**: see also Zech 13:1-note), so He will pour out the spirit of grace and supplication upon needy Israel. The verb שָׁפַךְ is employed in Joel 3:1ff (Heb) also to express this transforming spiritual transaction. For the same truth Isaiah 44:3; Ezekiel 36:26, 27; and Ezekiel 39:29. The pouring out of the spirit of grace upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem reveals two features: (1) the whole nation from the highest to the lowest will be included; and (2) where the Lord was rejected, there He begins His work of restoration. ([Ref](#))

**Charles Spurgeon** on the prophecy in Zechariah 12:10 - This prophecy, first of all, refers to the Jewish people; and I am happy that it confirms our conviction that the Lord will do good to Israel (PRAISE GOD SPURGEON DID NOT REPLACE ISRAEL WITH THE CHURCH!!!). We know God has said that the Jews will be restored to their own land and that they will inherit the good country the Lord has given to their fathers by a covenant. But, better still, they will be converted to the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ and will see in Him the house of David restored to the throne of Israel. The day is coming when they will see in Jesus of Nazareth that Messiah for Whom their saints looked with joyful expectation, of whom the prophets spoke with rapture, but who was despised and rejected by their blinded leaders. What a happy day it will be when our Jewish brethren will all be found worshiping before the Lord of hosts through their Great High Priest, who is a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek! **It is also helpful to hear our text as it speaks to us. A great mistake is common among all kinds of people.** It is currently believed that we are, first of all, to mourn for our sins and then to look by faith to our Lord Jesus Christ. Most persons who have any concern about their souls, but are not as yet enlightened by the Spirit of God, think there is a degree of tenderness of conscience and of hatred of sin that they are to obtain, somehow or other; and then they will be permitted and authorized to look to Jesus Christ. Now you will perceive that this is not according to the Scriptures, for according to the text before us, **men first look on Him Whom they have pierced; and then, but not until then, they mourn for their sin.** (ED: THIS IS SIMILAR TO FEINBERG'S POINT ABOVE) This is the common human folly—they look for the **effect** in order to produce the **cause**; they forget the old proverb and put the cart before the horse. But our text

plainly indicates what is the **cause and puts it first**, assuring us that **the effect will follow**. Repentance is in no sense a preparation to faith in Christ. It is, on the other hand, a legitimate consequence of faith. In certain diseases the surgeon aims at producing an outward eruption that carries off the internal poison and so assists in the cure; but no man would be justified in refraining from medical advice until he could see the eruption in his skin, that being a healthy sign, a forerunner of the cure, a result of medicine, and by no means a preparation for it. **So repentance is the bringing into our own sight the sin that lurks within; it is a result of the medicine of faith.** (CSB Spurgeon Study Bible)

Messianic Jewish commentator **David Baron** entitled this wonderful passage "The Great Spiritual Crisis in Israel's History," writing that "The first nine verses of the 12th chapter of Zechariah describe prophetically, as we have seen, Israel's great national deliverance and the destruction of the armies of the confederated anti-Christian world-powers which shall be gathered in the final siege of Jerusalem. That will, indeed, be a great and wonderful day in their history, an hour of triumph such as they have never known before, greater than when they quitted Egypt; greater than when they triumphed over Pharaoh and his host at the Red Sea; greater than when they entered the Promised Land, and the walls of \ Jericho fell down before them." But yet there is something greater, more solemn and ore blessed, than mere outward deliverance and triumph over their enemies that Israel is to experience on **"that day,"** and that is God s final conquest over them. ("Through God we shall do valiantly, And it is He who will tread down our adversaries. - Ps 60:12) Ah! yes, Israel shall then learn the truth of the saying, that "our only true triumphs are God's triumphs over us, that His defeats of us are our only true victories"; and will learn with the great apostle whose history and experiences are in many ways a foreshadowing of the history and experience of his nation to say, "Thanks be unto God, who always leadeth us in triumph in Christ" (2 Cor 2:14), that is, as former enemies who have been vanquished, and whom He is now leading about as manifest trophies of His all-subduing grace and power." On former occasions, when Jeshurun ("upright one" and is a term of endearment and refers ironically to Israel Dt 33:5, 26) had been made to ride on the high places of the earth, he had waxed fat and kicked ; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation (cf Dt 32:15-18). But it will never be so again. He who comes to conquer their foes comes also to subdue their hearts." Hence, great as their triumph will be, great as will have been their individual might in the last stage of their conflict with the surrounding hosts so that "he that is feeble among them will be as David", when they return from their victory, this their glorious day of triumph will end in self-abasement and tears. How this wonderful change will be brought about, how the stubborn heart of unbelieving and gainsaying Israel will at last be broken, we are told in the 10th verse.... ([click for the rest of Baron's comments below](#)).

**Cole** - Before we look at several aspects of the spiritual salvation that God promises to bring to His chosen people, note that it is entirely of God. God does not say, "I would like to save My people someday, but they must exercise their free will in order for the process to happen." Nor is this prophecy based only on God's foreknowledge of what will happen, but rather on His mighty power that causes it to happen. In other words, God isn't looking down through the centuries here and exclaiming, "Finally, after all these years, I can see that the Jews will soften their own hearts by their own free will and trust in Me! I've always wanted them to do this, but I couldn't do anything about it because of the sovereignty of human free will. I'm so glad that they finally decided to follow Jesus!" That is how many evangelicals view salvation in our day, but it is definitely not what the Bible teaches. It shows that salvation is of the Lord, from start to finish. While we must trust in Jesus Christ and repent of our sins, neither saving faith nor repentance originates in the fallen human heart. They are God's gift, so that none can boast (Eph. 2:8-9; Acts 5:31; 11:18).

As **Cole** says the Jews are prepared for this incredible event by a severe **three and one-half year tribulation** (aka, the [Great Tribulation](#) - [synonymous with several other time phrases](#) = 1260 days, 42 months, "middle of the week," "time, times, and half a time", [Time of Jacob's Distress](#) "a time of distress" - Da 12:1-[note](#)) -

"Before God saves the Jews spiritually, He will take them through the awful events of the Tribulation, culminating in the horrifying campaign of Armageddon. Lest you think that God is merely describing what will happen in the future, apart from His causation, in 14:2, He states, "For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle...." Those nations will be accountable for their hatred against the Jews, but behind all events is God, "who works all things after the counsel of His will" (Eph. 1:11). When you encounter trials, you are prone to doubt either God's love or His sovereign power. You may even go so far as to doubt His existence: "If there is a loving, all-powerful God, then why are these terrible things happening to me?" But our text is clear that God is by far stronger than the most powerful armies in the world and that He cares for His people, whom He will save. There are Christians who say that anything bad that happens to us is from the devil and that it was not God's will (imagine!). But the implication, then, is that Satan got one over on God! The Bible is clear that God sometimes uses Satan to carry out His will, but Satan can go no farther than God permits (Job 1-2). It brings far more comfort to know that even severe trials are under God's sovereign will, than to think that somehow they are not. In the chemistry lab, every substance has its melting point. The same is true of the hard human heart. God graciously brings trials into our lives to soften us and prepare us to receive His grace. Before the trials, we didn't know that we needed God. We thought that we were in control. So God yanks the rug out from under us by bringing all the armies of the world against us to cause us to cry

out to Him for help!

## AN OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT OF GRACE

In Hebrews 10:29 we see the Spirit is designated as **'the Spirit of grace.'**

Herbert Lockyer - The Holy Spirit is styled—

- **The Spirit of Grace**, since He is the Dispenser of the divine favor to all men.
- **The Spirit of Supplication**, because He teaches us how to pray and for what to pray.
- **The Spirit of Revelation**, because He reveals Christ to the eye of faith.
- **The Spirit of Wisdom**, because He imparts wisdom from above.
- **The Spirit of Adoption**, because He certifies the believer's sonship.
- **The Spirit of Christ**, because He was sent by the Father through the mediation of the Son.
- **The Spirit of Truth**, because He makes the Word of Truth and "The Truth" real to us. "Theology without the Holy Spirit," said Professor Beck of Tübingen, "is not only a cold stone, it is a deadly poison."
- **The Spirit of the Lord God**, because He shares the sovereignty of the Godhead.
- **The Seven Spirits of God**, because of the plenitude of His power and His diversified activity.

**I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication** The Messiah is still speaking. It is notable that before Jesus ascended into heaven, He gave His Jewish disciples a promise "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you (THE HOLY SPIRIT); but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." (Lk 24:49-note, cf Acts 1:8, Acts 2:33, Jn 14:16, 26, Jesus said "Whom I will send" Jn 15:26) So at Pentecost Jesus poured out the Spirit on the Jews and the church was born. Here in Zechariah 12:10 Jesus promises to again pour out the Spirit, which will result in one-third of the nation of Israel being redeemed (Zechariah 13:8-9-note).

**Pour** (08210)(**shaphak**) means to pour out literally (of fluid - Ex 4:9, Deut 12:16) or blood on the altar (Ex. 29:12; Lev. 4:7; Dt. 12:27). Shaphak describes the casting up of a mound against a city to form a siege ramp for attacking it (2 Sam. 20:15; Ezek. 4:2; Dan. 11:15). A dependent prayer is described as the pouring out of one's soul (1Sa 1:15; Ps. 42:4), one's heart (Ps. 62:8]; Lam 2:19); or one's inner parts before the Lord (Lam 2:11). God poured out both His wrath (Ps. 69:24; Isa. 42:25; Jer. 6:11; Hos. 5:10); and **His grace** (Joel 2:28, 29; Zech. 12:10) on people.

Joel uses shaphak in a parallel passage demonstrative of God's grace being poured out on Israel...

Joel 2:28, 29-note "It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. "Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

The **Spirit** of God will pour out the Spirit on Jews at Pentecost but the **final fulfillment of this outpouring** will be on this terminal generation of Israel described in Zechariah 12-14. The Spirit will convict them of sin, righteousness and the judgment to come which will drive the Jews to a time of national believing prayer, confession and repentance. They will supplicate the LORD for His forgiveness and favor.

## PROPHECIES OF THE OUTPOURING OF SPIRIT UPON ISRAEL

There are several OT passages that allude to the pouring out of **the Spirit of grace** on the Nation of Israel

Isaiah 32:15 (context - Isa 32:13-20) Until the Spirit is poured out upon us from on high, And the wilderness becomes a fertile field, And the fertile field is considered as a forest.

**Moody Bible Commentary** - The prophets frequently link the establishment of the millennial kingdom with the coming of the Spirit upon God's people (Ezek 36:27; Joel 2:28-32). God's Spirit will perform a reversal of fortune, transforming the city and the people and all that has been destroyed. The progression from desert to fertile field to forest is similar to that in Isa 29:17 and appears to denote extraordinary growth

**Constable** - God's Spirit would affect an even greater change later in the future (cf. Ps. 104:30; Ezek. 36:26-27; Joel 2:28; Zech. 12:10). Then the wilderness would become fertile, and what was presently considered fertile would become a veritable jungle so full of large plants would it be (cf. Isa 30:23-26). The

creation will burgeon, the divine curse will be removed, and the damage that sin has caused will be reversed (cf. Isa 29:17).

Isaiah 44:3-5 'For I will pour out water on the thirsty land And streams on the dry ground; **I will pour out My Spirit** on your offspring And My blessing on your descendants; And they will spring up among the grass Like poplars by streams of water.' 5 "This one will say, 'I am the LORD'S'; And that one will call on the name of Jacob; And another will write on his hand, 'Belonging to the LORD,' And will name Israel's name with honor.

**Constable** - The Lord promised to pour out His Spirit on the Israelites in the future. This gift would have the same result for the nation as pouring water on dry ground would have for the landscape. It would bring refreshment and new life, indeed, a whole new spiritual attitude (cf. Isa 32:15; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:26-27; 37:7-10; Joel 2:28-29). Blessing would come to the descendants of Isaiah's audience. Isaiah in this verse may have meant that God would bring both physical and spiritual refreshment. Other passages reveal that He will send physical refreshment (cf. Isa 35:6-7; 41:18).

Ezekiel 39:29-note "I will not hide My face from them any longer, for I will have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel (PARALLELS Zechariah 12:10)," declares the Lord GOD.

Joel 2:28-32 "It will come about after this That **I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind**; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. 29 "Even on the male and female servants **I will pour out My Spirit in those days** 30 "I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke. 31 "The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. 32 "And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, As the LORD has said, Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

**Comment** - Partial fulfillment at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-3, 17, Joel 2:28) but awaits complete fulfillment in the last days, in that day of Zechariah 12:10 (cf Ezek 36:27, Ezek 37:14) when "all" Israel (actually the "1/3" in Zec 13:9) will be saved (Ro 11:26). Thus this promise anticipates its complete fulfillment with the conversion of the nation of Israel when Christ returns.

**Matthew Henry** - The Holy Spirit is gracious and merciful, and is the Author of all grace or holiness. He, also, is the Spirit of supplications, and shows men their ignorance, want, guilt, misery, and danger.

**Keil on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem** - The recipients of the spiritual blessing [identical with those who mourn] will be (1) "**the house of David**," through whom the promise of the Messianic-Davidic Kingdom was made (2 Sa 7:8-16), and through whom it will be realized (Luke 1:31-33); and (2) "**the inhabitants of Jerusalem**"—the whole saved remnant of Israel, by [metonymy](#), the capital representing the whole nation (cf. 1Ki 20:34, where "Samaria," the capital, represents the nation). The fact that only the inhabitants of Jerusalem are named, and not those of Judah also, is explained correctly by the commentators from the custom of regarding the capital as the representative of the whole nation. And it follows...from this, that in Zech 12:8 also the expression "**inhabitants of Jerusalem**" is simply an individualizing epithet for the whole of the covenant nation. But just as in Zech 12:8 the house of David is mentioned emphatically along with these was the princely family and representative of the ruling class, so is it also in Zech 12:10, for the purpose of expressing the thought that the same salvation is to be enjoyed by the whole nation, in all its ranks, from the first to the last.

**Spurgeon** - This is a **promise concerning Israel**. Long have the Jews rejected the Christ, but the day is coming when they shall acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth to be the promised Messiah. In that day, this promise will be fulfilled. God must always give "the spirit of grace" ere men will pray aright; and wherever grace is given, there is always true prayer.

**Cole on the Spirit of grace and supplication** - God promises to pour out on the Jews "**the Spirit of grace and of supplication**." This is a reference to the Holy Spirit (Isa. 44:3; Ezek. 39:29; Joel 2:28-29). Jesus told Nicodemus that the new birth is effected by the Spirit (John 3:5-8). "It is the Spirit who gives life" (John 6:63). Unless the Spirit of God convicts us of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8) and imparts new life to us, we remain dead in our transgressions and sins (Eph. 2:1, 5), excluded from the life of God because of our hard hearts (Eph. 4:18). Salvation, like the original creation, requires the sovereign power of God (2 Cor. 4:4, 6). He is called here "the Spirit of grace and of supplication." Grace means God's undeserved favor. The Jews who pierced their Messiah do not deserve God's favor, and neither does any sinner. Grace means that we do not have to clean up our lives or accumulate good works in order to qualify for salvation. Those things follow salvation, but they do not precede it to prompt God to act. The "Spirit of supplication" means that when He graciously intervenes in a sinner's heart, that sinner cries out to God, "Save me, Lord, or I perish!" All subsequent prayer stems from God's gracious Spirit of supplication moving us to cry for help. If you recognize that you are a sinner in God's sight and you have cried out to Him to save you, it is because He has poured out His Spirit of grace and supplication on you. If you know Christ as Savior, but you lament the hardness of your heart, and you are crying out, "God,

soften my heart towards You," it is because His Spirit of grace and supplication is working in you.

**Matthew Henry on the Spirit of grace and supplication** - One would think that it should follow, "And they shall look on him whom they have believed, and shall rejoice" (and it is true that that is one of the fruits of the pouring out of the Spirit, whence we read of *the joy of the Holy ghost*), but it follows, *They shall mourn* for there is a **holy mourning**, that is the effect of the pouring out of the Spirit, a **mourning for sin**, which is used to quicken faith in Christ and qualify for joy in God. It is here made the matter of a promise that the Jews shall mourn, for there is a mourning that will end in rejoicing (cf Ps 30:5) and has a blessing entailed upon it. This mourning is a fruit of the Spirit of grace, an evidence of a work of grace in the soul, and a companion of the Spirit of supplication, as it expresses lively affections working in prayer hence prayers and tears are often put together, 2 Kings 20:5. Jacob, that wrestler with God, *wept and made supplication*. But here it is a mourning for sin that is the effect of the pouring out of the Spirit.

**Feinberg** quotes Dods who "observes, "The former of the two words is commonly and rightly rendered *favour* or *grace*, and if used in this sense here it must refer to a new disposition towards God springing up in the people, a spirit of relenting, of contrition for rejecting God, of willingness to accept Him, in a word, of love, but of love that has in it the element of tender compunction about its past treatment of God. The second word refers rather to the expressions of love, the trustful cries for help and acknowledgements of dependence which accompany this relenting." In short, the **spirit of grace** is the Holy Spirit who, when poured out upon Israel, will awaken their hearts to supplication for the bestowal of God's favor upon them. ([Exegetical Studies in Zechariah: The Second Burden, 12-14 .. Israel's Conflict and Deliverance, 12:1-14](#))

**Grace** (favor) (02580)([chen/hen](#) from verb **chanan** = to favor) means favor (acts which display one's fondness or compassion for another), grace (acts of kindness displaying one's pleasure with an object, which benefit the object of pleasure), acceptance. The idea is that a person finds favor in the sight of another person or acceptance by the person, in this case favor in the sight of God. This word plays a major role in helping us understand God's relationship with sinful men as shown in the first use in Genesis 6:8 with those wonderful words "And Noah found favor (grace) in the eyes of the Lord." The result of this favor was that he was delivered by God from His judgment of the world through the Flood. In a similar vein, the nation of Israel was granted by God to receive "favor in the sight of the Egyptians." (Ex 3:21, 11:3, 12:36). Zechariah's only other use of *chen* is Zech 4:7 "What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!"

**Supplication** (08469)([tachanun](#) from **chanan** = extending favor which is neither expected nor deserved) is a masculine noun that describes one asking for favor. In Daniel's great prayer in chapter 9, he seeks the Lord God by "prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes." (Da 9:3) and in Da 9:23 we see his supplications were heard immediately. In the first use Solomon prays "And listen to the **supplications** of Thy servant and of Thy people Israel, when they pray toward this place; hear Thou from Thy dwelling place, from heaven; hear Thou and forgive." (2Chr 6:21) In the psalms supplications reflect a plaintiff cry on one hand (Ps 28:2, 86:6, 130:2, 140:6, 143:1) and a gratitude for divine answer on the other (Ps 28:6, 31:22, 116:1). Proverbs speaks of the sense of humility of the one making supplication (Pr 18:23). In Jer 3:21 Israel is making supplication because they are beginning to feel the wrath of God's displeasure. Zechariah 12:10 was discussed above -- notice that both Jer 31:9 and Zechariah 12:10 use this same noun. The **Holman Standard** version (and others) translate **tachanun** with more variety than the NAS (all uses in NAS = supplication) and so renders it as pleading, plea for mercy, appeal for mercy, cry for help.

**Supplication** (Latin *supplex* ~ entreating for mercy; plead humbly, kneel down) - describes the the action of asking or begging for something earnestly or humbly. The idea of **pleading** conveys the sense of making an emotional appeal.

**So that** - This is [purpose clause](#), one of the more profound purpose clauses in the entire Bible, especially if you are Jewish! Whenever you encounter a purpose clause consider the "**5P's**" - **P**ause to **P**onder the **P**assage then **P**actice it in the **P**ower of the Spirit. As noted this is one of the "richer" purpose clauses you will encounter in Scripture.

## ISRAEL'S NATIONAL DAY OF ATONEMENT

This prophecy (**they will look upon Me**) was partially fulfilled in Jesus' first coming when He was crucified and pierced and His Jewish brethren bore witness (looked upon Him), but the final fulfillment awaits His [Second Coming](#) when not only will the Jews see Him, but the entire world will look upon He Who was pierced!

In his Gospel John has a description of Jesus' crucifixion in which he quotes Zechariah's prophecy in Zechariah 12:10 showing that in the Crucifixion this Messianic prophecy (the piercing) was fulfilled. The ultimate fulfillment of John 19:37 will be at [Christ's Second Coming](#) (His "[parousia](#)"), when the [repentant remnant](#) of Israel will mourn over rejecting and killing their Messiah. And do not miss the incredible truth in this prophecy (remember it is the pre-incarnate Christ Who is speaking in context of Zechariah 12:10) -- Do not miss the fact that God said "**they will look on Me Whom they have pierced**" which was also a prediction that Jesus would be incarnated and would be crucified. In other words, Zechariah 12:10 alludes to the future incarnation and Manhood of the Messiah



(He had to be a Man to be pierced).

And again another Scripture says, "**THEY SHALL LOOK ON HIM WHOM THEY PIERCED.**" (John 19:37)

But in the Revelation John records the future, final fulfillment of this prophecy writing...

**BEHOLD**, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even **those who pierced Him**; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen. (Rev 1:7-[note](#))

**Comment:** Note that Jesus' coming on the clouds is exactly what the angel in Acts 1:9-11 affirmed when he stated " will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven." In other words His Second Coming would be an actual event that was literal (not hidden or invisible), physical (literal body), and in the clouds. The Greek verb for **pierced** is **ekkenteo** (from **ek** = out or an intens. + **kentéō** = to sting, stab, prick, pierce. Means to dig out, pierce. Used trans., meaning to pierce through)([1574](#)) is used only in John 19:37 and Rev 1:7 in the NT (6x in Septuagint - Num. 22:29; Jos. 16:10; Jdg. 9:54; 1 Chr. 10:4; Isa. 14:19; Jer. 37:10). Comparing Zechariah 12:10 with this verse, we see that Jesus is identified as God!

The prophet Isaiah also describes the piercing of Messiah...

Isaiah 53:5 But He **was pierced** through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.

**Comment:** The Hebrew verb for was pierced in Isaiah is **chalal** (Used 6x in OT = Job 26:13, Ps 109:22; Isa 51:9, 53:5; Ezek 28:9, 32:26) not **daqar** as in Zech 12:10 and might be better translated "He was **wounded** for our transgressions." The Septuagint translates **chalal** with the verb **traumatizo** which means to wound or cause to be wound. This Greek word of course gives us our English words such as trauma, traumatic, etc.

**Feinberg** has an interesting comment on Isaiah 53 and suggests that Isaiah's words may indeed be Israel's confession in that day

Let us remember that Isaiah 53 is the inspired confession that repentant Israel will voice on this important occasion (Referring to Zech 12:10). (Feinberg goes on to paraphrase Isaiah 53:1-8 from a Zech 12:10 perspective)

"If Calvary be the tragic hour of Israel's age-long history, then this national Day of Atonement will be the hour of their penitent sorrow to be followed by rejoicings ineffable. In that hour, with enlightened hearts and broken spirits, they will inquire of one another, "Which ones of us believed the report made to us? To which ones of us did the mighty power of God disclose itself? So few of us, because He appeared so lacking in promise; He had no outward attraction that our carnal hearts could then delight in. So we desired Him not, with the result that He was despised and cut off from our company, knowing only griefs and pains, as we went our way turning our gaze from Him. But marvel of it all, He was bearing and enduring our sorrows and our griefs, and all the while we thought He was being stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted because He was so sinful and we so good. No, He was smitten because we were so sinful, for He was wounded because we had transgressed the law and will of God; He was crushed to death because of our iniquitous ways; the scourge of God was upon Him so that we might have spiritual healing and peace with God. We all went senselessly on in our sins, deliberately and wilfully, and God caused to come upon Him as an avalanche the sins of us all. What oppressions and merciless treatment He suffered, yet He endured them so patiently and submissively. And yet we did not lay it to heart that He was suffering all this because it was due us."

As unbelieving Thomas they will not believe until they see the prints in His hands. (John 20:24-29). (Exegetical Studies)

**They will look on Me whom they have pierced** - Who is "**they**"? He tells us these are Jews, and from other Scriptures we know that **they** are those Jews who are living in the days of the Great Tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble. And who is **Me**?" This is none other than the Messiah speaking to Israel even before He was crucified, which of course is what **pierced** refers to. Did the Jews literally drive the nails in His hands and pierce His side with a spear? Of course not, for that part the Romans are also culpable and responsible. But when Pilate was trying to release Jesus (Lk 23:19), the Jewish crowd "kept on calling out, saying "Crucify, crucify Him!" (Lk 23:21,23, Mt 27:22-25 Mk 15:13 Jn 19:15).

**Walter Kaiser** has an interesting note on some important technical aspects of Zech 12:10 writing that "Probably no text in the Old Testament speaks more directly to the question of whether there are going to be two comings of the one Messiah than does verse



10. But, even aside from the question of whether this text points to one or two Messiahs, the hardest fact for most Jewish interpreters and readers to face is that “**Me**” and “**Him**” both refer to the same person. Most Jewish interpreters would prefer to have the Gentile nations look to God, whom these nations have attacked indirectly by inflicting suffering on His people Israel. But each of these novel translations is problematic. Each ignores the fact that the subject of both the verb “to look” and the verb “to pierce” is the same in Hebrew. Therefore, those who pierced the One who will pour out a spirit of grace and supplication in that day, belong to the same national group that will “look” and “mourn” over the pierced One like one mourns over the loss of a firstborn. In the debate over verse 10, interpreters argue that it is impossible to pierce God, since He is spirit and not flesh and blood (Is. 31:3; John 4:24). But that is the point; it was Christ’s flesh that was pierced, and the One who was pierced is at the same time One in essence and being with the God who speaks in this text. Note also that whenever the first person pronoun appears elsewhere in this chapter (Zech 12:2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10 = “**I am...I will...I will...I will. I will...I will**”) it refers to the Messiah. Zechariah had just referred in chapter 11 to the Good Shepherd who had been rejected by Israel, and whose rejection was followed by a terrible punishment. Only the Messiah fits all the details here. His piercing must have come in an earlier advent, for certainly when He comes again it will be with the victory promised in this section.” (Ibid)

**NET Note on they will look on Me Whom** - Because of the difficulty of the concept of the mortal piercing of God, the subject of this clause, and the shift of pronoun from “**me**” to “**him**” in the next, many Manuscripts read אֶלֶי אֶת אֲשֶׁר (’ale ’et ’asher, “to the one whom,” a reading followed by NAB, NRSV) rather than the MT’s אֶלַי אֶת אֲשֶׁר (’ela ’et ’asher, “to me whom”). The reasons for such alternatives, however, are clear—**they are motivated by scribes who found such statements theologically objectionable**—and they should be rejected in favor of the more difficult reading (lectio difficilior) of the MT.

**Kaiser** amplifies the **NET Note** by addressing why there is such controversy over this text - One of the greatest problems centers around a translation problem. The New Jewish Publication Society translation of the [Tanakh](#) (Old Testament) in 1988 rendered it: “*But I will fill the House of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem with a spirit of pity and compassion; and **they shall lament to Me about those who are slain**, wailing over them as over a favorite son and showing bitter grief as over a first-born.*” The 1896 Jewish translation in an Appendix to the Revised Version read, “*And they [i.e., the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem] **shall look up to Me because of Him whom they [i.e., the nations which came up against Jerusalem] have pierced.***” A more ancient Jewish interpretation understands this prophecy to refer to Messiah ben (“son of”) Joseph, a separate individual from Messiah ben (“son of”) David. But the creation of these two Messiahs, one who would suffer (ben Joseph) and the other who would be glorified (ben David) finds no support from the Tanakh itself. (See also [The Jewish Tradition Of Two Messiahs](#))

**S Lewis Johnson** has some additional insights on the Jewish approach to Zechariah 12:10 - I have a commentary on the Old Testament written by some Jewish scholars, it’s not a bad commentary in many ways, and I find a great deal of help. I notice the explanation that they gave of the 10th verse of the 12th chapter. It was something like this: They shall look unto me, because **THEY, the nations**, have thrust Him through. They shall look unto me because they the nations have pierced him through. And I looked in my Hebrew text to discover how this rendering of the text was possible. It is impossible (JOHNSON WAS A PROFESSOR OF OT AND FLUENT IN BIBLICAL HEBREW). Will you look at the text carefully, it says, “**And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem**”. There (“HOUSE OF DAVID...INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM”) is the “**THEY**” of the text, not the nations. The **nations** have been mentioned in the 9th verse. But since that mention, there has only been the mention of the Jews in verse 10! And so surely the normal interpretation of the 10th verse is, “**And they**”, that is, **the inhabitants of Jerusalem**, about whom I’ve just been speaking. “They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced”, the “**THEY**” must refer to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ([The Conversion of Israel](#)) (**ED: APOLOGIES FOR THE TECHNICAL DETAILS IN SEVERAL OF THE PREVIOUS NOTES, BUT THIS SUBSTANTIATION IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE CLEARLY THE HEBREW TRANSLATORS ARE TRYING TO HIDE THE EVIDENCE SO TO SPEAK! VERY INTERESTING, BUT IT IS NOT SURPRISING!**)

Will the nation of Israel actually see Messiah’s scars? I think so for it is certain that the wound marks are still on our Lord’s glorified body, for they were visible in His resurrected body (John 20:27, cf Lk 24:39-note) and thus will mark Him forever. In Revelation 5, three times John uses the Greek verb [sphazo](#) to described his vision of the glorified Jesus (Rev 5:6-note, Rev 5:9-note and Rev 5:12-note), indicating that our Lord’s wounds are still visible in heaven. What might be the significance you asked? While there may be other answers, certainly one of the most significant aspects is that His wounds are the marks of His cutting of a blood covenant with those who have placed their faith in Him on earth. His wounds will forever be the marks of the New Covenant in His blood, and will testify throughout eternity that this covenant will never be broken. This is an amazing truth, and one that we will surely ponder with gratitude and wonder throughout eternity! Thank You Lord Jesus for taking the piercing that should have been done to me. Amen.

**Spurgeon** - “It is a beautiful remark of an old divine, that eyes are made for two things at least; first, to look with, and next, to weep with. The eye which looks to the pierced One is the eye which weeps for him.”

In the prophet Joel in the context of the **Day of the Lord** just as here in Zechariah 12-14, we read these words from Jehovah...

“Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “Return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and

mourning; And rend your heart and not your garments." Now return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness And relenting of evil. (Joel 2:12-13-note)

**Comment:** In Zechariah 12:10, it is as if Jehovah answers His own plea to His Chosen People.

**Steven Cole** observes that "There is no way to explain it apart from the incarnation, death, and resurrection of one who is both God and man. The speaker throughout this passage has been God, who now says, **"They will look on Me Whom they have pierced."** **"Pierce"** is consistently used of someone being run through by a sword or spear (Nu 25:8; Jdg 9:54; 1 Sa. 31:4). No one can pierce God, unless God first takes on human flesh. And the Jewish nation cannot someday look on this One Whom they pierced unless He is then living, having been raised from the dead. When the soldier thrust his sword through Jesus' side as He hung on the cross, he inadvertently fulfilled this prophecy in remarkable detail (Jn 19:36-37)!...Israel will **"look on Me whom they have pierced."** As I said, the only way that this can be explained is if the one pierced is **both God and man**. In the 16th century, John Calvin fought against the same errors that we face in **Unitarianism** and the **Jehovah's Witnesses**, who deny that Jesus is fully God. Calvin comments on this text to show that Christ is the same in essence with the Father and the Spirit, but distinct in person. Thus God the Father was not pierced, because He did not take on human flesh. But He can say, **"They shall look on Me"** because He is one in essence with the Son (Calvin's Commentaries on The Twelve Minor Prophets, p 365-367). While you do not need to **understand the Trinity** to be saved, you really cannot understand the Gospel unless God opens your eyes to see that Jesus is fully God and fully man. He had to be God to be sinless, so that His sacrifice would be acceptable to the Father. He had to be Man or that sacrifice could not apply to humans. But not only must we see the Savior accurately, as God and man; we must also see that **"He was pierced through for our transgressions"** (Isa. 53:5). There is no salvation apart from Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 1:23-24; 2:2). Apart from the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness for sins (Heb. 9:22-note). To follow Jesus as a great moral example is not enough (See [Josh McDowell's classic "More than a Carpenter"](#)). To be saved, you must apply (by grace through faith) His shed blood to your sins. The Jews who will be living during the Battle (ED: MORE ACCURATELY THE "CAMPAIGN OF ARMAGEDDON" - [SEE NOTE](#)) of Armageddon did not physically kill Jesus. True, their ancestors did. But God says here that they pierced Christ. We need to apply this to ourselves: I pierced Christ by my sins! You pierced Him! If you do not see that fact, you do not understand God's salvation. Thus God often prepares us for salvation through trials. He brings us to salvation through His Spirit and by opening our eyes to see the Savior accurately (cf Acts 26:18-note)."

**Cole on look on Me** - The emphasis in looking **"on Me whom they have pierced"** is not on looking on the Messiah literally, but on looking to the Messiah in faith (Kenneth Barker, Expositor's Bible Commentary 7:683). It is the same as when Moses erected the bronze serpent, and whoever looked to it in faith lived (Nu 21:9, cf Jn 3:14-15). Some interpret this as happening at the Second Coming of Christ, but I understand it to be just prior to that event. At that point, there will be a widespread conversion of the Jews, as Paul states in Romans 11:25-27-note. No one, Jew or Gentile, can be saved apart from looking in faith to Jesus Christ as the crucified and risen Son of God.

**Pastor Cole's** comment on **looking to the Messiah** reminds me of the [conversion of the great preacher Charles Spurgeon](#) who was saved the day he heard a simple exposition from an unknown substitute preacher of the passage in Isaiah 45:22KJV (for context see Isa 45:21)

**Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth:  
For I am God, and there is none else.**

**Look on Me** - Messiah is speaking. They will look on their Messiah in that day even as described in the Gospel of John

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life. (John 3:14-15)

**Comment** - In the OT Jews who had been bitten by poisonous serpents and were destined for certain death were told by Moses to **look** (also nabat; Lxx - [epiblepo](#)) at the bronze serpent and live in Nu 21:9. Jesus took this OT shadow and emphasized that one was to look at Him with spiritual eyes, eyes of belief (John 3:14-15)

"For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds ([theoreo](#)) the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." (John 6:40)

**Feinberg** adds that the Hebrew verb **nabat** is "used of both physical and spiritual sight and is not infrequently "coupled with the idea of confidence in the object beheld; like [theoreo](#) (To behold intensely or attentively), for example, in John 6:40."

**A LOOK OF FAITH OR  
A LOOK OF SIGHT?**

The following notes are again somewhat more technical than usual but hopefully will help you understand why some versions translate Zechariah 12:10 "look **ON** Me" (NAS, KJV, ESV, NIV, NLT, NAB, NKJ, NRSV. AMP, REB, NEB) and other versions translate it as "look **TO** (unto) Me" (NET, ASV, ISV, NJB, Young's Literal, Modern English). Holman Christian Standard Bible has "look**AT** Me." Some of the versions that translate it "look **ON** me" still have a marginal note "TO me." (CSB, NIV) .Even two versions of the English translation of the Septuagint differ - Brenton's LXE = "look **UPON** me" and Septuagint-NETS = "look **TO** me."

The issue in question is the little Hebrew preposition ( לָא 'ēl, לָא 'el) which means to, into, concerning. It has the basic meaning of toward. The preposition expresses primarily motion toward someone or something. As such, it occurs in a wide variety of contexts expressing motion, attitude, direction, or location. In the present passage the question is simply this - Does Zechariah mean that those Jews who will be saved "look" toward the Messiah **figuratively**, with eyes of faith or do they look **literally**, with eyes of sight, eyes that literally see Him? Of course we know that they will eventually **literally** see their Messiah, but do they first have to "**see**" **Him by faith** in order to be saved by grace (cf "by grace you have been saved through faith" = Eph 2:8, "the conviction of things not seen" = Heb 11:1, "we walk by faith, not by sight" = 2 Cor 5:7). Do you see the subtle difference? That's what the next set of comments deals with and hopefully you will walk away not totally confused. Clearly there is not a consensus as indicated by the variation in the way the Hebrew preposition is translated. May the Spirit give you insight as you prayerfully study this section.

**Arnold Fruchtenbaum** says rather than looking **on** (upon), they will look **to** (unto) explaining that "The KJV erroneously translated this to read: *they shall look upon me whom they have pierced*. Because of the mis-translation of the Hebrew word **al** as *upon*, many have interpreted this to mean that Yeshua (Jesus) will come first; once the Jews have seen Yeshua, then will they be saved. However, the Hebrew word used here does not mean *upon* but *unto* because of where His is: "aloft" or "on high." (NOW HERE IS HIS INTERESTING POINT) **When believers look unto the Lord, they do not visibly see the Lord.** The way this passage should be interpreted is when the Holy Spirit is poured out upon the whole House of Israel, they will then look **unto**, not **upon**, **the One whom they have pierced, mourning for Him to return. Only then will He return.** So after they have looked unto Him, they are saved, resulting in His return. (IN OTHER WORDS) Israel's national salvation is the prerequisite to the Second Coming. (THIS IS A VERY INTERESTING ANALYSIS AND IT IS NOTABLE THAT JOHN MACARTHUR IN HIS STUDY NOTE SAYS "Israel's repentance will come because they look **TO** Jesus, the One whom they rejected and crucified (cf. Is 53:5; Jn 19:37), **in faith** at the Second Advent Ro 11:25–27.") (Emphasis mine)

**S Lewis Johnson's** comments support Fruchtenbaum's analysis - The text says, "**and they shall look UNTO Me**". Is this the **look of faith** or is it the **look of sight**? When the Lord Jesus comes, is it the look of sight, which sees Him as the One Who has been crucified. Is that what Zechariah means? Or does he mean that they (FIRST) shall **look in faith**, and realize that it is the Savior Who has died for them, Whom they do not see, visibly. Now we know, of course, they shall see Him. I am inclined to think that it is both. **They see our Lord Jesus Christ by faith**, and of course, He soon comes and they **see Him visibly**, as the One Who has come and has died for them. ([The Conversion of Israel](#)) (Emphasis mine)

**Look (05027)(nabat)** carries the root idea of that which one does with the eye and can describe a mere glance (1Sa 17:42) but more often it has the sense of looking somewhat intensely in a focused way at something; to gaze: to gaze at the heavens (Ge 15:5); at Sodom and Gomorrah (Ge 19:17, 26 - Lot's wife did not just glance but she gaze...with longing to go back - See Luke 17:32-note); at the sea (1 Ki 18:43). And so nabat can speak of a careful, sustained, and favorable contemplation (Isa 5:12; Ps 74:20; Ps 119:6, 15, Hab 1:5). **Nabat** speaks of of **physical "looking"** (Ex 3:6) and (as in Ps 119:18) of **figurative "looking"**, that is, spiritual apprehension (1 Sa 16:7). Nabat can speak both of man's looking upon God and God's looking upon man (Isa 63:5). In the figurative sense it can mean looking at, considering the commands of the Lord to follow them (Ps. 74:20; 119:6, 15, 18); looking on something for help, dependence (Isa. 22:8, 11). Nabat can mean to evaluate or consider by looking at something (1 Sa 17:42; Ps. 84:9; Amos 5:22). Nabat is used of the keen observations of an eagle from a great distance (Job 39:29); and of the Lord's gazing on the earth from His habitation (Ps. 102:19).

The Hebrew verb **nabat** (Lxx - [epiblepo](#) = see below) here is used of looking intently at Messiah Whom they had pierced, which contrasts radically with the use of their **look** (nabat) in His first coming the psalmist recording words that also apply to Messiah - " I can count all my bones. They **look**, (Lxx = [katanoeo](#) = look carefully, think about very carefully = but their spiritual eyes [for most of the Jews] were not opened to comprehend the significance of the One they observed) they stare at me." (Ps. 22:17) In Messiah's first coming, the first look of the Jews was with hardened hearts, while in this Second Coming in Zech 12:10, they would look with broken hearts! At that time the grace poured out by the Spirit will allow one-third of the Jews in the Great Tribulation (Zech 13:8-9-note) to look on Messiah and be spiritually healed.

The **Septuagint** translates **nabat** in this passage with the verb [epiblepo](#) means to literally to turn the eyes upon. The root verb **blepo** frequently implies looking not nonchalantly but with intent and earnest contemplation. **BDAG** says [epiblepo](#) means to "look intently, to pay close attention to (show special respect for - James 2:3), to look attentively at with implication of personal concern for someone or something.

**Cole on they will mourn** - God's salvation produces genuine repentance in the hearts of His people. Israel will mourn over the pierced Savior, as one mourns for an only son, and as the Jews mourned for the good King Josiah in the [plains of Megiddo](#), when Pharaoh killed him. Genuine repentance is not something that a person must work up in order to be saved. But it does necessarily accompany saving faith, so that the New Testament views saving faith and repentance as flip sides of the same coin (Acts 20:21; 26:18). Just as saving faith is not a one-time thing, but ongoing, so with repentance. Ongoing repentance should mark the life of a believer, as we continually look to the Savior who was pierced for our sins. As believers, we should look frequently to the Savior whom we pierced, and mourn. It must be personal, so that even husbands and wives mourn separately. That is the point of the repetition of "by itself" (12:12-14). The family of David refers to the rulers; the family of Levi refers to the priests. "All the families that remain" refers to everyone else. True repentance is not glib, shrugging off sin as no big deal. Jesus said, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5:4). The Lord's Supper is a good time to look in faith to the Savior whom we pierced.

**Pierced** (01856)(**daqar**) means to pierce or thrust through in each biblical instance, the subject of the verb is a human being pierced by a weapon in the context of warfare. Normally the piercing results in death, but in Jeremiah 37:10 the men are only seriously wounded. The weapon used to pierce is usually a sword, but a spear is used in Nu 25:8.

There is a surprising and strange rendering of **daqar** in the Septuagint which uses the verb *katorcheomai* which means to treat spitefully, to mock at, to insult and this is the only use of this verb in all the Bible. Even though the Lxx does not translate with a Greek verb for pierce it is significant that not one of the 10 uses of the Hebrew verb **daqar** means anything other than to pierce or thrust through and none convey the sense of to insult. My experience with the Septuagint is that it is often very close to the Greek word but not always and in fact at times literally makes no sense when one looks at the original Hebrew and context. It follows that we can confidently say that Zechariah meant what he said...pierce and not insult. And think about the context. If the Jews who looked (on or to) the Messiah only insult the Messiah, one can hardly imagine their deep contrition that followed.

**Gilbrant on daqar** -

Often, to be pierced resulted in a disgraceful death, as in Num. 25:8. An Israelite man brought a Midianite woman home in sight of the whole assembly of Israel. Phinehas, the priest, left the assembly, took a spear, followed them into the Israelite's tent, and thrust the spear through both of them. This action stopped the plague against the Israelites resulting from the idolatry and immorality connected with the worship of the Baal of Peor.

Two Israelite rulers asked their servants to pierce them through to avoid dying in disgrace. A woman dropped a millstone on the head of Abimelech and cracked his skull. He hurriedly called for his armor-bearer to pierce him through so no one could say a woman killed him (Judg. 9:54). Saul (1 Sam. 31:4f; 1 Chr. 10:4) ordered his armor-bearer to pierce him through, when the Philistines overtook them, to avoid abuse by the Philistines.

The term is used twice in Zechariah, and the idea of disgrace is again present. In 12:10, the house of David turns to "the one they have pierced." Chapter 13 then relates the removal of idols, false prophets, and impurity, predicting that false prophets who continue their false prophecy will be pierced through by their parents (13:3).

**Dāqar** is used four times in connection with the armies of Babylon. When the Persians and Medes overtake them, they will pierce them through (Jer. 51:4; Isa. 13:15). In Jer. 37:10, even "wounded" or "pierced" men will join in defeating Judah, and in Lam. 4:9, people will be "racked" or "pierced" with hunger. (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

**Daqar** - 10x in 10v - pierce him through(1), pierce me through(2), pierced(1), pierced him through(1), pierced of them through(1), pierced through(1), stricken(1), thrust me through(1), thrust through(1), wounded(1).

Numbers 25:8 and he (THE PRIEST PHINEHAS) went after the man of Israel into the tent (WHO HAD CO-HABITED WITH MOABITE WOMEN) and **pierced** both of them **through**, the man of Israel and the woman, through the body. So the plague on the sons of Israel was checked.

Judges 9:54 Then he called quickly to the young man, his armor bearer, and said to him, "Draw your sword and kill me, so that it will not be said of me, 'A woman slew him.'" So the young man **pierced** him **through**, and he died.

**Comment:** Abimelech wanted to avoid the charge that a woman killed him

1 Samuel 31:4 Then Saul said to his armor bearer, "Draw your sword and pierce me through with it, otherwise these uncircumcised will come and pierce me through and make sport of me." But his armor bearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. So Saul took his sword and fell on it.

1 Chronicles 10:4 Then Saul said to his armor bearer, "Draw your sword and **thrust** me through with it,

otherwise these uncircumcised will come and abuse me." But his armor bearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took his sword and fell on it.

Isaiah 13:15 (In the end times, in the Day of the Lord, when He pours forth His full wrath on the God hating, Christ rejecting world) Anyone who is found will be **thrust** through, And anyone who is captured will fall by the sword.

Jeremiah 37:10 'For even if you had defeated the entire army of Chaldeans who were fighting against you, and there were only **wounded** men left among them, each man in his tent, they would rise up and burn this city with fire."

Jeremiah 51:4 "They (BABYLON) will fall down slain in the land of the Chaldeans, And **pierced** through in their streets."

Lamentations 4:9 Better are those slain with the sword Than those slain with hunger; For they pine away, being stricken For lack of the fruits of the field.

Zechariah 12:10 "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they **have pierced**; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.

Zechariah 13:3 "And if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who gave birth to him will say to him, 'You shall not live, for you have spoken falsely in the name of the LORD'; and his father and mother who gave birth to him **will pierce** him through when he prophesies.

The second stanza of **Charles Wesley's** classic hymn "[Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending](#)" is especially apropos to the looking and the mourning of the nation of Israel (aka, **the third** portion of the nation - Zech 13:8-9-note). Take a moment from your study to praise and worship our soon coming King of kings. Amen!

Lo, He comes with clouds descending,  
Once for favored sinners slain;  
Thousand, thousand saints attending  
Swell the triumph of His train:  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
God appears on earth to reign.

**Ev'ry eye shall now behold Him,  
Robed in splendor's majesty;  
Those who set at naught and sold Him,  
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,  
Deeply wailing, deeply wailing,  
Shall the true Messiah see.**

Now the Savior, long expected,  
See in solemn pomp appear;  
All who have not Him rejected  
Now shall meet him in the air:  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
See the day of God appear

## **BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED (Mt 5:4)**

**And they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son:** The great grief is like mourning for an only son. Their hearts will be smitten with grief like that for the firstborn in the home. I witnessed this to a degree first hand -- I worked with a Jewish gastroenterologist and he tragically lost his only daughter in an automobile accident and every time after that when I saw him, there was a palpable sadness about his countenance and bearing.

**Matthew Henry** - At the time here foretold, the Jews will know who the crucified Jesus was; then they shall look by faith to Him, and mourn with the deepest sorrow, not only in public, but in private, even each one separately (**by itself** - Zech 12:12-14).

**Wil Pounds** - The fulfillment says **Keil** will "not terminate till the remnant of Israel shall turn as a people to Jesus the Messiah,



Whom its fathers crucified. On the other hand, those who continue obstinately in unbelief will see Him at last when He returns in the clouds of heaven, and shriek with despair (Rev. 1:7; Matt. 24:30)." It is with a deep penetrating conviction and mourning that will take place. But for so many it will be too late to be saved. According to Romans 11:25-29 there is a day coming when many in Israel will recognize her Messiah and turn to Him. The change in person from "mourn for Him" to "mourn for Me" is common in prophetic literature. The outpouring of the Spirit prompts the people to mourn for sin in private (Zech 12:10) and public (Zech 12:11). This profound sense of spiritual poverty and mourning leads to a cleansing from all sin because the precious fountain has been opened (Zech 13:1-note). ([Zechariah 12:8-10 Mourning for the One Who was Pierced](#))

At this time there will be a reversal of what occurred after Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah lamenting that "The joy of our hearts has ceased; Our dancing has been turned into mourning," (Lamentations 5:15 ). But in the Day of the Lord in Zechariah 12-14 there will be a reversal of their mourning for Jeremiah writes "Then (in that day when Jehovah ransoms His chosen people - see Jer 32:11-12-note) the virgin will rejoice in the dance, And the young men and the old, together, for I (Jehovah's Spirit) will turn their **mourning into joy** and will comfort them and **give them joy for their sorrow**." (Jeremiah 31:13-note)

**Feinberg on mourning...bitterly weep** - The picture in the verb **saphad** (mourn) is that of smiting on the breasts in mourning. Compare Isaiah 32:12....It is not so much a mourning for the act committed, but for the Person involved. Compare Jn 19:37; Rev 1:7. To emphasize the intensity and wholeheartedness of the grief, never before experienced in the nation's history, though they have learned well through the centuries how to weep and mourn, the prophet likens the lamentation to that for the only child, and the bitterness of heart for the loss of the **first-born**. These sorrows are the deepest that can enter the private life. (See Ex 11:6; Jer 6:26; Am 8:10.)

**Mourn...mourns** ([05594](#))(**saphad** - see note on [mourning](#) by Patterson) is a primary verb meaning to wail, to lament, to mourn and most of the references deal with the mourning rites at someone's death. **Saphad** describes Abraham's reaction when his wife Sarah died (Ge 23:2), the great mourning over the death of Jacob (Ge 50:10), all Israel at the death of Samuel (1 Sa 25:1, 28:3), mourning for seven days at the death of King Saul (2 Sa 1:12), Bathsheba mourning over Uriah's death (2 Sa 11:26).

Given the emphasis with **saphad** on mourning over someone's death, when Israel's eyes are opened and they realize that they have killed their Messiah (as has every sinner), there will be mourning over His death. The **Septuagint** translates mourn in Zech 12:10 with a combination of the verb [kopto](#) which means to beat one's breast as a strong expression of grief and the rare noun **kopetos** (used only in Acts 8:2) which describe the beating of one's breast as a sign of grief. Ecclesiastes 3:4 says there is "A time to weep and a time to laugh; A time to **mourn** (**saphad**, Lxx = [kopto](#)) and a time to dance." The **mourning** of Zech 12:10 will be surely be followed by a time of dancing in Messiah's Kingdom!

**Gilbrant** - In OT times, lamenting was a central part of life. Examples of happenings which caused people to mourn include death, natural disaster, war, sickness or awareness of sin. Joseph wailed bitterly and mourned for seven days at the threshing floor at Atad following the death of his father, Jacob (Gen. 50:10). Sāphadh is also connected with other practices of mourning rites, such as tearing clothes and wearing sackcloth, a coarse and uncomfortable material worn next to the skin (2 Sa 3:31); fasting (2 Sa 1:12) and beating one's breast (Isa 32:12). Although the meaning of such mourning practices is not completely clear, the OT seems to impart the idea that expressing bereavement must embody the entire person. The submission of the body to discomforts such as coarse clothing, sitting in ashes and hunger were appropriate actions to signify anguish. Also, the public display of sorrow indicated the communal, and not just individual, nature of mourning.

**Saphad** - 31x in 29v - beat(1), lament(9), lamented(5), mourn(8), mourned(6), mourners(1), mourns(1).

Gen. 23:2; Gen. 50:10; 1 Sam. 25:1; 1 Sam. 28:3; 2 Sam. 1:12; 2 Sam. 3:31; 2 Sam. 11:26; 1 Ki. 13:29; 1 Ki. 13:30; 1 Ki. 14:13; 1 Ki. 14:18; Eccl. 3:4; Eccl. 12:5; Isa. 32:12; Jer. 4:8; Jer. 16:4; Jer. 16:5; Jer. 16:6; Jer. 22:18; Jer. 25:33; Jer. 34:5; Jer. 49:3; Ezek. 24:16; Ezek. 24:23; Joel 1:13; Mic. 1:8; Zech. 7:5; Zech. 12:10; Zech. 12:12

**And they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn** This loss is a peculiar sorrow to loving parents, which has been likened to the most intense private sorrow and here now likened to the most intense public grief (as the Egyptians were when there was a cry throughout all their land for the death of their first-born = Ex 11:6, Jer 6:26, Amos 8:10) Thank God for that godly sorrow which worketh REPENTANCE. (2 Cor 7:9-10)

**Matthew Henry** - The sorrow of children for the death of their parents is sometimes counterfeited, is often small, and soon wears off and is forgotten but the sorrow of parents for a child, for a son, for an only son, for a first-born, is natural, sincere, unforced, and unaffected, it is secret and lasting such are the sorrows of a true penitent, flowing purely from love to Christ above any other.

**Weep bitterly** ([04943](#))(**marar** of the adjective [marar](#) usually to describe an emotional response to a destructive, heart-crushing situation, but sometimes literal - Ex 15:23) means to be bitter, emotionally distraught or embittered. To grieve bitterly often with weeping and vocalization. It is used by Naomi who lost her husbands and two sons and declared the "Almighty has dealt very



bitterly with me." (Ru 1:20, cf Ru 1:13, Job 27:2). Marar describes the Egyptians making the lives of the Israelites bitter because of hard labor (Ex 1:14).

The **Septuagint** translates the two uses of **marar** in Zech 12:10 with the verb **odunao** which has two main senses (1) violent physical torment or being in agony as was the rich man in Hades (Lk 16:24-note) and (2) of spiritual or mental distress meaning to be grieved, be pained and the related noun **odune** literally describing severe, sudden pain, but here used figuratively to describe deep mental distress, agitation, sorrow, including remorse from a guilty conscience.

**Victor Hamilton**- The verb **mārar** is used fifteen times, always with man as subject, never God, unless the verb describes an interpretation given by man to God's actions and will. For example, Job (and this root plus its various derivatives appear more frequently in Job than in any other OT book [ten times]) complains: The Almighty has vexed my soul (Job 27:2), Hiphil of mārar. Similarly, Naomi says, "Do not call me Naomi, call me 'Mara' for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me" (Ruth 1:20). It is interesting to note that the Hebrews expressed tragic, unpleasant experiences in terms of the sense of taste, the bitter. Actually, we employ the same figure of speech in our English language: It was a galling experience; his actions were not in very good taste, I thought; your wife is always so tastefully dressed. (TWOT)

**Baker** says **marar** conveys "the sense of harshness, embitterment, offensiveness, affliction: of a physical attack on someone (Ge 49:23; Da 8:7; 11:11); of backbreaking, debilitating work (Ex. 1:14; 23:21); of the effect of calamities in life (Ruth 1:13, 20; 1 Sam. 30:6; 2 Kgs. 4:27; Job 27:2; Isa. 38:17; Lam. 1:4; Zech. 12:10); especially of the bitterness engendered by God's judgments on His people (Isa. 22:4; 24:9). (Word Study OT)

**Marar** - 15x in 14v - bitter(2), bitter weeping(1), bitterly(2), dealt...bitterly(1), embittered(2), enraged(2), had(1), harder\*(1), made bitter(1), troubled(1), weep bitterly(1).

Ge. 49:23; Ex. 1:14; Ru 1:13; Ru 1:20; 1 Sa 30:6; 2 Ki. 4:27; Job 27:2; Isa. 22:4; Isa. 24:9; Isa. 38:17; Lam. 1:4; Da. 8:7; Da 11:11; Zech. 12:10

Zechariah 12:10 in a very real sense is a fulfillment of the prophetic promise in Leviticus 26....

'If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me— 41 I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies—or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity, 42 then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land. (Lev 26:40-42-note)

There is also an allusion to the fulfillment of Zechariah 12:10 in Hosea 5 when Jehovah promises...

I will go away and return to My place Until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face; In their **affliction** ([tsar](#); Lxx = [thlipsis](#)) they will earnestly seek Me. (Hosea 5:15)

**Comment:** This is an incredible prophecy, for in the Septuagint the word for affliction is the noun [thlipsis](#), which is the very word Jesus uses in Matthew 24:29 to describe the horrible time of affliction the Jews will experience for three and one half years, in the time of the [Great Tribulation](#) (Begins - Mt 24:15-note, named - Mt 24:21-note), also referred to by Jeremiah as the [Time of Jacob's Distress](#) (Jeremiah 30:7-note), and by Daniel as "a time of distress" - Da 12:1-note. Note also that this 3.5 year period known as the [Great Tribulation](#) is also [synonymous with several other time phrases](#) = 1260 days, 42 months, "middle of the week," "time, times, and half a time."

Moses also alludes to the time of fulfillment of Zechariah 12:10 declaring to the nation just before they entered the Promised Land

**"When** (Not IF but WHEN!) you are in **distress** (as described in Zech 12:2-3-note, Zech 14:2-note) and all these things (cf Dt 31:17) have come upon you, in the latter days you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice. (Dt 4:30-commentary)

**Comment:** It is also worth noting that the Hebrew word for **affliction** is [tsar](#) (and the Greek word [thlipsis](#) in the Septuagint) is also used in this prophetic passage.

The prophetic promise in Zechariah 12:10 as noted above is echoed in Dt 4:30 and is also alluded to in Moses' prophecy in Deuteronomy 30:

So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you (WHEN IS WHEN? THE FULFILLMENT IS DESCRIBED IN ZECHARIAH 12-15, especially Zechariah 12:10-note WHEN THE NATION REPENTS AND BELIEVES IN MESSIAH), the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in

all nations where the LORD your God has banished you, 2 and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him **with all your heart and soul** according to all that I command you today, you and your sons (BELOVED THIS HAS NOT YET HAPPENED FOR THE NATION OF ISRAEL! THIS HAS TO BE A FUTURE EVENT!), 3 then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. 4 "If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth (NOTE ALL OVER THE EARTH NOT JUST ASSYRIA AND BABYLON), from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. 5 "The LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. 6 "Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God **with all your heart and with all your soul**, so that you may live (CLEARLY THIS HAS NOT HAPPENED AND AWAITS THE RETURN OF THE MESSIAH!). (Deuteronomy 30:1-6-[see commentary](#)).

As noted above in Joel 2:28-31, 32-note Joel describe the outpouring of the Spirit. God would first pour out His Spirit on the Jews at Pentecost, a foretaste of the pouring out of the Spirit on Israel in Zechariah 12:10. Then the Messiah will return at the end as Israel's Deliverer (Ro 11:26) and "ALL" of the 1/3 who survive will be saved (Zech 13:8-9-note). At that time the prophecy of Joel 2 will be completely fulfilled!

The **Talmud** pronounces peace upon one who refers the passage to Messiah the son of Joseph, yet to be slain. They had a theory of 2 Messiahs, one to die and one to reign. The oldest interpreters of this passage however both Jewish and Christian, understood this passage clearly referred to the Messiah to come.

As an aside, the **rabbinical theory of two messiahs** (one to suffer and one to reign) is without scriptural support. See this small booklet on [The Jewish Tradition Of Two Messiahs](#).

The repentant mourning is compared to the mourning that occurred when good King Josiah, the only king to provide any hint of spiritual hope to the believing remnant between Hezekiah and Nebuchadnezzar, was slain in [battle at Megiddo](#) (2 Chr. 35:20-25). The verbal confession of the people in that coming day is predicted in Isa. 52:13-53:12 (Matt. 24:30, Ro 11:25-33).

Messianic Jewish missionary [Adolph Saphir](#) comments on Zechariah 12:10 noting that

"Every Jew who, by the grace of God since the Day of Pentecost, had been brought to Christ fulfills (MORE ACCURATELY "PARTIALLY" FULFILLS) this prediction; he looks unto Him Whom he has pierced. It is the look of repentance; for only a sight of the crucified Jesus shows us our sin and grief. It is the look of **supplication** and faith; for He only can bless and save, and He saves all who believe. It is the look of peace and adoration; for His love is infinite, unchanging and omnipotent. It is the look which never ceases and never ends; for now the veil is taken away, and we with open face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory (2 Cor 3:18-[note](#)).

It is interesting and surprising that **John Calvin** did not see Zechariah 12:10 as Messianic but held that God was vexed ("pierced") by the Jews. Even his contemporaries refuted his spurious interpretation.

**Charles Feinberg** writes that...

Among Christians the prevailing view was that Zechariah spoke of Christ and so most of the Reformers (Calvin excepted)...That interpretation which refers the passage to the Lord Jesus Christ is the correct one because...

- (1) the Jewish tradition referred the passage to the coming Messiah, even if it did err in assigning it to the "son of Joseph";
- (2) all Jewish commentators acknowledged that the chapter spoke of the days or times of the Messiah;
- (3) this view agrees with other Scriptures which represent this mourning as that of repentance. Compare Ezekiel 36:25-31. There must be sufficient cause to answer to the profundity and universality of the grief.

The heart that is in line with the purpose of God will pray fervently that the hour may not be far off when repentant Israel will look upon their pierced Messiah and own Him as their Shepherd, their Lord, their King and their Savior. (God Remembers: A Study of Zechariah).

**Feinberg** - In Zech 12:10 the mourning is likened to the worst domestic grief; in verse 11 the sorrow is compared to a great public calamity. The mourning of Hadadrimmon (Maximianopolis) in the valley of Megiddo was on the occasion of the slaying of the godly king Josiah by Pharaoh-Necho of Egypt. Compare 2 Chronicles 35:22-27. The Chronicles passage reveals how great was the lamentation over this king. And rightly so, for "this was the greatest sorrow, which had fallen on Judah. Josiah was the last hope of

its declining kingdom.... In Josiah's death the last gleam of the sunset of Judah faded into night."

#### Related Resources:

- [Will all Israel be saved in the end times?](#)
- [Romans 9:1-5 Paul's Sorrow Concerning Israel](#) - Tony Garland
- [Romans 9:6-13 Children of the Promise](#) - Tony Garland
- [Romans 9:14-24 The Potter and the Clay](#) - Tony Garland
- [Romans 9:25-33 A Remnant Will be Saved](#) - Tony Garland
- [Romans 10:1-13 The Righteousness of God](#) - Tony Garland
- [Romans 10:14-21 Has Israel Not Heard?](#) - Tony Garland
- [Romans 11:1-6 God Has Not Cast Away The Jews](#) - Tony Garland
- [Romans 11:7-15 Life from the Dead](#) - Tony Garland
- [Romans 11:16-24 Two Olive Trees](#) - Tony Garland
- [Romans 11:25-36 The Salvation of Israel](#) - Tony Garland
- [Romans 11 Does God Have a Future for Israel? by Gil Rugh](#)
- [The Jewish Problem - small book by Jewish believer David Baron \(written in 1891-interesting!\)](#)

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**Charles Feinberg** asks an interesting question about Zechariah 12:10 - How has this important passage been treated by Jewish and Christian students in the past? **Early Jewish opinion favored the Messianic interpretation of this portion of Zechariah. After the Christian era the theory of two Messiahs, the first, the son of Joseph, and the second, the son of David, came into vogue.** Such is the position of the Talmud and many Jewish commentators, even to this day. But McCaul rightly asks, "Why should the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem mourn so bitterly for a son of Joseph, especially as, according to Abarbanel, his death is to make way for the object of their hopes and prayers, Messiah, the Son of David?"<sup>24</sup> There can be no Messiah, son of Joseph, because (so McCaul): (1) they, the two Messiahs, cannot exist contemporaneously in view of Ezekiel 34:22, 23 ("one shepherd") and 37:21-24 ("one king"); and (2) the son of David cannot succeed the son of Joseph in view of Hosea 3:4, 5, for they will have no king until they seek the son of David. However, still other Jewish commentators denied any Messianic reference whatsoever (so Kimchi). The latter says, in commenting on our passage, "Our rabbies, of blessed memory, have interpreted this of Messiah, the son of Joseph, who shall be killed in the war. But I wonder, according to their interpretation, how he is here spoken Of unconnectedly, without any previous mention at all."<sup>25</sup> Among Christians the prevailing view was that Zechariah spoke of Christ, and so most of the Reformers. Calvin was the exception, for he held that God was vexed (figuratively said to be pierced) by the Jews. His contemporaries repudiated his view. Later writers referred it to some Jewish leader or martyr. That interpretation which refers the passage to the Lord Jesus Christ is the correct one because, as McCaul has pointed out, (1) the Jewish tradition referred the passage to the coming Messiah, even if it did err in assigning it to the son of Joseph; (2) all Jewish commentators acknowledged that the chapter spoke of the days or times of the Messiah; and (3) this view agrees with other Scriptures which represent this mourning as that of repentance. Compare Ezekiel 36:25-31. There must be a sufficient cause to answer to the profundity and universality of the grief. The heart that is in line with the purposes of God will pray fervently that the hour may not be far off when repentant Israel will look upon their pierced Messiah and own Him as their Shepherd, their Lord, their King, and their Savior.

**See also - [Jewish Messianic Interpretations of Zechariah 12:10](#)**

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#### David Baron's comments continued -

"I think," said a great master in Israel, "there is nothing in the whole range of scripture more touching than the promise contained in these simple, unadorned words. As they touch the heart they fix themselves on our memory. Who can ever forget them? They shall look unto (or "upon") Me whom they have pierced." And yet there is not another scripture in the Old Testament around which more controversy has raged than around "these simple, unadorned," and, to the Christian, most precious words. Jewish commentators and some rationalistic Christian writers who seem not less biased in their anti-Christological methods in interpreting the Old Testament, have tried their utmost to divert this scripture from Him whose rejection and suffering unto death, and yet future recognition and penitent reception on the part of "His own" nation, it foretells.

The modern Jewish translation of the passage as given, for instance, in the "Appendix of the Revised Version," issued by the Jewish Community in England for the use of Jews, in 1896, is as follows: "And they (i.e., the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem) shall look up to Me because of Him whom they (i.e., the nations which come against Jerusalem) have pierced." This translation, first suggested by Rashi, adopted by Kimchi in his commentary on Zechariah, was fully elaborated by Rabbi Isaak of Troki in his polemical work against Christianity, *Chizzuk Emunah* ("Strengthening of the Faith"), who thus explains: "If it should happen

that any of the **Israelites should be pierced**, namely, in that war, even though it should be one of the most inconsiderable, they shall wonder greatly how this could happen, and will think that this is the beginning of a fall and defeat before their enemies, as Joshua did. When the men of Ai smote thirty-six of Israel, he said "Alas ! O Lord God, why didst Thou cause this people to pass the Jordan?" And again: What shall I say when Israel turn their backs before their enemies? (Joshua 7). So will it be at that time if they should see any of them pierced, they will be astonished, and look on Me on account of Him whom they pierced." This translation, however, to which English-speaking Jews have, as we have seen, officially committed themselves, only shows the length which modern Judaism will go in misinterpreting the plainest scriptures so as to evade the Christian argument drawn from them in support of the claims of Jesus of Nazareth. It is a rendering which is contrary to grammar and to the natural sense, for, first, the word *eth asher* cannot possibly mean "because of Him whom," but simply "whom," emphatically and definitely expressed. And, secondly, the modern Jewish rendering or paraphrase implies that the subject of the second verb of the first verse "pierced," is a different one from that of the first verb "shall look" in the same short sentence. But it is altogether unnatural to suppose that two parties were in the prophet's mind, and that "they" who "shall look" are the Jews, and "they" who "have pierced" are the Gentile nations.

Another "Jewish" rendering of the passage, equally unfair and even less tenable, but contradictory of the above, is that found in the bulky "Jewish Family Bible," which has also a kind of "official" air about it, inasmuch as it was "printed with the sanction of (the late) Rev. Dr. Adler, the chief Rabbi." The critical passage in question is translated thus: "But I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they whom the nations are piercing shall look upon Me, and shall mourn over it," etc. But a translation which does not scruple to interpolate words and expressions is not worth noticing, except to point out that it can claim, at best, to be only a polemical Targum, or commentary, **the chief aim of which is the elimination of all references to a suffering, atoning Messiah from the pages of the Old Testament**. It is not necessary to point out to any one who can read the original that the words, "whom the nations were piercing," are not found in the Hebrew text, and are an unjustifiable gloss of the "reviser."

But there is a more ancient Jewish interpretation of this prophecy than those to which I referred, which were invented by Jews for controversial reasons; it is that, namely, which applies the passage to **Messiah ben Joseph**. Thus Aben Ezra, who wrote after Rashi, says: "All the heathen shall look to me to see what I shall do to those who pierced Messiah, the son of Joseph" ; and Abarbanel, after noticing the interpretation of Rashi and Kimchi, says: "It is more correct to interpret the passage of Messiah, the son of Joseph, as our Rabbis, of blessed memory, have interpreted it in the treatise Sukkah, for he shall be a mighty man of valor of the tribe of Joseph, and shall at first be captain of the Lord's host in that war (namely, against Gog and Magog), but in that war shall die." This interpretation is of interest and importance to the Christian student, in so far as it shows that the disciples of Christ, when the New Testament was written, were not alone in interpreting this scripture of the Messiah. The Jewish Rabbis explained it in the same way, only they applied it to Messiah ben Joseph, who does not exist in Scripture, and is an invention of their own brains. ([The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah - 1918](#))

**Zechariah 12:11** "**In that day** there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo.

- like the mourning: 2Ki 23:29 2Ch 35:24

## **NATIONAL MOURNING AND REPENTANCE**

**Charles Feinberg** - Zechariah has not concluded what he wishes to reveal concerning that sorrow. It is of such importance that he elaborates upon it. The manner of the mourning is detailed for us. There will be universal and individual mourning. Seclusion and privacy will be sought at this time of grief. The prophet outlines for us the way in which the nation will be divided into family groups and then further into individuals as they pour out their bitter weeping over their rejection of the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. (The Minor Prophets)

**Feinberg** - Now the prophet would show us how universal as well as individual will be that sorrow, so he writes: "In that day the mourning shall be great in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives

apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of the Shimeites apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart," (Zec 12:11–14) As Chambers rightly states, "It is a picture of penitence as vivid and accurate as any found anywhere in the Scriptures."<sup>19</sup> This is the experience of Psalm 51:1-19 on a national scale....Of the three proper nouns in Zec 12:11 the LXX translates only the first as a name, erroneously rendering the other two as appellatives. (Exegetical Notes)

**Kenneth Barker** - The convicting work of the Spirit of God will produce national contrition or repentance, led by the civil (royal) and religious leaders. The future weeping ("on that day") in Jerusalem will be so great that it is compared with "the weeping of Hadad Rimmon in 'the plain of Megiddo.'"

**In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem** - Not a little remorse but **great mourning** for great sin **In that day** during the [Great Tribulation](#) (presumably just before Messiah returns but one cannot be dogmatic - except to say it will be in this last 3.5 year period) when the Spirit of God has opened the eyes of their heart to recognize Jesus Christ as their Messiah and with brokenness they mourn, even with **great mourning** given the greatness of their sin against their Messiah.

**Like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo**- "It is like the mourning of a people for the death of a wise and good prince. It shall be like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon, where good king Josiah was slain, for whom there was a general lamentation (Zechariah 12:11), and perhaps the greater because they were told that it was their sin that provoked God to deprive them of so great a blessing." (Matthew Henry)

**Stephen Ger** notes the **great mourning** "is also compared (Zech 12:11) to the national mourning that attended the untimely death of a beloved Jewish king, Josiah (2 Chron. 35:22–27). The mourning for this messianic Jewish King will not only yield public national anguish, but private, intense, individual grief, led by the Jewish political and spiritual leadership (Zech 12:12–14). ([Zechariah: Minor Prophet With A Major Message - Conservative Theological Journal 03:8 Apr 1999](#))

**Hadad-rimmon** (composed of the names of two Syrian idols), the name of a place in the valley of [Megiddo](#). It is a proverbial expression derived from the lamentation for Josiah, who was mortally wounded near this place 2 Ch 35:22-25

However, Josiah would not turn away from him, but disguised himself in order to make war with him; nor did he listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God, but came to make war on the plain of Megiddo. 23 The archers shot King Josiah, and the king said to his servants, "Take me away, for I am badly wounded." 24 So his servants took him out of the chariot and carried him in the second chariot which he had, and brought him to Jerusalem where he died and was buried in the tombs of his fathers. **All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.** 25 **Then Jeremiah chanted a lament for Josiah.** And all the male and female singers **speak about Josiah in their lamentations to this day.** And they made them an ordinance in Israel; behold, they are also written in the Lamentations.

**Mourning...mourning** (04553)(**misped** from **saphad**= to wail, lament) is a "masculine noun depicting wailing, mourning, lamenting. It stands for deep, despairing emotional reactions by persons and animals at some calamity: the death of a patriarch (Gen. 50:10); the prospect of being slaughtered, annihilated (Esth. 4:3); the opposite of dancing for joy (Ps. 30:11[12]); at the approach of judgment from the Lord (Isa. 22:12; Jer. 6:26; Amos 5:16, 17; Mic. 1:8); economic disaster (Ezek. 27:31). It is used of mourning for a person (Zech. 12:10, 11)." (Baker)

**Gilbrant - Misped** is used to describe the ritual of wailing over the dead, as is the case in Gen. 50:10. Here Joseph and his attendants lamented over Jacob's death, "And [Joseph] observed seven days mourning for his father" (NASB). As is the common meaning of this noun, it is used to describe more of a prolonged mourning custom that involves certain rituals rather than mere emotive release. Scattering dust on one's head, fasting, cutting one's beard, rending one's garments and disheveling one's hair were among the observable rituals that comprised mourning rites in biblical times. (Further examples of these rituals used to express mourning can be found in Jer. 6:26; 48:38; Ezek. 27:31; and Mic. 1:8). In addition, mispfidh is used many times with respect to God's coming judgment, for judgment will bring the necessity of mourning. Three times, the word appears in Amos 5:16f to express the peoples' anguish at the Lord's passing through their midst. Oftentimes, in connection with mispfidh being used to describe a response to the Lord's coming judgment, it is also used to express repentance toward God. The Lord declares through his prophet Joel, "Return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and mourning" (Joel 2:12, NASB). (Ibid)

**Misped** - 14x in 13v - lament(1), lamentation(4), mourning(5), wailing(4).

Gen. 50:10; Est. 4:3; Ps. 30:11; Isa. 22:12; Jer. 6:26; Jer. 48:38; Ezek. 27:31; Joel 2:12; Amos 5:16; Amos 5:17; Mic. 1:8; Mic. 1:11; Zech. 12:11

**R D Patterson** on **mourning** with **saphad** and **misped** - By far most of the references in which this root and its derivative are found deal with the mourning rites at someone's death (e.g. Gen 23:2; 50:10; I Sam 25:1; 28:3; II Sam 1:12; 3:31; 11:26; I Kgs 13:29f.; cf.



Eccl 12:5). A such times, all who sensed the loss of the departed would come to share their grief with the members of the family. Their grief could be demonstrated in many ways: going barefoot, stripping off one's clothes, cutting one's beard or body, fasting (or banqueting), scattering ashes, or beating some part of the body. Some of these rituals were proscribed for the Israelite, doubtless because of pagan association (Lev 19:28). Shrill cries or loud wailing often accompanied the mourning, which in time became stereotyped and structured into formal laments. Of course, weeping, especially by the women, was greatly in evidence as the combination of sāpad with its set parallel bākâ ("weep") attests. The growth of funerary ritual led to the employment of professional mourners, again, usually women. Mourning for the dead began immediately at death, went on as the body was carried to the tomb, was observed at the tomb and lasted at least seven days after the burial. The practice of mourning for the departed was seized upon by the prophets to warn of a coming national death in accordance with the just judgment of God. Isaiah 32:11ff. summons the women of Judah to mourn in the light of the coming judgment. Jeremiah 4:8 calls Jerusalem to repentance and mourning in the face of the Assyrian invasion. Joel 1:8, 13ff. calls on the mourning priests to lead the people in a time of heartfelt national repentance and sorrow for their sins, since the locust plague was but a harbinger of a worse judgment to come. Micah 1:8 goes wailing and mourning for Judah. A whole genre of prophetic lamentation grew up which not only stressed the need of national repentance for sin and the certainty of coming judgment but promised ultimate deliverance at the coming of Messiah (e.g. Zech 12:10–11), when in a far deeper sense the believer will reecho the Psalmist's cry (Ps 30:10–11), "O Lord ... thou hast turned my mourning into dancing!" (TWOT)

This is the same word used by God in Joel 2 calling for Israel to repent "Yet even now," declares the LORD, "Return to Me with all your heart, And with fasting, weeping and **mourning**;" (Joel 2:12) In a very real sense the **mourning** in Zechariah 12:11 is an answer to Jehovah's call in Joel 2:12, as it is the mourning of a broken heart, a repentant heart.

The same Hebrew word for mourning is used by David in Psalm 30 writing "You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have loosed my sackcloth and girded me with gladness." (Ps 30:11) Indeed for the Jews who mourned over their Messiah, their mourning and repentance would be turned by joy by the Holy Spirit.

Yes **in that day** there will indeed be "**great mourning**," but it will be followed by **great joy** (Zephaniah 3:14-20-commentary).

Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! 15 **The LORD has taken away His judgments against you, He has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; You will fear disaster no more.** 16 **In that day** it will be said to Jerusalem: "Do not be afraid, O Zion; Do not let your hands fall limp. 17 "The LORD your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy. 18 "I will gather those who grieve about the appointed feasts— They came from you, O Zion; The reproach of exile is a burden on them. 19 "Behold, I am going to deal at that time With all your oppressors, I will save the lame And gather the outcast, And I will turn their shame into praise and renown In all the earth. 20 "At that time I will bring you in, Even at the time when I gather you together; Indeed, I will give you renown and praise Among all the peoples of the earth, When I restore your fortunes before your eyes," Says the LORD.

Hadadrimmon is literally "of Hadad Rimmon." Hadad Rimmon was a Syrian god of storm and fertility who may have been worshiped annually with rites of mourning, like the Mesopotamian god Tammuz (cf. Ezek. 8:14). The point may be that Israel's repentant sorrow will be as great as the abominable rites of mourning performed in disobedience to God at [Megiddo](#). In support of this view, many pagan cult objects have been discovered in excavations at Megiddo. Nevertheless, a more likely view is that there was adjacent to [Megiddo](#) a site **Hadad-Rimmon** named for the pagan god, where mourning took place for Josiah.

**NET Note - Hadad-Rimmon** is a compound of the names of two Canaanite deities, the gods of storm and thunder respectively. The grammar (a subjective genitive) allows, and the problem of comparing Israel's grief at God's "wounding" with pagan mourning seems to demand, that this be viewed as a place name, perhaps where Judah lamented the death of good king Josiah (cf. 2 Chr 35:25). However, some translations render this as "**for**" (NRSV, NCV, TEV, CEV), suggesting a person, while others translate as "**of**" (KJV, NAB, NASB, NIV, NLT) which is ambiguous.

**MacAthur** - "Since there is no specific mountain by that name, and Har can refer to hill country, it is probably a reference to the hill country surrounding the [Plain of Megiddo](#), some sixty miles north of Jerusalem. More than two hundred battles have been fought in that region."

**Zechariah 12:12** "The land will mourn, every family by itself; the family of the house of David by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself and their wives by themselves;

- **The land will mourn:** Jer 3:21 Jer 4:28 Jer 31:18 Mt 24:30 Rev 1:7
- **every family by itself** Ex 12:30
- **the family of the house of David by itself:** Jer 13:18 Jon 3:5,6
- **and their wives by themselves:** Zec 7:3 Joe 2:16 1Co 7:5
- **the family of the house of Nathan by itself:** 2Sa 5:14 7:2-4 12:1 Lu 3:31

**Charles Feinberg** - Because of the overwhelming sorrow each family will weep apart. It will be an intense and sincere sorrow; private and public; national and individual; personal and family. The mourning will extend from the highest to the lowest in the land. The mention of the house of David shows the kings to be guilty; the house of Nathan (if this be Nathan the prophet and not Nathan, son of David), prophets guilty; the house of Levi, the priests guilty; and the house of Shimei, the ordinary Levites (Nu 3:21) guilty. The old Jewish view held that Nathan represented the prophetic order, while the Shimeite stood for the teachers.

**Spurgeon** - "**The land will mourn** (cf Jer 4:28), **every family by itself.**" True repentance is the distinct act of each individual. It cannot, as a rule, be performed in the mass. There is a general repentance that, like that of the Ninevites, has a special excellence about it because it affects a whole city or nation, but that is not the kind of repentance that is described here. In this case the sharpness of personal conviction of sin cuts and wounds the conscience of each individual, and a bitter cry is uttered by each one as if he were the only sinner in the world. How sincerely you and I would repent if we felt as if we were the only ones who had ever broken God's law! Yet such repentance as that is necessary if we would be personally forgiven.

From **Spurgeon's** sermon "[Apart" on Zechariah 12:12-14](#) - TRUE repentance is always accompanied by sorrow. It has been said by some of those of modern times who disparage repentance that repentance is "nothing but a change of mind." These words sound as if there was merely some superficial meaning to them; and so, indeed, they are intended by those who use them, but they are not so intended by the Spirit of God. Repentance may be and is a change of mind; but what a change it is! It is not an unimportant change of mind such as you may have concerning whether you will take your holiday this week or the next, or about some trifling matter of domestic interest; but it is a change of the whole heart, of the love, of the hate, of the judgment, and of the view of things taken by the individual whose mind is thus changed. It is a deep, radical, fundamental, lasting change; and you will find that, whenever you meet with it in Scripture, it is always accompanied with sorrow for past sin. And rest you assured of this fact, that the repentance which has no tear in its eye, and no mourning for sin in its heart, is a repentance which needs to be repented of, for there is in it no evidence of conversion, no sign of the existence of the grace of God. In what way has that man changed his mind who is not sorry that he has sinned? In what sense can it be said that he has undergone any change worth experiencing if he can look back upon his past life with pleasure, or look upon the prospect of returning to his sin without an inward loathing and disgust? I say again that we have need to stand in doubt of that repentance which is not accompanied with mourning for sin; and even when Christ is clearly seen by faith, and sin is pardoned, and the man knows that it is forgiven, he does not cease to mourn for sin. Nay, brethren, his mourning becomes deeper as his knowledge of his guilt becomes greater; and his hatred of sin grows in proportion as he understands that love of Christ by which his sin is put away. In true believers, mourning for sin is chastened and sweetened, and, in one sense, the fang of bitterness is taken out; but, in another sense, the more we realize our indebtedness to God's grace, and the more we see of the sufferings of Christ in order to our redemption, the more do we hate sin, and the more do we lament that we ever fell into it. I am sure it is so, and that every Christian's experience will confirm what I say....Another special characteristic of this mourning described by Zechariah, which also distinguishes genuine repentance for sin, is that it is personal, the act of each individual, and the act of the individual apart from any of his fellows. The watchword of true penitence is this word "**apart.**" How it rings out in the text (in the King James Version the word "apart" occurs 11x in Zech 12:12-14KJV)...Sham repentance can do its work in the mass; it talks about national sin and national sorrow, which generally means the mere notion of sin and the notion of repentance. But when it comes to a true work of the Spirit of God, and men do really mourn for sin so as to obtain pardon, it is a thing in which each individual stands in a personal solitude, as much apart from everybody else as if he had been the sole man that God ever made, and was without father and without mother and without descent, and had himself alone so sinned that the whole anger of God for sin had fallen upon him. A man in this condition gets alone, he bears his sin apart, quitting the company of his fellows, and all the charms that once lured him to destruction; and his lamentation on account of sin is his own sole act and deed. It wells up from his own heart, it is not borrowed from others; but, by the effectual working of the grace of God, everything about it is of himself.

**The land will mourn, every family by itself** - It is a general public mourning, but more importantly a private, personal mourning. Not only the capital of Jerusalem, but the whole land shall mourn, and this not only in mass but especially individually, every family and every subdivision of a family by itself.

**Kenneth Barker** says "The expressions "each clan by itself" and "their wives by themselves" (v.12) are doubtless intended to emphasize the sincerity of the mourning as true repentance. This is no purely emotional public spectacle. Nor are professional mourners involved. Individually and corporately, this is the experience of Leviticus 16 (the Day of Atonement) and Psalm 51 (a penitential psalm) on a national scale." (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

**The family of the house of David by itself** - Royalty will mourn.

**And their wives by themselves** - five times we see this phrase in Zechariah 12:2-14! This mourning will be so intense as to transcend even the closest ties on earth, those between husband and wife. Each will want to be alone with God in that hour.

**Feinberg on wives by themselves** - Five times it is mentioned that their wives will mourn apart. It has been suggested that the reference is to the Jewish custom for wives to live in separate apartments as well as to worship separately. This is to miss the inner meaning of the passage. The prophet means that the mourning will be so intense as to transcend even the closest ties of earth, those between husband and wife. Each will want to be alone with God in that hour.

**The family of the house of Nathan by itself** - Nathan would be representative of the prophets, but Feinberg notes "Some identify this Nathan as the prophet (2 Sa 7:2) while others think it is the younger son of David (2 Sa 5:14). If the former is intended, then the royal office and prophetic are included; if the latter is the meaning, then the highest and lowest in the royal house are in view. We cannot prove either view with finality."

**And their wives by themselves** - see Feinberg above.

**Warren Wiersbe** - Note the specific groups of people who will repent (12:12-14): David (royalty), Nathan (the prophets), Levi (the priests). Throughout Israel's history, it has been the prophets, priests, and kings who often led the people astray. (Wiersbe's Expository Outlines of the OT)

**Zechariah 12:13 the family of the house of Levi by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself and their wives by themselves;**

- **the family of the house of Levi by itself:** Ex 6:16-26 Nu 3:1-4:49 Mal 2:4-9
- **the family of the Shimeites by itself:** or, Simeon, as LXX, 2Sa 16:5 1Ki 1:8 1Ch 3:19 4:27 23:7,10 2Ch 29:14

**The family of the house of Levi by itself** - The priests will mourn. It is interesting that the prophet mentions these groups who would be members of one of the 12 tribes. Will they know which tribe they belong to at this time? I am not sure. But God knows and so He knows and is probably signifying the fact that the mourning among the Jews when they see their Messiah will be reflective of all having a broken heart. And as we will see in Zechariah 13:8-9, those Jews who mourn and repent and believe in Messiah are only one-third of the entire nation of Israel.

**The family of the Shimeites by itself** - Shimei son of Gershon, the son of Levi (Nu 3:17-18, 21)

**And their wives by themselves...And their wives by themselves** - see Feinberg's comment in verse 12.

**Zechariah 12:14 all the families that remain, every family by itself and their wives by themselves.**

## **NATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL MOURNING**

This is a very poor chapter break (recalling they were not inspired), but naturally flows into the next verse (pun intended) which says

"In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity. (Zechariah 13:1-note)

Their mourning and weeping and repenting has prepared their hearts to be washed clean of their sin even as Ezekiel had prophesied

"Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. (Ezekiel 36:25-note)

And then washed by the blood of the Lamb and having the Spirit poured out on them (Joel 2:28-note) Zechariah says at that time

They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'" (Zechariah 13:9-note)

**Feinberg** - Because of the overwhelming sorrow each family will weep apart. It will be an intense and sincere sorrow; private and

public; national and individual; personal and family.

**All the families that remain** - Everyone not characterized as members of one of the groups in Zech 12:12-14 will mourn and repent after looking upon the Messiah Whom they pierced.

**Every family by itself - By itself.** six times and five **by themselves** in Zech 12:12, 13, 14. As noted the KJV has "apart" eleven times. Individual repentance is emphasized.

**Constable** comments that "The repeated phrases **"every family by itself"** and **"their wives by themselves"** solemnize the mourning and underline its genuineness....This would not be a national media event staged by the leaders of Israel to make a show, but individuals everywhere throughout the nation would sincerely voice their remorse."

**Kelly** writes "'The closest relationship is as nothing in [the] presence of sin and God as its judge. Each must be alone."

**And their wives by themselves** - see Feinberg's comment in verse 12.

**Steven Cole** applies the truths of this incredible predictive prophecy by first asking - Why did God give this remarkable prophecy to people who lived at least 2,500 years before it would take place? It was not so that they could draw up prophecy charts and read books about how soon these things would take place. He gave these prophecies to comfort His people as they went through trials and faced threatening enemies with the solid truth that He is a mighty Savior, and that no one can touch His elect apart from His purpose. That's how He wants us to apply it. If you have not yet repented of your sins and trusted in Christ as your Savior, God may have kept you alive until now so that today you would look on Him whom you pierced and mourn. If you have trusted in Christ, He wants you to know that no enemy, whether "tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword," or even death itself, will be able to separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:35-39)!

**Feinberg** sums up Zechariah 12:10-14 - "LOOK UNTO ME" How simple yet how glorious is the way of salvation provided by our God. It is a looking away from self and man-made plans and endeavors to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. In Israel's glad conversion hour she will come into the knowledge of sins forgiven by looking unto her rejected and pierced Messiah, the crucified Saviour of sinners.