

Notes for Zech 12 – 14

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We have progress towards “that day” when God establishes his universal kingdom on earth. “On that day” repeated 16 times in 12 – 14. Two basic themes: siege of Jerusalem and God’s intervention to protect Jerusalem and to set up his world-wide kingdom

Chapter 12

1: “Israel” — entire nation, not just the northern kingdom.

Note 12.1: “Thus declares the Lord who *stretches* out the heavens, *lays* the foundation of the earth, and *forms* the spirit of man within him....”

Note that “stretches,” “lays,” and “forms” are prepositions in Hebrew implying *present* tense, not past tense as in many translations. (LXX also has present tense.)

Parallel passages:

Isaiah 42:5

Thus says God the LORD, creator the heavens and *stretches* them out, who *spreads* out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it,

Isaiah 44:24

Thus says the LORD, your redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, “I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, *stretching* out the heavens by myself and *spreading* out the earth all alone,

2: “Cup of reeling”

Jer 25.15, 16: 15 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. They will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them.”

Is 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.

Rev 16.19: Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.

Cf. Zech 14.2 on invasion of Jerusalem; also, Joel 3.9 – 16; Rev 16:16 – 21

3: “Heavy stone” more or less repeats vs. 2.

4 & 5: The Lord intervenes first in Jerusalem and then in Judah. “Bewilderment” and “madness” cf. Dt 28.28 for application to disobedient Israel. The mention of horses may be to exalt God’s power.

6 – 9: Judah joins the fray. Judah and Jerusalem fight together so there is no envy of one vs. the other. Jerusalem and Judah are like David and the nations are Goliath.

9: “All the nations” refers back to vss. 2 & 3. It starts out w/ nations around and then extends to all the nations. This appears to be a world conflagration.

At first, the battle is being won by the combined human forces of Jerusalem and of Judah without obvious supernatural help. That comes later as the battle rages against Judah and Jerusalem.

10: Following a great victory, the Lord will revive Judah’s and Jerusalem’s citizens and they will understand the magnitude of their participation concerning “the one they have pierced.”

Note the change between “me” and “him.” Does this make sense to you?

Does “Spirit” refer to the Holy Spirit or to man’s “disposition.” I favor Holy Spirit, for in other passages we read that the Lord will pour out his Holy Spirit upon humanity and they will turn to him. Cf. Is 32.15; 44.3; 59.20 – 21; Ezek 36.26 – 27; 39.29; Joel 2.28 – 29. Also note that the spirit of repentance is of the Lord. Cf. 2 Tm 2.25: “...if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth....”

For more on “pierced,” cf. Is. 53.5: “But He was pierced through for our transgressions....”

11: Weeping as like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo. Not known precisely where this is, but the best indication comes from Jerome who identified it with a place he knew as Rummané not far from Jezreel, and may refer to the death of good king Josiah who was killed at Megiddo in the Valley of Jezreel and for whom there was great mourning. Cf. (2 Kgs 23.26 – 37; 2 Chr 35.20 – 36.5; Jer 22.1 – 23).

Some suggest this is the mourning for Baal's death carried out in pagan rituals, but I have a hard time thinking that Zechariah is likening the pierced son to a pagan myth, especially since Baal worship is thoroughly condemned throughout scripture.

12 – 14: Note that the families of David (king), Nathan (prophet), and Levi (priest) will mourn, implying that all three institutions of leadership in Israel will mourn. Mourning by themselves implies one group is not influencing the other: The repentance is genuine.

What about "Shimei(tes)?" This is the name of a grandson of Levi, but it's also the name of the person that cursed David when he fled from Absalom, but later repented before David (2 Sam 16 & 19; 1 Kgs 2)

The correlation between them? David repented at the confrontation of Nathan, and Shimei after David was safe. As for Levi? (You tell me.)

Chapter 13

1: This verse fits in w/ the end of chapter 12. The "fountain" may be an expansion of the "sprinkling" in Ezek 36.24 – 25: "For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. 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." (Cf. the cleansing of Joshua the high priest in Zech 3.4ff.)

Note the hymn "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood." (William Cowper, [1731 – 1800]):

There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.
(etc.)

Also note Ezekiel's river flowing from the temple eastward w/ trees growing alongside w/ fruit for eating and leaves for healing. (Eden reestablished.)

Vss. 2 – 6: Back to evil leaders,

2: False prophets are/will be a problem (cf. Mt 24.4, 5, 11, 15, 23, 24; 2 Thes 2.2 – 4, Rev 9.20, 13.4 – 15. They were a problem in the time of Nehemiah (Neh 6.12 – 14).

3: Same word "pierce" here as in 12.10. For parents to do this shows quite a conversion and zealotry for the truth.

4: Masoretic Text says "will not put on a hairy robe to prophesy," whereas the LXX has "will put on a hairy robe." (Maybe the LXX is thinking of sackcloth that a repenting prophet might wear—I'm just guessing here.)

Where does the idea of a "hairy robe" come from? (cf. 2 Kgs 1.8: Elijah; Mt 3.4: John the Baptist)

5 & 6: The false prophets apparently had some kind of markings that made it obvious they were in the (false) prophetic ministry, and they cannot get rid of the markings (Tattoos? Ecstatic cuttings as per Baal's prophets on Mt. Carmel [1 Kgs 18.28]?). Now the prophets are in CYA mode and blame the marks/bruises on brawling w/ a friend. (Likely story!)

7: Picks up the shepherd theme of chapter 11. "Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered" appears in Mt 26.31 & Mk 14.27, and is quoted by Jesus.

8: Future destruction of the land and 2/3 of its people.

9: 1/3 of the remainder will go thru the fire (purification), and this will show they are truly God's people. Can this refer to the 144,000 of Rev 7.1 – 8 & 14.1 – 5?

The ending of chapter 13 sets up the more detailed prophecies of chapter 14. In a sense, chapter 14 "fleshes out" 13.7 – 9.

Chapter 14

Nice parallel to chapter 12 in terms of events, but w/ finer detail.

1 & 2: Expands upon 13.8 & 9. Shows how the 2/3 will perish and what depredations the 1/3 that remain will experience: plunder, abuse of women, exile. "All the nations"—the whole globe or the surrounding nations as per 12.2? Obviously, the armies of all nations cannot fit around Jerusalem, so this is probably something like a UN force that is sent to settle the "Jewish question" once and for all.

If 1/2 of the previous 1/3 is in view, then 1/6 of the original population remains.

3 & 4a: The promised intervention of God finally takes place w/ the coming of Lord whose feet will stand on the Mt. of Olives. Clearly, this is Jesus's Second Coming. It is at that time that the Jew will realize whom the "one they have pierced" is.

"Against the nations" can also be "with the nations" (preposition can mean both in Hebrew), and early church fathers thought the Lord was fighting w/ the nations against Jerusalem. (Sorry to say, but some church fathers were very anti-Semitic.) But in context, "against" makes more sense. The Lord will fight against the nations in the way he fought against the Egyptians during the Exodus.

4b – 5: The Second Coming will usher massive geologic shifts, including the splitting of the Mt. of Olives. The valley will become a means of escape (vs. 5) and an E-W valley thru which waters will flow towards the Dead Sea (Sea of Salt). (Tie this in with Ezek 47.1 – 12.)

The connection between this mountain and Jesus's ascension, and the angel's statement that Jesus will return in the same way, points to the literalness of Jesus's return.

As for the earthquake in Uzziah's time, which occurred c. 760 B.C. (cf. Amos 1.1). Indications of this earthquake appear in the archeological excavations of Level VI at Hazor.

Whose feet are coming on the mount? Cf. acts 1.9 – 12. Jesus comes as he went.

MT text has "all the holy ones w/ you. Who are these "holy ones?" cf. Mt 25.31; Rev 19.14; Jude 14 (angels) & 1 Thess 4.17 (redeemed humanity—implied).

6 & 7: Astronomical peculiarities; one sees astronomical signs in lots of apocalyptic literature. Cf. Is 13.9; Joel 2.31; 3.15; Amos 5.18; Mt 24.29 – 30; Rev 6.12 – 14; 8.8 – 12.

There will be one continuous day. cf. Is 60.19, 20; Rev 21.25; 22.5.

8: The river flowing towards the east. Summer as well as winter—streams dry in summer after the end of the latter rains. Eastern sea—Dead Sea; western sea—Mediterranean.

Is there a connection w/ John 7.38 about the flowing Spirit?

9: "...in that day the Lord will be the *only* one, and His name the *only* one." Literally, "the LORD will be one and his name one." Does this remind you of anything? Cf. Dt. 6.4. also:

Dt 4.35: To you it was shown that you might know that the Lord, He is God; there is no other besides Him.

Dt 4.39: Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the Lord, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other.

Is 45.5: "I am the Lord, and there is no other; besides Me there is no God.

It is not, therefore, unreasonable to think of Zech 14.9 as implying that the LORD is the only LORD and God. The "oneness" refers to uniqueness; the Trinity has not suddenly become Unitarian!

10: A plain from Geba to Rimmon. Check a map. Zion will rise above the rest of the terrain. Figurative? Literal? Probably literal if we take the movement of Mt. of Olives literally. Also cf. Mic 4.1; Is 2.2.

As for the gates, these mark the N-S-E-W corners, which implies the entire city will be inhabited again.

11: In spite of its desolation, Jerusalem will be inhabited again when the Lord becomes king.

12: Backtrack. This is what is to happen before the Lord becomes King. To wit, the armies surrounding Jerusalem will be destroyed, perhaps in the same way that the angel of the Lord destroyed Sennacherib's army in the time of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 19.35; 2 Chr 32.21. Cf. Jdg 7.22).

13: Enemies of Israel have been defeated by fighting amongst themselves. Cf. Hag 2.22; 2 Chr 20.22.

14: Will Judah fight "with" or "against" Jerusalem? Same story as with vs. 3. The preposition in Hebrew can mean either, but context strongly implies "with," especially in light of Zech 12.5.

15: The plague will be on the means of transportation and upon the food sources of the invaders. Few escape.

16: Clearly, although the armies of the attackers have been defeated, the citizens of the attacking nations remain. With the supernatural loss of their military, the people—if not converted—decide better to be on a friendly basis w/ the Lord, and they show this by attending the Feast of Booths, which was a feast open to all people, Israelites or not. This picks up the theme in Zech 8.20 – 23 about going to Jerusalem.

The Feast of Booths (Tabernacles) is in the fall of the year when the last harvest occurs and was/is a festival of rejoicing (Lev 23.40; Dt 16.14, 15; Neh 8.17). So now we see the “ingathering” of the nations to the King—who is the LORD!

This was also the time that the Torah was read: Dt 31.12: “Assemble the people, *the men and the women and children and the alien who is in your town*, so that they may hear and learn and fear the Lord your God, and be careful to observe all the words of this law.

It is also fitting that the Feast of Tabernacles be important since now the King—the LORD—will “tabernacle” among humans in the new heavens and the new earth (Rev 21.3).

17: No rain—one of the punishments that will come upon a nation that does not send a delegation to the Feast of Tabernacles. Note that the withholding of rain was a punishment that the Lord would bring upon Israel if she did not obey God’s laws (Dt 11.17). Rain is also seen earlier in Zech 10.1 when the Lord encourages the people to ask for rain.

Note that the river mentioned earlier (Zech 14.8 & Ezek 47) needs rain for continuous running, especially to run in summer.

18 – 19: Interesting that Egypt is mentioned since it depends upon the Nile not upon rain, but without rain even the Nile will dry up.

20: Bells on the horses w/ “Holy to the Lord” inscribed upon the bells. Note that this expression was on the miter (turban) of the high priest (Ex 28.36) and was meant for all Israel, for Israel was to be a holy nation (Ex 19.6; Jer 2.3). Once God’s reign is established, holiness will be characteristic of the people and of their animals. Since horses are no longer needed for war, they can be used to transport pilgrims to Jerusalem. (Thoughts from Joyce Baldwin.)

This anticipates Rev 19.16: “on his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”

Pots: Here and in vs. 21: Pots were used for cooking the sacrifices. In this case, fellowship offerings, for if all is holy, the whole burnt offering is not necessary.

As for “Canaanite,” this can refer to non-Israelites, but in the context of people coming from all nations, why would Canaanites be excluded—unless the word infers someone morally or spiritually unclean.

Is 35.8: “A highway will be there, a roadway, and it will be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean will not travel on it, but it will be for him who walks that way, and fools will not wander on it.”

Ezek 43.7: He said to me, “Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell among the sons of Israel forever. And the house of Israel will not again defile My holy name.

Ezek 44.9: Thus says the Lord God, “No foreigner uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the sons of Israel, shall enter My sanctuary.

Rev 21.27: and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life. (New heavens and earth)

The word “Canaanite” also means “merchant,” and this may refer to the practice of merchants fleecing the pilgrims when they came to Jerusalem to sacrifice. Note Jesus’s words in Mt 21.12, 13; Mk 11.17; Lk 19.46; Jn 2.16; (cf. Jer 7.11)

At the end—after great destruction wreaked upon Jerusalem and Judah—the Lord will be king in practice and not in theory. I.e., it will be a reality, not something to look forward to.

A question remains as to what is fulfilled during the “Millennium” (Rev 20.2, 4) and what during the new heavens and the new earth.