

The Visions to Zechariah Zechariah 12:1 – 13:1

Lesson 7

Although it concerns Israel, the last oracle given to Zechariah which covers chapters 12 through 14 does not prophesy against her. Different from the other visions and oracles of the book, the initial premise has begun to be fulfilled, but the main bulk of the message remains to be fulfilled in the future.

A Cup of Reeling

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, 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.

The language of the beginning of this oracle wonderfully describes the mighty works of the Lord who created the heavens and the earth as well as man in the beginning. This same Lord of all creation will make His city, the city of His death and resurrection, a cup that causes every nation of the world to reel. These two verses alone prove that after God created the world and all that is in it, He continued to be involved with His creation. That involvement can be seen as He controls what will happen to the nations who try to conquer His city, Jerusalem. Again, those who try to overtake Jerusalem will find it to be a cup that will make them reel. What does that mean? It means that all who come against Jerusalem to take possession of it will be greatly troubled and persecuted during the days of their attempts to control Israel's land and borders. From the outset, the siege will not only be on the city of Jerusalem but also on the land belonging to the tribe of Judah. Besides Israel, only the Babylonians and Persians had controlled Jerusalem by the time of this oracle. Egypt's attempt to control her was extremely limited and essentially in name only. A look at the major events in the history of Jerusalem is helpful to this study. The chart below lists the major countries, nations and peoples who have tried to control Jerusalem. Notice how the Jews have overcome all the obstacles to remain in their city and on their land even after they have been physically barred from being near their Promised Land at times.

Jerusalem - A Cup of Reeling

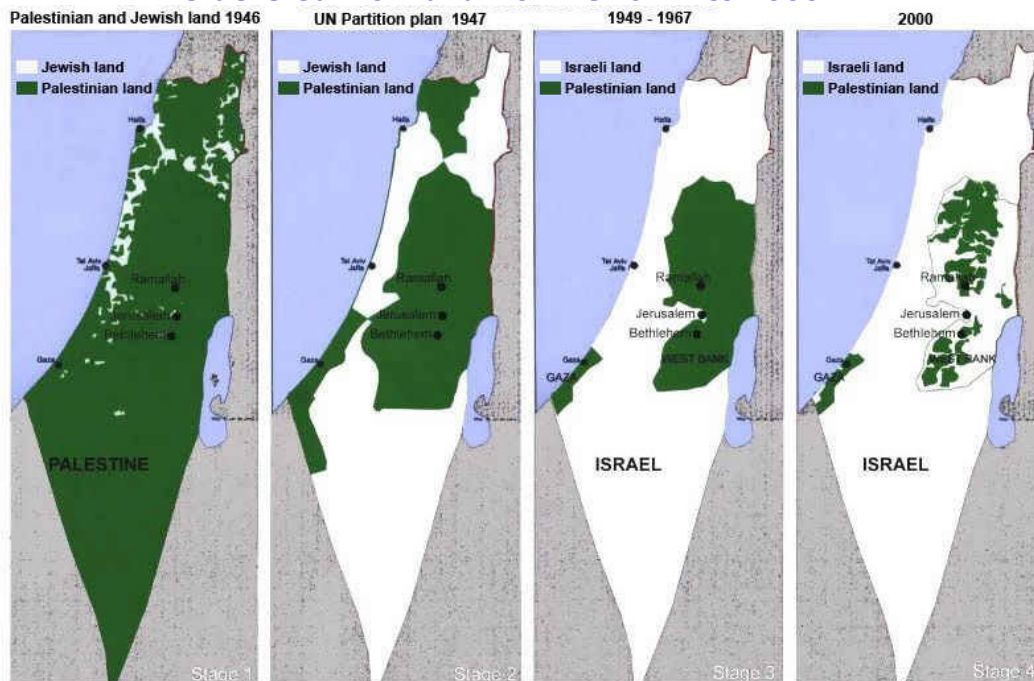
Major Events in Jerusalem's History

1004 BC	King David established Jerusalem as the capital of The United Kingdom of Israel.
701 BC	Hezekiah successfully withstood Sennacherib's assault on Jerusalem.
606 BC	Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem.
586 BC	Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple and exiled the remaining Jews to Babylon.
537 BC	Babylon fell to the Persians.
537 BC	A remnant of about 50,000 Jews returned to Jerusalem from Babylon by the edict of King Cyrus.
536 BC	The foundation of the Temple was begun but the work was stopped after the neighboring nation complained to the new Persian king.
520 BC	Work was restarted on the Temple.
After 518 BC	The Lord's oracle concerning Israel was given to Zechariah (Chapters 12-14).

515 BC	The completed Temple was rededicated by Zerubbabel.
332 BC	Alexander the Great conquered Palestine and defeated Daruis III, thus capturing Jerusalem by default.
320 BC	Ptolemy I captured Jerusalem for his Egyptian kingdom.
198-167 BC	The Syrian Seleucid's kingdom captured and ruled Jerusalem.
169 BC	Seleucid king, Antiochus IV Epiphanies (175-163) outlawed Judaism and profaned the Temple on December 25th.
164 BC	Judas Maccabee recaptured Jerusalem and restored the Temple. The Hasmonean rule began at that time.
63 BC	General Pompey captured Jerusalem for Rome.
63-37 BC	Jerusalem was still under Hasmonean rule but under the protection of Rome.
66-73 AD	The Jews fought the Great Revolt of the War against Rome.
70 AD	Titus destroyed the Second Temple in Jerusalem.
135 AD	Emperor Hadrian totally destroyed Jerusalem, built new walls and a new city called Aelia Capitolina; the Jews were not allowed to be in Jerusalem.
326 AD	Queen Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine the Great, visited Jerusalem and determined the locations of events associated with the last days of Jesus. She ordered churches to be built to commemorate the events of His last days, most notably the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in 335 AD.
438 AD	Empress Eudocia permitted Jews to live in Jerusalem.
614 AD	When the Persians attacked Jerusalem, they destroyed most churches and expelled the Jews.
629 AD	The Byzantines recaptured Jerusalem.
638 AD	Six years after Mohammed's death, Caliph Omar entered Jerusalem and Jews were allowed to return to the city.
691 AD	Caliph Abd al-Malik completed the Dome of the Rock.
701 AD	Caliph al-Walid completed the construction of the al-Aqsa mosque.
1010 AD	Caliph al-Hakim ordered the destruction of synagogues and churches in Jerusalem.
1099 AD	The Crusaders, led by Godfrey de Bouillon, captured Jerusalem following Pope Urban's call for Holy Jihad in 1096. Baldwin I was declared King of Jerusalem.
1187 AD	Kurdish general Saladin captured Jerusalem from the Crusaders. He permitted Jews and Muslims to return and settle in the city.
1192 AD	Richard the Lion Heart attempted to re-capture Jerusalem but failed. The Treaty with Saladin permitted Christians to worship at their Holy sites.
1219 AD	Sultan Malik-al-Muattam tore down the city walls.
1244 AD	Khawarizmian Turks captured Jerusalem brought an end of the Crusader rule.
1244 AD	Mameluk Sultans defeated the Ayyubids who ruled Jerusalem.
1260 AD	The Mameluks of Egypt captured Jerusalem.
1267 AD	Rabbi Moshe Ben Nahman (Nahmanides) arrived from Spain, revived the Jewish congregation and established a synagogue and center of learning bearing his name.
1348 AD	The Black Death hit Jerusalem.
1488 AD	Rabbi Obadiah of Bertinoro settled in Jerusalem and led the community.
1517 AD	The Ottomans peacefully took over Jerusalem.

1537-1542 AD	Sultan Suleiman ("The Magnificent") rebuilt the city walls which were destroyed in 1219, including the present day seven gates and the "Tower of David" as well as the Damascus gate.
1700 AD	Rabbi Yehuda He'Hassid arrived and started building the "Hurva" Synagogue.
1860 AD	The first Jewish settlement was established outside the walls of the city.
1917 AD	The British conquered the Germans who, with the Muslims, controlled Jerusalem. Britain took control of Jerusalem and began to rule by British Mandate.
1920 AD	Sir Herbert Samuel was appointed the first British High Commissioner and the "Government House" was established in Jerusalem.
1947 AD	A United Nations resolution recommended the partition of Israel.
May 14, 1948 AD	The British Mandate ended and the State of Israel was proclaimed.
May 14, 1948 AD	Israel's War of Liberation began.
May 28, 1948 AD	The section of Jerusalem called the New City remained intact but the Jewish quarters of the Old City fell.
Jan 1949	Israel's War of Liberation ended.
April 1949 AD	The Israel/Trans-Jordan Armistice Agreement was signed whereby Jerusalem was divided between the two countries.
Dec 13, 1949	Jerusalem was declared the capital of the State of Israel.
June 5, 1967 AD	Jordan shelled the new city on the opening day of the Six-Day War.
June 7, 1967 AD	Israeli troops captured the Old City and Jerusalem was reunited under Israel.
June 23, 1967 AD	Muslims, Christians and Jews were again given access to their holy places.
1980 AD	Jerusalem Basic Law was enacted declaring united Jerusalem to be the capital of Israel.
1994 AD	Mutual recognition of Israel and the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) was established.

Israel's Gain of Land from 1946 AD to 2000 AD



As eye-opening and horrendous as the history of Jerusalem and Judah seems, it pales in comparison to the fulfillment of the future events revealed in the rest of this oracle. The nations that come against Jerusalem and Judah in the future will not only find trouble for themselves but will also be destroyed on one single day by the Lord. Why does every nation of the world want a part of Jerusalem and Judah? Why are they all drawn to the gates of the Holy City? Why has the desire to own the city become such a heavy desire in the hearts of foreign rulers to possess Jerusalem at any cost? For Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome, Jerusalem just happened to be in the center of the world that their rulers desired to conquer and control. Since 30 AD, the battle for Jerusalem has been strictly religious; all religions want to control the city that they consider to be the home of their religions. Today, and in the future, all nations who try to capture the city will be severely injured in that attempt.

In That Day – A Heavy Stone

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.

A day is coming in the future when people from every nation will gather to destroy Jerusalem. We do not know when that day will occur, but it will not transpire until all the biblical prophecies that are still outstanding are fulfilled by the Lord in His perfect timing. Here is a list of just a few prophecies that must be completely fulfilled before the nations mentioned in this oracle will gather to fight against Jerusalem.

1. People will be living among the heavens.
2. People will be living at the bottom of the seas.
3. The nation of Iraq/Babylon will be a luxurious nation and the chief purchaser of all the best the world has to offer.
4. Nineveh will be rebuilt and established as a major capital city of the world.
5. The five major cities of the Gaza strip will be deserted as the people move south to Edom.
6. Edom and the Paran Mountain range, which is totally deserted today, will be rebuilt and inhabited by the people who now live in the Gaza strip.
7. A false prophet will arise and captivate the European world as their religious leader.
8. The rise of the Revived Roman Empire will be made up of Great Britain, France, Spain, Italy, Macedonia, Syria, Greece, Turkey, Egypt and North Africa.
9. Three of the ten presidents of the Revived Roman Empire will be assassinated by its new leader.
10. The church will be snatched away from the earth.
11. A seven-year peace treaty with Israel will be made and broken.
12. The king of the north will attack Israel while it is at peace.
13. Two witnesses with supernatural power will minister in Israel and then die in the streets of Jerusalem. The whole world will see their deaths and rejoice. Three days later, the two witnesses will rise from the dead and ascend into heaven.
14. Israel will almost starve as a nation. Cannibalism will occur among her people.
15. A call will go out to all the world to come and fight against Jerusalem.

These are but a few of the prophecies that must be fulfilled before the day spoken of by this oracle to Zechariah happens. Those who try to go against Jerusalem will experience the opposition of the heavy stone of the Chief Cornerstone who is jealous for Jerusalem and will fight to protect her.

In That Day – Bewilderment, Madness, Blindness

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. 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.'

In the valley just northwest of Jerusalem where the armies of all the nations of the world will gather to fight against the city and her King, the Lord will strike all His enemies with bewilderment, madness and blindness. They may have been clear-headed, sound of mind and keen of eye when they arrived, but not one of them will escape these first three plagues from the Lord. Once Israel sees her enemies in total disarray on that day, she will know that the Lord intends to keep His promise to them. The plagues will be on their horses and animals as well as the people.

In That Day – Judah A Firepot

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. 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.

Hundreds of years before this oracle, the Lord revealed this same prophecy to Obadiah and Isaiah concerning the events of this same day in the future.

Obadiah 1:18 "Then the house of Jacob will be a fire and the house of Joseph a flame; But the house of Esau *will be* as stubble. And they will set them on fire and consume them, so that there will be no survivor of the house of Esau," For the LORD has spoken.

Isaiah 10:17 And the light of Israel will become a fire and his Holy One a flame, And it will burn and devour his thorns and his briars in a single day.

The true nation of Israel, those who have turned to the Lord as their Savior, will be protected by the Lord when they fight against their enemies on that day. Everyone they fight will be destroyed as if they had been through fire. Why? Israel is to be the premier nation of the world as promised by the Lord's covenant with her and He will fulfill His promise.

In That Day – Jerusalem Defended

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.

All the enemies of Jerusalem will attempt to battle a supernaturally energized people when they attack the city. Jews, old and young alike, will be strengthened by the Lord with angelic abilities to defeat their enemies. The source of these qualities will be the Lord, not human beings.

In That Day – Destruction of Enemies

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

Why will the nations be destroyed by the Lord? They are enemies of His people. The Lord will protect the Israelites who have experienced the grace of the Lord. In spite of their protection, the believing Israelites will mourn because they were responsible for putting the Lord to death and refused to accept Him as their Messiah at His First Advent. Those Israelites who do not accept Him as the Messiah will die when the enemy attacks the city.

In That Day – Mourning Over Jerusalem

Zechariah 12:¹¹ "In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo. 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; 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; ¹⁴ all the families that remain, every family by itself and their wives by themselves.

Verse 11 speaks of the plain of Megiddo which is also known as the Valley of Megiddo where Armageddon will take place and although the context of this passage is directly related to the mourning that will occur at Armageddon, this verse refers to the mourning that occurred many year ago at the death of Josiah. The story can be found in Second Chronicles.

2 Chronicles 35:²² 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.²⁹

Hadadrimmon was the village where King Josiah was killed by King Neco of Egypt. It stood at the foot of the Megiddo hills in the valley. The lament over his death was great throughout the land and every Jew was affected by the tragedy. In the future, all of Israel will be affected by the tragedy that will happen because of the enemy build-up in the Valley of Armageddon. Jewish relatives who have refused to accept the Lord will die when Jerusalem is attacked because the Lord will not protect the unbelieving Jews. At that time a great number, two thirds of the Jews alive, will die. Although the Jews who survive have become believers, they will still mourn the loss of their relatives. Every clan of Israel will mourn the deaths of their loved ones and they will all mourn individually just as a husband, wife or child mourns the death of a family member.

²⁹ Book of Lamentations written by Jeremiah because of the death of the beloved Josiah.

In That Day – A Fountain Opened

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

The mourning of the Jewish believers will be met with a paradox that Jesus will speak about in Matthew 5:4. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Comfort will be given to the mourning Israelites; their sins will be forgiven. In that day, when the Lord has opened the blinded eyes of the Jews, they will see the refreshing fountain of the Lord. It will have been delivering living water to the Jews and Gentiles for hundreds of years by that time but the church that drank from that fountain had been removed seven years before. Armed with only the written Word of God, the two witnesses and the 144,000 sealed Israelites, the recognition of the Lord will be new for the Jews of the future. On that day they will experience the same grace that was offered to the world when He died on the cross, although, at the time of that event, they missed its meaning and importance.