

Zechariah Chapter 14 Continued

Zechariah 14:11 “And [men] shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.”

“Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited”: Jerusalem, the city of peace, has been fought over more frequently than any other city on earth, and prayed for over the millennia (Psalm 122:6-9). As promised by God (2 Sam. 7:10-17; Psalm 2:6; Ezek. 37:24-28; Joel 3:16-17), she will know permanent righteousness and with it peace, rest and safety.

Verse 11 gives us in these three brief sentences, a glimpse of the blessed condition of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, which shall be thus renewed and established.

Jacob then “shall be quite and at ease, and none shall make him afraid.” (Jer. 30:10).

“And there shall be no more utter destruction”, because the causes which previously provoked the Holy One to inflict desolating and destructive judgments upon the land and people shall be no more.

Nothing shall hurt or destroy throughout God’s holy mountain. Not only are these things blessed, but are living symbols, speaking of higher blessings. For they indicate the peace and harmony and love that shall pervade all hearts and all peoples whom the power of Zion shall effectually reach.

“And Jerusalem shall dwell (or ‘shall be inhabited’) safely, or literally, in conscious security”. Or “in confidence”; though it shall be surrounded neither by walls, nor fortifications, it shall have nothing to fear. “For I, saith Jehovah, will be unto her a wall of fire round about and the glory in the midst of her” (Zech. 2:4-5).

This picture of the blessed condition of restored and purified Jerusalem, which in the millennial period will be, so to say, the earthly vestibule and the refectory of the glory of the new or heavenly Jerusalem, which shall come down from God out of heaven, is filled in by the inspired utterances of the “former” prophets (read Isa. 65:17-20).

Verses 12-15: The prophet, one final time, cycles back over the judgment that precedes the kingdom.

God will strike the heathen forces gathered against Israel (verses 1-3), with a supernatural plague similar to His judgment of the Assyrian army (Isa. 37: 36). Causing a panic so great that they begin to attack one another (Judges 7:22; 1 Sam. 14:15-20; 2 Chron. 20:23), aiding in the escape of the half (verses 2, 5).

God will enable His people to fight (Isa. 11:13-14). Then He will send a wide spread plague that even extends to their animals, preventing their use for military endeavors or escape. This depicts the thwarting of their efforts as God ultimately destroys them by the Messiah (Rev. 19:11-16).

Zechariah 14:12 “And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.”

"And this shall be the plagues": This respects one or more, or all, of the seven plagues, which will be inflicted on the antichristian states, mentioned in (Revelation 15:1).

"Wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem": Who have been the enemies and persecutors of his church; and with which plague or plagues they shall be utterly consumed and destroyed.

"Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet": Antichrist will be consumed with the breath of Christ's mouth; the flesh of the whore of Rome, which is her substance, shall be eaten and devoured by the kings of the earth. And her destruction will be in a moment, suddenly, and at unawares, as is here suggested (see 2 Thess. 2:8).

"And their eyes shall consume away in their holes": The right eye of the idol shepherd shall be utterly dried up, and the kingdom of the beast will be full of darkness (Zech. 11:17).

"And their tongue shall consume away in their mouth": With which antichrist and his followers have blasphemed the name of God, his tabernacle, and his saints. And which they will gnaw for pain, when the plagues of God are inflicted on them (Rev. 13:5).

The glorious picture of salvation has its obverse side, namely the judgments which will be inflicted on the enemies of God and His people.

Chronologically (verses 12-15 should follow verse 3), for the terrible punishment of the confederated anti-Christian hosts which they describe are the immediate consequence of the manifest interposition of Jehovah in the person of the Messiah as the Deliverer of His people, when He shall “go forth and fight against those nations as when He fought in the day of battle”.

The prophet, one final time, cycles back over the judgment that precedes the kingdom. God will strike the heathen forces gathered against Israel with a supernatural plague similar to His judgment of the Assyrian army, causing a panic so great that they begin to attack one another.

Three weapons will be used by God for the destruction of the enemies of His Kingdom:

- (1) The fearful plague described (in verse 12);
- (2) Mutual destruction in consequence of a great panic of terror “from Jehovah”.

These first two are spoken of as being inflicted by God's own hand. The Hebrew word *maggepha*, rendered is used for infliction, slaughter, plague or pestilence, always denoting a plague or judgment sent direct by God.

The description of the "plague" is terribly realistic. Literally, "He (Jehovah), makes his flesh to rot (or consume away), "while they stand upon their feet", which is perhaps intended to express the suddenness with which God's stroke will alight upon him.

"And his eye (singular), shall consume away in their sockets (plural); and his tongue (singular), shall consume away in their mouth (Plural).

The thought which the prophet probably intends to express, by the use of the singular suffix, is that this terrible catastrophe shall overtake each one and the whole company.

The superhuman strength of the saved remnant of Judah, who shall suddenly become like "a pan of fire" among wood, and like "a flaming torch among sheaves"

They shall devour their enemies round about, on their right hand and on their left (see verse 12:6).

Zechariah 14:13 "And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor."

"And it shall come to pass in that day": When the vials are pouring out.

"That a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them": The Targum renders it, a great tumult, or noise of killing. And the Septuagint, an ecstasy: it refers to the earthquake, and the slaughter of seven thousand men of name, and the fright upon that (Rev. 11:13).

"And they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor": There will be a revolution, upon this tumult, in several of the antichristian states; and the kings of them shall hate the whore, make her desolate, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire (Rev. 17:16).

Or, "his hand shall be cut off by the hand of his neighbor" (see Zechariah 11:17), the power of antichrist shall be destroyed by neighboring Christian princes.

"A great tumult from the Lord" with which the gathered hosts shall also be seized in that day, is the supernatural panic and "confusion" which Jehovah sends among His enemies, with a view to their utter self destruction.

It is the same as the "astonishment" and "madness" with which the horses and riders of these same hosts are spoken of as smitten (in chapter 12:4), and as a consequence "they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbor).

Each one in that panic stricken throng shall seize the other's hand, "mastering him powerfully," with a view to his destruction. And each man's hand shall be lifted up against the hand of his neighbor with a view to deliver a deadly blow.

This will be like when the hosts of Midian were discomfited before Gideon and his little band of 300 or the multitude of Philistines at Michmash "melted away" before Jonathan and his armor bearer (in Judges 7:22).

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

"And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem": These are the professing people of Christ, the armies in heaven, the chosen, called, and faithful, who will follow the Lamb, and attend him when he goes forth to make war with the antichristian princes, and shall overcome them (Rev. 17:14).

"And the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance": By which are meant the riches of the Papists (Papist is a "usually disparaging" term or an anti-Catholic slur, referring to the Roman Catholic Church, its teachings, practices, or adherents). Called Gentiles or Heathens (Rev. 11:2), which will fall into the hands of the followers of Christ at the time of Rome's destruction.

And which are signified by the flesh of the whore, and by the flesh of kings, captains, and mighty men, which will then be eaten. They will be stripped and spoiled of all their substance (Rev. 17:16).

Judah isn't fighting against Jerusalem, contrarily, this means "and Judah also," which stands here as meaning the whole remnant of the people shall fight at or in Jerusalem.

It indicates the third weapon mentioned (in verse 12 above), which in addition to the plague and tumult, that'll be used by God for the destruction of the confederated hosts. Which had all but succeeded in utterly exterminating the remnant of His people.

While their foes are consumed by the "plague" and engaged in fighting with one another in consequence of the "confusion" or tumult sent among them by the Lord, the remnant of Judah, "also" conscious now that the Captain of the Lord's host is with them, and the Almighty power is now on their side, are suddenly stirred up to do valiantly and have a share in utterly destroying them.

"Gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance" is again an allusion by the prophet to historical incidents in the past history of the nation as a foreshadow of the future, as seen in 2 Chronicles:

2 Chronicles 20:25 "And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels,

which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much.”

Zechariah 14:15 “And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague.”

"And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass": The flesh of the horse is said to be eaten (Revelation 19:18).

"And of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague": Their beasts shall perish in like manner as themselves.

Inasmuch as these hosts, by their enmity against God and His people, have brought themselves under His ban for utter destruction. The animals which they have brought with them for this campaign against the holy land and city will also be overtaken with the same fate as their masters.

God sends a widespread plague that even extends to their animals, preventing their use for military endeavors or escape. This depicts the thwarting of their efforts as God ultimately destroys them by the Messiah.

Verses 16-19: Reveal that Gentiles will go into the millennial kingdom alive along with the redeemed Jews. A converted remnant from those heathen nations will make annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem to worship the lord and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles during the Millennium.

In the Millennium, they will celebrate Messiah’s presence again dwelling among His people and the joyful restoration of Israel, including the ingathering of the nations. Those who refuse to go will experience drought and plague.

“The feast of tabernacles” is the joyous feast of ingathering, rest, and thanksgiving. Israel celebrated it when they returned from the Exile (Nehemiah. 8:14-18). The millennial reign of the Messiah is the realization of the Feast of Tabernacles. No other feast will be observed because the realities they foreshadowed will have been realized.

Commemorating the time when God “tabernacled” with Israel in the wilderness, the feast represented the last of the 3 major pilgrimage festivals (Lev. 23:34-36, marked the final harvest of the year’s crops, and provided a time of rejoicing.

Tragically, as the world who will reject Christ as Savior and King, joining in a final war against Him, only to be destroyed and cast into hell forever (Rev. 20:7-15).

Zechariah 14:16 “And it shall come to pass, [that] every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.”

“Feast of tabernacles”: The historical background can be found (in Lev. 23:33-36; Num. 29:12-38; Deut. 16:13-17). In addition to the Feast of Booths, or Tabernacles, two other feasts will be celebrated in the Millennium, i.e.

1. Feast of the New Year (Ezek. 45:18-20); and
2. Passover (Ezek. 45:21-25).

These feasts are no more efficacious than were the feasts of the Mosaic era or the Lord’s Supper in the church age. They all provided a symbolic anticipation or remembrance of Christ’s unique and one-for-all sacrifice at Calvary.

There is a beneficial end in the very judgments of God, for through them the nations will at last learn righteousness, and the fruit will be “universal homage to the Universal Ruler,” Jehovah of Hosts, and in the person of the Messiah, under whose sway all nations shall then be blessed.

Zechariah 14:17 “And it shall be, [that] whoso will not come up of [all] the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.”

“No rain”: Drought is a dreaded punishment (1 Kings 17:1-7; 2 Chron. 7:13-14; James 5:17-18), since it deprives the people of life-sustaining water.

It’s known from prophetic Scripture that the hearts of multitudes among the Gentile nations will not be fully subdued to God and His truth, even in the Millennium. And that many of them will render only a feigned submission to the Divine King, whose throne shall be on Mount Zion.

There follows therefore the warning to the nations against disobedience to His command to come up to Jerusalem to render homage to the King, Jehovah of hosts.

Commentators take to mean the “early rain,” which generally falls in Palestine about the end of October and the beginning of November soon after Tabernacles and usually stands simply for heavy, torrential rain. This is a threat uttered, not against Israel and Palestine, but the Gentile nations, whose seasons and climates may be altogether different.

The withholding of rain was one of the ways by which God would punish the apostasy of His own people in the days of the theocracy (this is a form of government in which a 'god' or 'deity' is recognized as the supreme civil ruler). He now threatens to inflict it on the Gentile nations in case of disobedience.

Zechariah 14:18 “And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that [have] no [rain]; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.”

"And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not": To Jerusalem, the church of God; do not go there to worship the Lord, attend his ordinances, and keep them in their purity; nor walk as

becomes the people of God. By "the family of Egypt" are meant the Papists, so called for their tyranny, cruelty, and idolatry (Rev. 11:8).

"That have no rain": Have not the pure word of God, and the ordinances thereof, only the traditions of men. Yea, the doctrines of devils, and lies in hypocrisy. The allusion is to the land of Egypt, which was watered, not so much by rain as by the overflowing of the river Nile. Or it may be rendered, "and upon them there shall be no rain"; or that which is equivalent to it.

The sense is, as they are without the pure Gospel of Christ, they shall continue so, and be punished with, that sore judgment of a famine of hearing the word of the Lord.

There shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles": They shall have the same plague of want of water, a famine. For it is a vulgar mistake that there is no rain in Egypt; it rains indeed but seldom, and only in some places, but it does rain.

Meaning of the feast of Tabernacles: The seventh (and final), feast given to Israel is called Sukkot or the "Feast of Tabernacles." Sukkot is observed in the fall, from the 15th to the 22nd of Tishri. During this time many Jewish families construct a sukkah, a small hastily built hut in which meals are eaten throughout the festival.

The sukkah is used to remember the huts Israel lived in during their 40 year sojourn in the desert after the exodus from Egypt. Later, after Israel entered the land of promise, Sukkot was associated with the fall harvest and came to be known as Chag ha-Asif, the "Festival of Ingathering" (of the harvest), at the end of the year.

Because we are commanded to rejoice during the holiday of Sukkot for the blessing of God's provision and care for our lives (Deut. 16:14-15), it is considered especially important to give tzedakah (charity), during this time of year.

For this punishment, in case of disobedience, there will be no exception and escape. This is the thought expressed in this and the following verse.

Egypt is especially named because of its peculiar conditions and climate, for however it ultimately depended on the equatorial rains, which overflowed the lakes which supply the Nile. It did not need that fine arrangement of the rains of autumn and spring which were essential to the fruitfulness of Palestine.

Hence it may perhaps encourage itself in the thought that the threatened infliction in case of disobedience would be no punishment to them. The prophet therefore emphasizes the fact that, notwithstanding Egypt's apparent independence of rain, it would suffer the consequences that follow the withholding of rain, as much as the other nations that are dependent on it.

Zechariah 14:19 "This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles."

"This shall be the punishment of Egypt": Or "sin", as in the original text: rightly is the word rendered "punishment", as it is by the Targum.

"And the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles": Which will be one and the same; they shall have no rain, or what answers to it. They shall all have a famine; or it will be different, Egypt shall be punished with a consumption of their flesh, and the other nations with want of rain: the former sense seems best.

As it is impossible for all nations literally to come to Jerusalem once a year, to keep a feast, it is evident that a figurative meaning must here be applied. Gospel worship is represented by the keeping of the feast of tabernacles.

Every day of a Christian's life is a day of the feast of tabernacles; every Lord's Day especially is the great day of the feast. Therefore, every day let us worship the Lord of hosts, and keep every Lord's Day with peculiar solemnity. It is just for God to withhold the blessings of grace from those who do not attend the means of grace.

It is a sin that is its own punishment. Those who forsake the duty, forfeit the privilege of communion with God. A time of complete peace and purity of the church will arrive. Men will carry on their common affairs, and their sacred services, upon the same holy principles of faith, love and obedience.

Real holiness shall be more diffused, because there shall be a more plentiful pouring forth of the Spirit of holiness than ever before. There shall be holiness even in common things. Every action and every enjoyment of the believer should be so regulated according to the will of God, that it may be directed to his glory.

Our whole lives should be as one constant sacrifice, or act of devotion. No selfish motive should prevail in any of our actions. But how far is the Christian church from this state of purity! Other times, however, are at hand, and the Lord will reform and enlarge his church, as he has promised. Yet in heaven alone will perfect holiness and happiness be found.

The thought that Egypt if disobedient will be overtaken in the same judgment is solemnly repeated in the 19th verse. The Hebrew word punishment used here primarily means sin. But it signifies also sin in its effects, as bringing punishment.

Verses 20-21: Just as the High Priest, whose turban was engraved with the phrase "HOLY TO THE LORD", was set apart for the service of the Lord (Zech. 3:5; also, Exodus 28:36; 39:30).

There will be no need for distinctions between holy and secular. Everything will be set apart to the service of the Lord in the Messiah's glorious kingdom.

Zechariah 14:20 “In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar.”

"In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses": He does not say only, that they should be consecrated to God, as Isaiah says of Tyre, "Her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord" (Isa. 23:18). He says that, "the bells of the horses," things simply secular, should bear the same inscription as the plate on the high priest's forehead.

Perhaps the comparison was suggested by the bells on the high priest's dress. Not the thin layer only on his forehead, but bells (not as his, which were part of his sacred dress), bells, altogether secular, should be inscribed with the self-same title, whereby he himself was dedicated to God.

"Holiness unto the Lord": He does not bring down what is sacred to a level with common things, but he uplifts ordinary things, that they too, should be sacred. As Paul says, "whether ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

"And the pots in the LORD's house shall be like the bowls before the altar": The pots are mentioned, together with other vessels of the Lord's house (Ezek. 38:3; 1 Kings 7:45; 2 Kings 25:14; 2 Chron. 4:11; 4:16; Jer. 52:18-19).

But not in regard to any sacred use as they were used with other vessels, for the dressing the victims; (2 Chron. 35:13), that were the partakers of the sacrifices. These were to be sacred, like those made for the most sacred use of all, "the bowls for sprinkling," whence, that sacrificial blood was taken, which was to make the typical atonement.

The last two verses reach the glorious goal and climax of vision and prophecy. God's original purpose in the calling and election of Israel, "Ye shall be unto Me a Kingdom of priests, and holy nation", shall at last be realized.

The aim and purpose of the whole law, namely, that His people might learn the meaning of holiness and become holy because Jehovah their God is holy. But to which, so long as they were in bondage to the law, they could not attain.

This shall at last be fulfilled when they are brought into a condition of grace, and when God shall put His law into their inward parts and write it on their hearts. Not only shall "Holiness (or holy), unto the Lord" be written on their persons, and on all the outward and inward life of the whole community, but on everything they possess.

This will be a time that even mundane and ordinary things like the bells that decorate horse and common pots and pans will be as holy as the High Priest and the altar bowls used in sacrifices. There will be no need for distinctions between holy and secular. Everything will be set apart to the service of the Lord in the Messiah's glorious kingdom.

Zechariah 14:21 “Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and see the therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.”

“Canaanite”: This identification is used as a figure for the morally and spiritually unclean persons who will be excluded from entering the millennial temple. Before Israel conquered the Promised Land, the vile Canaanites inhabited it. Thus the term became proverbial in Israel for a morally degenerate, ceremonially unclean person.

Private and domestic life shall be hallowed too, for everything alike shall be holy. And all such distinctions as “profane”, “holy,” and “most holy” shall completely cease “in that day”.

Zechariah chapter 14 Continued Questions

1. What was the root cause of all the destruction?
2. What type of plague is this?
3. Who is affected by this plague?
4. How often shall everyone go to Jerusalem to worship?
5. What is this feast?
6. What shall be on the bells of the horses?
7. Where had this same inscription been before?
8. What are the Canaanites, in verse 21, speaking of?