

Zechariah
Prophet of Messiah's Glory

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN
(Continued)

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ISREAL'S KINGDOM

THE SECOND SECTION OF THE SECOND PROPHETIC ORACLE

(Zech. 14:8-21)

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With this section of the second prophetic oracle the prophecy of Zechariah draws to a climactic close in the realization of the grand finale of Israel's hope for the future--the establishment of the long-promised and long-awaited kingdom of Messiah, to be ushered in by the personal return to the earth of the King. The oracle as a whole works up to this magnificent conclusion. As a prerequisite to this prophetic denouement, the future deliverance and national conversion of the nation have been portrayed in glowing language (Zech. 12:1-13:8), as well as the appearance in glory of King-Messiah (14:1-7). At last the stage is set for the final scene of full kingdom blessing.

I. THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM ESTABLISHED OVER ISRAEL (Zech. 14:8-15)

As noted in the preceding chapter, modern textual emendation of the preceding verses (Zech. 14:6, 7) distorts their meaning and erroneously places them in this present section describing the new order,

rather than in the preceding context dealing with the events preparatory to the new order involved in the cataclysmic aspect of the day of the Lord, called **a day, the Lord's** (Zech. 14:1) accentuating its quintessential phase manifested in the personal second advent of Messiah (Zech. 14:1-7).

Although the term **in that day** continues to occur in this millennial section (vss. 9, 12, 20, 21), as it has occurred over and over again in chapters 12 and 13 to describe the active interposition of the Lord in human affairs in the woes and judgments necessary to the setting up of the kingdom over Israel, nevertheless the events of "the day of the Lord" par excellence are related in Zechariah 14:1-7, and that is the reason the expression is unique in Zechariah 14:1.

Moreover, Zechariah's use of the expression **in that day**, which is tantamount to the term "the day of the Lord," and which is in agreement with its widespread usage in the former prophets, enables a clear definition of the eschatological concept. "The day of the Lord," accordingly, is *that prophetic period embracing the final phase of Israel's chastisement and trouble, followed by her salvation and deliverance at the second advent of Messiah (the quintessential phase) and extending throughout the subsequent period of kingdom peace and prosperity, commonly called the millennium.*

8 And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.

8 And it shall come to pass in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.

1. *The Temporal and Spiritual Blessings of the Kingdom* (Zech. 14:8). **And it shall be in that day that living waters shall issue from Jerusalem; half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea. In summer and in winter it shall be.** These waters will be *literal* waters although they reflect and imply spiritual blessings. To phantomize or mysticize them is just as arbitrary and destructive of the real meaning of the passage as to phantomize or mysticize the capture and deliverance of Jerusalem (vss. 1-3), or the second advent of Messiah, or the earthquake and the topographical changes accompanying it (vss. 4-7).

It is not, however, inconsistent with a *literal* interpretation of such a prophecy to see a *spiritual* meaning behind it, inasmuch as the physical reality presupposes and is based upon the revelation of the Lord, which affects both *land* and *people*, as throughout the great prophecies of Israel's future kingdom status. Compare Isaiah 4:3, 4 with 4:5, 6; Isaiah 35:2-6 with 35:1, 7-10. Compare Ezekiel 36:16-37:28 (restoration of the people) with Ezekiel 36:1-15 (restoration of the land). Jerusalem as the capital of the millennial earth will be the radiating center of spiritual blessings reflected by the literal physical and climatic transformation of Palestine.

Living waters (*mayim hayyim*) are waters that are in the act of "living" (participle), that is, *manifesting signs of life* by moving in fresh fulness, as in a running brook or river, or gurgling from a perennial

spring, or rising up in a well (Song of Sol. 4:15; John 4:10, 11; 7:38). Accordingly, the Lord cries out through Jeremiah, "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the *fountain of living waters*, and they have hewn out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, which cannot hold water" (Jer. 2:13; cf. 17:13). This verse contains a perfect illustration of the difference between mere "water" caught from rain and stored in a lime-calked tank or cistern, a common necessity in the hill country of Palestine, and **living water** gushing from a perennial spring, cold, fresh, and exhilarating to the taste, depicting the true blessings which come from God, in contrast with paltry flat substitutes offered by sin.

Jerusalem and Judah have always lacked what an oriental paradise must have, namely, a copious supply of fresh water. Thus "a river went out of Eden to water the garden" (Gen. 2:10-14). Compare Paradise Restored (Rev. 22:1). Ezekiel graphically describes millennial Palestine as having a life-giving stream, issuing from under the threshold of the sanctuary, flowing eastward with increasing depth, dispensing fertility to the entire desert region (Ezek. 47:1-12).

Joel, likewise, had foretold such physical transformation of the land. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, *and all the brooks of Judah shall flow full of water; and a fountain shall send forth its waters from the house of the Lord*, and irrigate the valley of Acacias" (Joel 3:18 [4:18], Berkeley).

The psalmist, inspired by the Spirit of prophecy, foresaw this same scene: "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy dwelling of the most High" (Ps. 46:4 [5]). Like Zechariah, he too envisioned the mammoth earthquake and other world-engirdling convulsions immediately preceding and accompanying the personal return of Messiah, which will eventuate in the elevation of Jerusalem and the lowering of the whole surrounding country to a plain, so that living water shall flow from the city:

God is for us a refuge and a fortress;
found to be a mighty help in troubles.
Therefore we do not fear *though the earth is displaced,*
though the mountains reel into the midst of the sea;
though its waters roar and foam;
though the mountains shake at its swelling.
(Ps. 46:1-3 [2-4], Berkeley).

Half of the waters issuing from Jerusalem as the result of the earthquake opening up vast subterranean springs will flow toward the eastern sea (the Dead or Salt Sea) and half toward the western sea (Mediterranean). **In summer and winter shall it be.** This passage indicates that the streams shall be abundant and perennial, not drying up as Most Palestinian watercourses do in summer. The two-directional flow of these streams will be possible because the elevated city will be on a water-shed plateau.

The Dead Sea is called **the eastern** or "*former sea*" (*hayyam haqqadhmoni*, an adjective from the root *qadem*, "to be in front, to be before one," cf. Arabic *qadama*, "precede," Assyrian *qudmu*, "front"), since the Oriental faced the east in calculating directions of the compass. The body of water "in front of" him would thus be "the eastern sea" (Ezek. 47:18; Joel 2:20). Accordingly, the Mediterranean sea, which would be behind the observer looking eastward, is called "the rear" or **hinder sea** (*hayyam*

ha'aharon, from the root *'aher*, "coming after or behind") i.e., **the western sea** (Deut. 11:24; 34:2; Joel 2:20; Job 18:20). So the Assyrians designated "the western land" of Phoenicia and Palestine, *mat aharru* ("the hinder country").

9 And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.

9 And Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall Jehovah be one, and his name one.

2. *The Absolute Lordship of the King* (Zech. 14:9). **And the Lord will become King over all the earth. In that day the Lord shall be one and his name one.** The Hebrew word for **earth** (*'arets*) here, as elsewhere, may be translated "earth" or "land" (Palestine). However, it should be translated **earth** in this case, despite the fact that contextually it appears to be limited to the land of Palestine (cf. vss. 1-8 and especially verse 10 where the identical expression, *kol ha'arets*, denotes a part of Palestine) for the following reasons: (1) *The translation "land,"* while certainly in line with the context outside of verse 9 (i.e., vss. 1-8 and 10), *is not consonant with the larger context of the verse itself.* That **the Lord will be one and his name one** only in Palestine is unthinkable. The scope of verse 9 demands the larger meaning of the Hebrew word "earth," and strikes the note of universality in its wording and thought pattern. (2) If the prophet wished to say earth instead of land, there is no other way he could have done so in this context, for only one Hebrew word expresses both concepts.

Moreover, (3) *the idiom "to become" (hayah plus lamedh), points to the larger meaning earth. In that day the Lord will become King,* not be "for King" (Leupold, *op. cit.*, p. 267) or "be king" (R.V.). Although the King establishes the kingdom with its capital in Jerusalem, by means of Messiah's rule (Ps. 2:9-12) and the zealous missionary effort of the converted nation (Zech. 8:23; Ezek. 37:28), Messiah's rule and dominion, as well as the knowledge of the absolute uniqueness of Messiah and His name, will be gradually extended to the ends of the earth. (4) *The larger context of this very chapter calls for the translation of earth* rather than "land." **And it shall come to pass, that everyone 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 armies . . .** (Zech. 14:16).

Moreover, (5) *the larger context of prophecy with which Zechariah 14:9 dovetails requires the concept of earth* rather than "land." Passages could be multiplied *ad infinitum*, but compare Psalms 2:5, 6; 72:8-11; Isaiah 2:4; 54:5; Zechariah 9:9-10, and particularly Zechariah's extremely significant use of the millennial epithet "the Lord of the whole earth" (see comments on Zech. 4:4; 6:5; cf. Mic. 4:13). Messiah's second advent as "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:16) gives the clue to His universal dominion in Zechariah 14:9, since His same glorious coming is featured in this chapter (Zech. 14:4, 6).

Objections to the concept of **earth** in Zechariah 14:9 instead of "land" (6) *on the basis of arguments*

that *phantomize or mysticalize these great prophecies* have little weight for those who see them in the larger framework of prophetic teaching *concerning Israel*. In this phantomizing category is Chambers' contention that "Canaan here stands as a type of the kingdom of God in its fullest extent in the world" (*Zechariah* in Lange's *Commentary*, p. 111). In the same class is Leupold's insistence on "land" instead of **earth** on the ground that "this picture is painted in terms of the Holy Land," or "the fact" that the Lord "is King over all has always been true" (*loc. cit.*).

Such a declaration as that of Leupold ignores the Scripture revelation concerning the full results of man's fall and the resultant Satanic usurpation of the dominion of the earth and the purpose of the Creator's incarnation not only to redeem man from sin, but *the earth from Satanic sway*. This is the whole scope of the book of the Revelation (4:1-19:16), and the teaching of the Apostle (Eph. 1:14; Rom. 8:18-22), as well as the inspired prophets of the Old Testament (Ps. 2:1-2; Mic. 4:1-13, etc.).

In that day the Lord shall be one (*'ehadh*). The Hebrew term denotes *one only* of its kind, *solitary*, altogether *unique*, Arabic *wahidun*, "only one, incomparable" (cf. Job 23:13; Ezek. 37:17; Song 6:9; Zech. 14:7). This does not mean that the Lord (Yahweh) will be at some future time something He has not always been in Himself and in His divine essence in the past or present. But it does mean *He will be known and adored as the one only Lord*, the absolutely unique and incomparable One, the only wise God and Savior, the Word who was with God and who became flesh (human), that which He always was in the redemptive plan of God and which He became in the incarnation.

As the **one only Lord**, He will be universally owned as such in the kingdom age, and worshipped as the one true God. Never has this been true since idolatry and polytheism have enslaved men from earliest antiquity. It is distinctively not true of the present age of the church, and those who phantomize these prophecies by applying them to the Christian church or the eternal state find this prophecy quite ill-fitting in their scheme and totally meaningless. *Now* there are "gods many and lords many." *Then* alone shall God be worshipped. Monotheism shall be world-wide. Judaism (rejecting Christ), Islam (giving Him no proper place), and the great ethnic faiths like Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, etc., which flourish over vast sections of the earth today, shall vanish. Monotheism will be universal, and the one true God manifested in Christ, will be the sole object of faith, worship, and service.

Not only will **the Lord . . . be one** (the one only object of faith and worship) with the Jewish Shema (Deut. 6:4) the sole creed, but **His name** (the revelation of Himself as Jesus, the Christ, the Lord and Savior, King and Redeemer) will be **one only**. Jesus the Messiah will be the only name known and revered in that glad day of Israel's restoration and ministry to the nations. For the Lord Himself has already declared, "On that day . . . I will cut off *the names of the idols* from the land, so that they shall be *remembered no more*; and also I will remove from the land the prophets *and the unclean spirit*" (Zech. 13:2).

This interesting passage from Zechariah (13:2) is the one Scripture passage that indicates the imprisonment of demons (who are the dynamic of idolatry, I Cor. 10:20) during the kingdom age, although Revelation 20:1-3 clearly teaches that Satan will be incarcerated during this period. Zechariah 14:9 can only be realized (1) by the revelation of the *one only* Lord and King in His second advent and kingdom reign and (2) by the removal of Satan and demons as the abettors of idolatry and the promoters of false religions (cf. I Tim. 4:1-5; I John 4:1-6; James 3:15).

10 All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses.

11 And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

10 All the land shall be made like the Arabah, from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; and she shall be lifted up, and shall dwell in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananel unto the king's winepresses.

11 And men shall dwell therein, and there shall be no more curse; but Jerusalem shall dwell safely.

3. *The Exaltation and Peace of Jerusalem* (Zech. 14:10, 11). **All the land shall be transformed as the Arabah from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; and she [Jerusalem] shall be elevated and shall be inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's Gate unto the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel unto the king's winepresses. (11) And people shall dwell in her, and there shall be no more wholesale destruction, for Jerusalem shall be inhabited in perfect safety.**

Zechariah has already given us the *cause* of this vast topographical change in which the city of Jerusalem is to be exalted above the hills by which she has always been surrounded and overshadowed; namely, the resplendent second advent of Messiah attended by a mammoth earthquake that shall make the entire rugged terrain from Geba to Rimmon "a very great valley" (14:4). The purpose of this vast transformation of the geography of the central highland region of the tribes of Benjamin and Judah is to give Jerusalem, which will be "the city of the great King" (Ps. 48:2 [3]) in the kingdom age, the eminent situation it will warrant as the capital and chief metropolis of the millennial earth, from which Messiah's dominion and rule will issue forth to the utmost bounds of the globe in the coming age.

The land is said **to be turned about** [*yissov*] **as the Arabah**. The verb is *nifal* (passive, rather than *qal*) and from the *savav*, "to turn about," and hence means "to be turned about," that is, "to be changed or transformed so as to become" (a pregnant construction) "like" or "as" the Arabah. The R.S.V. has "turned *into a plain*," but "as" or "like the Arabah" is a simile, and the noun is definite with the article *ka'arabhah* and means **as the Arabah** (not "as a plain," A.V.).

The Arabah is the geographical name of the deep rift that extends from the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan Valley through the Dead Sea and on to the Gulf of Aqaba. It is remarkable in that *it is the deepest depression on the surface of the earth*. At the Sea of Galilee it is 652 feet below sea level, at the Dead Sea almost 1300 feet below, and only 300 feet above sea level at a point just west of Petra in Edom (see Denis Baly, *The Geography of the Bible*, New York, 1956, pp. 210-216).

But there is another element that prompted Zechariah to use the comparison "as the Arabah," beside *the depth of this terrain*, and that is *its level character*. Josephus twice speaks of the Ghor or Rift from the

Lake of Galilee to the Dead Sea as the "Great Plain" (*Wars* VIII, 2; *Antiquities* VI, 1). But the chief characteristic is its depression, the Greek writers calling it the *Aulon* or Hollow (Diodorus Siculus II, 48, 9; XIX, 98, 4). Zechariah, then, employs the figure **as the Arabah** to stress the depression of the surrounding hills of Jerusalem and their being made level as a plain so that the city might be exalted (cf. Nelson Glueck, *The River Jordan*, p. 72).

The district, then, altered by tremendous earthquake action by being drastically depressed and levelled out, is precisely defined as extending **from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem**. This geographical note is intended to indicate the whole "hill country" of the ancient tribe of Judah to the border of Simeon on the south and most of the tribe of Benjamin on the north, since Geba was in Benjamin (Josh. 18:24), about six miles northeast of Jerusalem (L. H. Grollenberg, *Atlas of the Bible*, maps 11, 13, and page 161), and is mentioned in II Kings 23:8 as one of the border towns of Judah.

Rimmon is En-Rimmon (Josh. 15:32; 19:7; I Chron. 4:32), 33 miles southwest of Jerusalem, a few miles south of ancient Ziklag, where the central highland ridge of Judah falls off to the lower-levelled country of the Negeb. En-Rimmon was one of the places reoccupied by the Jews on their return from exile (Neh. 11:29), and so was an inhabited site in Zechariah's day.

The words **Rimmon south of Jerusalem** are appended to distinguish the south Judean border town from a Rimmon in Galilee (Josh. 19:13) and from the Rock Rimmon in the hill range of Benjamin (Judg. 20:45-47). The name **Rimmon** meaning "pomegranate," was thus used of several places.

The purpose of the levelling and the lowering of the entire hill country of Judah is that Jerusalem may enjoy an eminent position, unobstructed by higher heights about her, as has always been the case of the city, with higher hills adjacent. **And she [Jerusalem] shall be elevated**, *wera'amah*, an anomalous third person feminine singular *qal*, from *wera'mah* for *weramah* from *rum*, "be high, be exalted" (Deut. 8:14; Isa. 6:1; Ezek. 10:16). Hosea 10:14 is a parallel verse which contains an *aleph* inserted as a *matres lectionis*, or aid to reading.

And shall be peacefully inhabited, *weyashevah* from *yashav*, "remain, dwell," Akkadian *ashabu*, "sit, inhabit," here used of a city in the sense of being "seated in its place" and so figuratively for "be [peacefully] inhabited" (Jer. 17:6, 25; 50:13, 39; Ezek. 26:20; 29:11; Isa. 13:20; Zech. 2:8; 9:5; 12:6; 14:11). **In her [Jerusalem's] place** is literally "in her underparts," i.e., "upon that which is under her" (*tahteha*, on her *ancient historical location*, in contrast to some new site). The city's location will remain the same, but the country around her will be transformed to accommodate the new religious and governmental capital of the millennial earth.

In this bold prediction Zechariah, as is his custom in his *entire* prophetic book, echoes, summarizes, abbreviates, or amplifies the predictions of the former prophets, and notably so in this case. Isaiah had glowingly predicted the same great fact. "And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow into it" (Isa. 2:2). Compare also Micah 4:1 and Isaiah 2:3.

In the case of the topographical details and the description of the cause (the second advent of Messiah and the accompanying earthquake), Zechariah gives important supplementary material not found in the former prophets. However, like them, his prophecies are to be taken in a literal sense, but the literal

furnishes the vehicle for the emblematic. These prophecies state physical facts, but also portray spiritual truths. Jerusalem will be the radiating center for the outflow of spiritual blessing and instruction to the entire earth of the kingdom age.

The future enlargement and expansion of restored Jerusalem are indicated in the latter part of verse 10. **But it [Jerusalem] shall be elevated and inhabited in her place from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the Former Gate unto the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel unto the king's winepresses.**

The prophet in predicting the future size of the millennial city sees Jerusalem not in the paltry dimensions of the small town of his day, with a struggling remnant and its walls still in ruins, but in terms of the walled city as it had existed in the heyday of its strength in pre-exilic times. The **Gate of Benjamin** was in the north wall and is apparently identical with that called "the Gate of Ephraim" (II Kings 14:13), through which the road ran to Benjamin and thence on to Ephraim, situated to the north.

The "first" or **Former Gate** was apparently in the northeastern corner of the city, while the **Corner Gate** (II Kings 14:13; Jer. 31:38) was at the northwestern extremity. These measurements would then indicate the full dimensions of the city, east and west, on the north beginning at **the Gate of Benjamin**. The **Tower of Hananel** was evidently at the opposite extremity of the **Corner Gate** in the northeastern part of the northern wall (cf. Jer. 31:38). From it to **the king's winepresses**, which were located in the king's gardens south of the city, in or near the Valley of Hinnom, would then give the north-south limits of the city. The overall measurements present an area of generous proportions adequate for the prophet's prediction of the future enlargement of the city, and the minute topographical details argue cogently for the literalness of the whole prophecy.

Appended to the forecast of the restored city is the prophecy of a restored population (vs. 11). **And they** [indefinite third masculine plural] **shall dwell in her**. The redeemed and restored people of Israel in kingdom status, are thus indicated indefinitely. Hebrew syntax, however, scarcely permits a passive construction. "And it [the city] shall be inhabited" (R.S.V.). The reason adduced is, **for there shall be no more curse** (R.S.V.). The Hebrew is **and a curse** [emphatic by word order] **shall be no more** (a circumstantial clause, which may well be rendered causally, as does the R.S.V.).

The **curse**, *herem*, is a "ban of utter destruction" (I Kings 20:42; Isa. 34:5; 43:28; Mal. 3:24) from the root *haram* in *hifil*, "ban, devote to destruction, exterminate" (Josh. 8:26; 10:28; I Sam. 15:18, 20; Jer. 50:26). When a city was placed under "a ban," it was devoted to complete destruction. The inhabitants were put to death and the spoil destroyed or not as the gravity of the situation demanded. Thus in the case of Jericho as an initial warning the ban was complete (Josh. 6:17, 21), and Achan transgressed in appropriating some of the booty. The ban was also complete in regard to the extermination of the Amalekites, Saul likewise sinned in sparing Agag and some of the spoil (I Sam. 15:3). The word occurs on the Mesha inscription, set up by Mesha king of Moab, about 850 B.C., "I devote it [the city of Nebo] to Ashtar-Chemosh" (line 17).

The reason there will be no more "ban of complete extermination" will be the peace and security of the Messianic reign. The rod-of-iron rule of the Messiah will not allow sin and wrong to flourish, all transgressors being dealt with in terrible severity. God's own will be so loyally devoted to Him that there will be no occasion for the Lord to say, "Therefore, I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob *to the curse* and Israel to reproaches" (Isa. 43:28).

If an individual or a city in Israel apostatized from the Lord and was lured away to devotion to other gods, they became "a curse" (*herem*), abandoned to complete destruction (Deut. 7:25, 26; 13:12-17). When **the Lord shall become King over all the earth** and there **shall be one Lord**, the sole object of worship, **and His name one**, the name of no other god acknowledged, then there shall be no idolatry and no apostasy, and hence **no more ban of complete destruction**.

Jerusalem's millennial security is further described in the clause, **And Jerusalem shall dwell safely** (vs. 11). The oft-recurring personification of a city "dwelling" (i.e., "being inhabited," as in Zech. 2:8; 9:5) is here qualified by the phrase **in safety**, *labhetah* (Lev. 25:18, 19; Judg. 18:7; I Kings 5:5; Isa. 47:8; Ezek. 38:8; 39:6). The noun **safety**, "security," *betah*, is from the root *batah*, "to trust," and has the notion of quiet undisturbed confidence and repose, giving a sense of security. Zechariah employs the phrase in its eschatological connotation, describing the peace and safety that shall characterize Israel and Jerusalem in the kingdom age. Thus Jeremiah describes the final regathering of God's people to Palestine, where the Lord "will cause them to dwell *safely*" (Jer. 23:6; 32:37; 33:16) and likewise Ezekiel (Ezek. 28:25, 26; 34:25, 28; 38:8, 11, 14; 39:6, 26). Although the expression is also employed of sinners and enemies of God dwelling in *false* security (Judg. 18:7; Isa. 47:8; Jer. 49:31), it is *never* so employed of Israel eschatologically, when the nation will be regathered and restored to God's favor.

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.

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

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.

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.

12 And this shall be the plague wherewith Jehovah will smite all the peoples that have warred against Jerusalem: their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their sockets, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.

13 And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from Jehovah 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.

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

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 those camps, as that plague.

4. *The Destruction of Jerusalem's Enemies* (Zech. 14:12-15). **And this shall be the plague with which the Lord shall plague all the peoples who shall go forth in battle against Jerusalem. Their flesh shall rot away while they are standing on their feet, and their eyes shall be consumed [rot] in their sockets, and their tongues shall rot away in their mouth. (13) And it shall be in that day there shall be a great panic from the Lord among them; so that each one shall grab another's hand and one's hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor. (14) And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the nations round about shall be gathered together, gold and silver apparel in profusion. (15) And the same plague shall be on the horse, on the mule, on the camel, and on the ass, and on the beasts that shall be in those camps--the very same plague.**

Three divinely ordered weapons are described in these verses as unleashed against the last-day enemies of the godly remnant to destroy them utterly just prior to Jerusalem's establishment in millennial glory as the religious and governmental capital of the millennial earth: (1) a deadly plague (vs. 12), (2) a frightful consternation producing mutual annihilation (vs. 13), and (3) the superhuman valor of the remnant of Judah, who shall also fight at Jerusalem (vs. 14).

Chronologically these verses 12-15 follow chapter 14:1-3, which verses in turn are an amplification and a supplement to the same subject discussed by the prophet in chapter 12:4-10. The reason the detailed description of the judgments on Jerusalem's enemies is for the moment passed over is that the prophet did not wish to interrupt the sequence of events setting forth the grand deliverance of God's people and the wonderful transformation of Jerusalem and Judah. But having fully and graphically set forth these dramatic results of the second advent of the Messiah (14:4, 5), Zechariah now proceeds with the details of the destruction of Israel's enemies, which are as terrible as the deliverance and exaltation of Jerusalem and God's people are glorious.

And this shall be the plague with which the Lord shall plague all the peoples . . . (the same root *nagaph*, "strike, smite" being used in both the noun and the verb). The noun *maggephah* denotes a "blow" or fatal "stroke" (Ezek. 24:16), that is, a divinely sent "plague" (Exod. 9:14), or "pestilence," as the tumors visited on the Philistines (I Sam. 6:4) or as a divine stroke against the Lord's chastened people (Num. 14:37; 16:48, 49 [17:13, 14]; 25:8, 9; 31:16; II Sam. 24:21; I Chron. 21:22; Ps. 106:29, 30). The word is used also of "slaughter" in battle, with the idea implicit that it was at least by divine permission, if not by direct divine intervention (I Sam. 4:17; II Sam. 17:9; 18:7). Here the "stroke" is wholly supernatural with which the Lord strikes Jerusalem's last and cruelest enemies and invaders.

The **plague** is unparalleled in its severity and terribleness and fits into that end-time period of cataclysmic judgment when "the iniquity" of the nations in their virulent anti-Semitism is "full" (cf. Gen. 15:16) and "the seven last plagues" in which "is filled up the wrath of God" (Rev. 15:1) are poured out in the frightful bowl judgment of the Revelation (Rev. 16:1-21) and emptied upon the earth immediately before the advent of Messiah (Rev. 19:11-16).

The penalty for those who **will come against Jerusalem** (*tsave'u*, a prophetic or future perfect denoting the certainty of the fact, and not a past perfect, since the action is still future) is that the Lord **will make their flesh rot while they stand on their feet**. The stroke is like a horrible leprosy that spreads through the body with shocking rapidity (cf. Lev. 26:16; Deut. 28:21, 22), so that the flesh will **rot** or "decay" so quickly, that the victim will become a skeleton erect upon his feet, with his flesh a putrid mass about it.

This is a judgment so unparalleled and awful that it is said concerning the victim, **He** [the Lord] **will cause his flesh to rot** (*hameq* being an infinitive absolute employed in lively dramatic style to take the place of a finite verb). "The infinitive absolute is precisely adapted to portray the suddenness of the infliction described and the rapidity with which it will do its work" (Mitchell, in *Int. Crit. Commentary, in loc.*).

Although the *plural* **all the peoples who engage in military combat against Jerusalem** is the subject, the Hebrew original changes to the *singular*: **He** [the Lord] **will cause his flesh to rot while he is standing upon his feet and his eyes shall rot in their sockets and his tongue shall rot in his** [Masoretic Text incorrectly "their"] **mouth**.

This reversion from the plural to the singular is a device to show the thoroughness of the plague, as not only striking the peoples en masse and as a whole, but extending in its terror to each individual person in the aggregate. The word **rot**, *maqaq*, means "to fester" of wounds (Ps. 38:5 [6]; "rot, rot away, consume away" (Zech. 14:12), "pine or waste away" because of punishment for iniquity (Ezek. 4:17; 24:23; 33:10; Lev. 26:39), "fade away," of the host of heaven (Isa. 34:4).

Never previously will humanity have experienced such a horrible visitation as in this instance of divine justice unloosed against the iniquity of man come to the full. The **tongue** is consumed because it had with wicked impudence blasphemed God. The **eye** is included because it had sought out God's people to exterminate them in one fell final blow.

Beside the deadly **plague** or "pestilence" (vs. 12), another divinely ordained weapon is unleashed against the end-time enemies of God's people; namely, a fearful commotion among those who attack Jerusalem, producing their mutual annihilation. This is called **a great consternation from the Lord**. The word **confusion**, *mehumah*, "tumult, disturbance" is from the root *hum*, "to roar" or "to discomfit," Arabic *hāma*, "to rush about wildly, to be distracted" (Deut. 7:23). The word is used of "tumult" and "confusion" in general (Amos 3:9; II Chron. 15:5), but especially of "tumultuous confusion" and "wild panic" among men, the result of divine judgment (I Sam. 5:9, 11; Ezek. 7:7) and "discomfiture" due to the Lord's interposition in battle in favor of His people (Deut. 7:23; 28:20; I Sam. 14:20; Isa. 22:5). The confusion is said to be **great**, *rabbah*, and **of the Lord**, a subjective genitive, better rendered **from the Lord**, that is, produced by Him "among them" (*bahem*, that is, "the enemy").

This tremendous tumult includes two features. Each attacker will first seize the other's hand with one hand to hold him powerless. Then he will lift his other hand to strike his neighbor, whose hand is also raised against him. Thus they will slaughter one another (cf. Zech. 12:4) in the wildest panic. Similar instances of God's confounding and destroying His people's foes by causing them to slaughter one another in a confused fight to the death at close quarters are found in Judges 7:22, in the case of Gideon's victorious three hundred, and Jonathan's great triumph over the Philistines at Michmash (I Sam. 14:4-16).

Despite the clear time indication, **in that day** of this **great consternation from the Lord**, Leupold (*op. cit.*, p. 271) insists that neither verse 12 nor verse 13 depict "a particular event which was to come to pass on a particular date, but by its specific picture rather portrayed a general principle." So far from such a statement being tenable, the expression **in that day** throughout the great section from chapter 12 through chapter 14 *always* signifies a very precise and definite period, namely, "the day of the Lord,"

denoting the time of the *direct* divine intervention in human affairs when God judges and removes sinners preparatory to His establishment of Israel in blessing upon the earth at the second advent of Messiah.

Besides the **plague** (vs. 12) and **the great confusion** (vs. 13), a third divinely ordained weapon is let loose against the latter-day attackers of the godly remnant in Jerusalem. This is the superhuman valor of the remnant of Judah, who shall also fight at Jerusalem (vs. 14). **And Judah also shall fight in Jerusalem** (not *against* Jerusalem, as in the Vulgate and Targum), not only defending themselves, but making a successful attack upon the attacking enemy. The expression "to fight against," *nilham be*, signifies to fight *in* or *at* such a place, as in Judges 5:19: "They fought *at* or *in* Taanach," *beta 'anakh*, and in Exodus 17:8: "Then came Amalek and fought with Israel *at* Rephidim," *berephidim*.

The collection of the wealth of the invading armies will yield an immense quantity of booty for Israel in the form of gold, silver, and garments. This will come from the well-equipped contingents composing the invading military powers, who will be cast into utter confusion in order to be annihilated (II Chron. 20; II Kings 7:2-8).

Verse 15 describes how the entire encampment of the enemy, including the cavalry and the beasts of burden, will fall under the same "ban of utter destruction" (*herem*), and Jerusalem, it is said, will be forever delivered (cf. vs. 11). The Mosaic law provided that a city which had committed the crime of idolatry and incurred the penalty of the ban, was to be totally wiped out. Its human inhabitants, as well as the animals in it, were to be exterminated, as in the case of Jericho (Josh. 6:17, 18, 21). Achan who disobeyed the law of the ban, was himself visited with its terrible severity. His oxen and other animals were stoned and burned along with himself and his children (Josh. 7:24, 25), demonstrating the awfulness of falling under the curse of God, as those who attack Jerusalem in her final assault.

II. MILLENNIAL WORSHIP AND GOVERNMENT (Zech. 14:16-21)

As a result of the terrible judgments outlined in verses 12-15, the nations who survive will have learned righteousness (cf. Isa. 26:9) by turning in faith and obedience unto the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and Universal Ruler. Then **the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one**, as the prophet has already declared (Zech. 14:9). With Israel at last converted and reinstated in divine blessing as a high priestly nation (Zech. 3:1-10) and as the light of the world (Zech. 4:1-14), with Messiah King-Priest ruling in righteousness and peace in the midst of her (Zech. 6:9-15), the nations will then be mightily blessed as they willingly submit and serve the King, the Lord of hosts. This wider extension of God's salvation to the ends of the earth is the happy note with which the final section of the prophecy of Zechariah closes (14:16-21). But amidst the note of world-wide salvation runs the notice of Messiah's rod-of-iron rule which will deal firmly and resolutely with all recalcitrants and sinners who might arise to attempt to destroy the righteousness and world-engirdling peace which will characterize the entire kingdom age (Isa. 11:1-9; Amos 9:11-15).

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.

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

1. *Jerusalem the Religious Capital of the Millennial Earth* (Zech. 14:16). **And it shall be that every one who is left as a survivor out of all the nations that shall come against Jerusalem shall go up annually to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.**

Every one that is left [singular] . . . **they shall go up** [plural]. Again, as often, Hebrew idiom singularizes the subject to stress the individual and pluralizes it to stress the totality (**all the nations**). The apparent meaning is that the nations shall come up *representatively*, *each one* who comes up does so as a delegate from his particular nation, so that the aggregate (**all the nations**) may be said to attend in the person of their representative.

The prophet also features **every one that is left** as an escaper (passive of *yathar*; "remain over," hence, "be left remaining" [Exod. 10:15; II Kings 20:17]), "be left over as a survivor *from*" (*min*, "out of") some calamity (I Sam. 25:34; II Sam. 9:1). This notation gives a hint how decimating and widespread will be the judgments and how wholesale will be the extermination of the wicked preceding the establishment of the kingdom.

The survivors are described as **out of the nations who will come** (*habba'im*, plural participle), "who will be coming" (not "who came"). The prophet is looking at them in *the act of coming* (participle in the future), and not as already having come in the past or in the context (14:1-3; 12-15).

When shall these converted Gentiles come? **From year to year** (*middey shanah beshanah*, literally, "from the sufficiency of a year in a year," when time has fully completed one year and enters another, i.e., "annually"). What is the purpose of the trip? **To worship** [literally "to bow down to"] **the King, the Lord of hosts**, He who will be known and adored as *the one only Lord* (Yahweh), *the absolutely unique One*, whose name will be *the one only name* of Deity that will then exist (Zech. 14:9). How will these converted and worshipping Gentiles express their adoration of the Lord? They will **celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles**. This is the only one of the seven Jewish festivals (Lev. 23:4-44) which is represented in this prophecy as being observed in the kingdom age.

Many answers have been given why only the **Feast of Tabernacles** or Festival of Booths will be observed in the millennium. The answer is: *it is the only one of the seven feasts of the Lord which at that time will be unfulfilled* typically and the only one which will be in process of fulfilment by the kingdom itself. The Passover (Lev. 23:4, 5) was fulfilled in the death of Christ the Redeemer (I Cor. 5:7; I Peter 1:19). The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:6-8) is being fulfilled in the holy, separate walk of the believer in fellowship with his Savior (I Cor. 5:6-8; II Cor. 7:1; Gal. 5:7-9). The Feast of Firstfruits (Lev. 23:9-14) was fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ (I Cor. 15:23). The Feast of Pentecost (Lev. 23:15-22) was fulfilled in the formation of the Church at Pentecost fifty days

subsequent to the resurrection of Christ (I Cor. 10:16; 12:12, 13). The Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23:23-25) will be fulfilled in the future regathering of Israel at the *beginning* of the kingdom (Isa. 18:3, 7; 27:12, 13; Ezek. 37:1-14). The Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:26-32) in its prophetic feature will be fulfilled in the conversion of Israel at the second advent (Zech. 12:10-13; 13:1) and preparatory to the millennium. *Only the Feast of Tabernacles at that time will be unfulfilled in its prophetic aspect as typical of the kingdom rest of Israel after her regathering, and the blessedness typified by that festival will be in process of fulfilment throughout the kingdom age.* Moreover, the joy and blessing foreshadowed in the celebration "will then not only be the portion of saved Israel," as Baron says (*op. cit.*, p. 521), "but shall also pervade all nations of the earth."

There is nothing in this present age to answer to the **Feast of Tabernacles**. It belongs in its anticipative or prophetic character to the time of the future conversion and restoration of Israel as a high-priestly nation (Zech. 3:1-10) and as the light of the world in the millennial age (Zech. 4:1-14). In its primary sense as "the Feast of Ingathering" or Harvest (Lev. 23:33-44; Deut. 16:13-15), it looks forward to the time "when the Lord of hosts" in Mount Zion "shall make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, or wines on the lees well refined" (Isa. 25:6).

Three times the **Feast of Tabernacles** is mentioned in these verses (vss. 16, 18, 19). Its place at the end of the cycle of sacred Jewish festivals, which constitute in their typical significance the sacred calendar of the history of redemption, gives it an eschatological significance which the other holy festal celebrations do not possess. Its ritual as laid down in the Mosaic Law (Lev. 23), as celebrated in ancient Jewish tradition, and as described in the Talmud and Mishna, point to its antitype in the millennial peace and prosperity of Israel's future kingdom (cf. Baron, *op. cit.*, pp. 527-530).

Particularly arresting as a feature of the **Feast of Tabernacles** was the eighth day, "the last and great day of the feast," the climactic solemnity when Israel no longer dwelled in the booths but returned to their homes. This feature looks beyond the millennial kingdom to the eternal state when time merges into eternity, and it shall be said, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people" (Rev. 20:1). The kingdom age will be characterized by a tabernacling of God with men that will be greater than any previous era. But the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles, in prefiguring the eternal state, points to a tabernacling of God that will be endless and absolute. When "God himself shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things have passed away" (Rev. 21:2-8).

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.

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.

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

17 And it shall be, that whoso of all the families of the earth goeth not up unto Jerusalem to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, upon them there shall be no rain.

18 And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, neither shall it be upon them; there shall be the plague wherewith Jehovah will smite the nations that go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

19 This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations that go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.



2. Rod-of-iron Rule Regulating Millennial Worship (Zech. 14:17-19). Also it shall be that whoever of the families of the earth shall not go up to Jerusalem to bow down to the King, the Lord of hosts, upon such there shall be no rainfall. (18) And if the family of the Egyptians do not go up and do not appear, then no rain shall fall upon them; but the plague shall befall them with which the Lord will plague the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. (19) This shall be the sin of Egypt and the sin of all the nations who will not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.

The stern note emphasizing the rod-of-iron rule of Messiah struck in Zechariah's sixth vision of the Flying Scroll (Zech. 5:1-4), once again appears in the notice regulating millennial worship. There Messiah's rigid rule is connected with the moral conduct of the inhabitants of the millennial earth. Here it concerns their religious and spiritual behavior. In both cases the severity of millennial administration is accentuated. This aspect of Messiah's kingly rule is featured throughout the prophetic word. The psalmist dramatically foretells it. "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt *break them with a rod of iron*; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him" (Ps. 2:8-12).

In Revelation 12:5 the woman (Israel) "brought forth a male child [Christ], *who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron.*" Out of the mouth of the returning Messiah "proceeds a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and *he shall rule them with a rod of iron*" (Rev. 19:15). The overcomer in the Thyatiran church will be given "power over the nations," and in association with the reigning Messiah, "shall rule them *with a rod of iron*" (Rev. 2:27).

In the matter of worship in the day when the Lord shall be universal King and the sole object of adoration, Messiah's absolute rule shall be manifested in withholding rain from the people or nation which refuses to send representatives to Jerusalem to worship the Lord at the annual Feast of Tabernacles. **And it shall be that he who [singular] does not go up from the families of the earth to Jerusalem . . . upon them [plural] there shall be no rainfall** (vs. 17). The use of the singular points to the individual representative of the people or nation, while the plural has in mind the people or nation itself.

The word **families**, *mishpahoth*, is from the root *shaphah*, "to pour out" (water, blood, semen, Arabic *safaha*). The term comprehends the idea of human reproduction. The word is employed of a "clan," i.e., the family connection of an individual (Gen. 24:38; II Sam. 14:7); or loosely of a "tribe" (Judg. 13:2; 17:7); of the technical divisions of the people of Israel (Num. 11:10; Jer. 2:4); of the tribes of

Israel (Exod. 6:14; Num. 3:15; Zech. 12:13). In a broader sense it is employed of a non-Israelite "people" or "nation" (Gen. 12:3; 28:14; Jer. 10:25; Ezek. 20:32; Nah. 3:4), and this is its usage in this millennial passage.

The particular punishment specified to be visited upon any "nation" or "people" who will display recalcitrance in spiritual obligations is the withholding of **rainfall**. The word used is not for the "early rain" or autumnal precipitation of Palestine (*moreh*) nor the later winter and spring rains (*malqosh*), but *geshem* (Arabic *jasuma*, "be massive or bulky"), comprehending general copious rainfall suitable for any part of the globe (cf. Zech. 10:1). In Ezekiel 34:26 the word is used figuratively of spiritual blessing, and Zechariah's usage, while literal, does not exclude the spiritual connotation.

It is interesting that **the family of Egypt**, the Egyptian "nation" (or "people") is singled out for mention, especially when Egypt has notoriously and in striking contrast to Palestine been independent of rainfall and dependent upon the annual inundation of the Nile River for her sustenance. But the fact must not be overlooked that sometimes the Nile failed and Egypt suffered famine, as in the seven-year dearth in Joseph's day (Gen. 41:54) and similar times of extreme scarcity recorded on the Egyptian monuments, as in the time of Zoser. Moreover, the Nile was dependent upon the rainfall in the African hinterland, which could be effected. Then, too, there will be drastically different climatic changes in the kingdom, which will effect all nations, including Egypt.

It is possible, however, that the Septuagint and the Syriac have preserved the original text in this passage, and their reading makes no reference to rainfall. **And if the people of Egypt do not come up and appear, upon them [wa'aleyhem] shall be the plague with which the Lord will plague the nations who will not come up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.**

Of course, **the plague** (*maggephah*, cf. comments on Zech. 14:12) is apparently the withholding of rainfall in Egypt's case also, but it is possible it may comprehend some other variation of punishment. This particular chastisement is scarcely the only form the rod-of-iron rule of Messiah will assume in dealing with sinners and recalcitrants in the earthly theocratic kingdom.

The question still remains, however, respective of the question of **rainfall**, why Egypt is singled out of all the millennial nations for special citation both with respect to her existence as a millennial nation and her submission to the Lord, on the one hand, and the rigid government of her by the Lord, on the other. The reason in the first instance is to glorify the grace and kindness of the Lord, and in the second instance, to magnify His holiness and severity. As in the case of His dealing with Jew and Gentile in this age, the purpose is enunciated. "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them [the Jews] which fell, severity; but toward thee [saved Gentile] goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Rom. 11:22).

The refusal of Egypt or any other millennial nation to go up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles will constitute a serious "sin," *hatta'th*. This word (from the root "to do wrong, miss the mark") here means not "sin, or sin offering" as commonly, but "the condition of sin, guilt of sin" (Gen. 18:20; Num. 16:26); or better, "the punishment for sin" as a result of this guilt. **This will be the punishment for sin of Egypt and the punishment for sin of all nations.**

The expression, **to go up** to Jerusalem (*'alah*, "to ascend"), is employed because, as a result of the

globe-engirdling earthquakes (Rev. 16:18-20), especially in Palestine (Zech. 14:4, 5, 10), Jerusalem, to accentuate its eminence, will be elevated geographically over all the surrounding territory of the ancient tribe of Judah, which will be depressed as the Arabah. But more than this, Jerusalem will be exalted as the religious and governmental capital of the millennial earth as the city of the great King from which the law of the Lord shall go forth. To **go up . . . to Jerusalem** will be a glorious privilege, as well as a stern and inescapable duty to the inhabitants of the millennial earth.

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.

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 seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts.

20 In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLY UNTO JEHOVAH; and the pots in Jehovah's house shall be like the bowls before the altar.

21 Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holy unto Jehovah of hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and boil therein: and in that day there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of Jehovah of hosts.

3. *Israel's Holiness as a High Priestly Nation in the Millennium* (Zech. 14:20, 21). **In that day "Holiness to the Lord" shall be upon the bells of the horses, and the utensils in the house of the Lord shall be as the sacred bowls before the altar. (21) And it shall be that every common pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be Holiness to the Lord of hosts! And all who shall be offering sacrifice shall come and take any of them and boil meat in them. And there shall no more be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts in that day.**

Zechariah concludes his grand prophecies of Israel's glorious future on the note of the nation's holiness as a high priestly nation. In his vision of Israel's cleansing for this high and holy ministry (Zech. 3:1-10), the prophet had set forth the basis of this holiness; namely, cleansing from the excrement-bespattered garments of self-righteousness and clothing with the garments of salvation through faith in the redemptive work of Messiah, Jehovah's "Servant, the Branch" (Zech. 3:8).

To illustrate this wonderful priestly restoration of Israel according to God's original intent for the nation (Exod. 19:5, 6), the prophet selects several details which, although minor and quite incidental, are nevertheless eloquently revealing of Israel's restoration to high priestly status *as a nation*. This is suggested by the employment twice of the epithet, **Holiness to the Lord** (Exod. 28:36), which was engraved upon "a plate of pure gold" on the turban of Aaron. "And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead," that the high priest might be responsible for every neglect or offence respecting "the holy things" (Exod. 28:38). The designation **Holiness unto the Lord** was thus in the life of Israel reserved for the highest and holiest position and function imaginable, engraved in gold upon the forefront of the turban of the loftiest spiritual dignitary of the nation and its representative before God to ever remind him to guard the holiness of God in the people's worship and service.

But **in that day** (here embracing the full establishment of the kingdom with Messiah's direct rule and administration in the affairs of men), the epithet **Holiness unto the Lord shall be upon the bells of the horses**. Hebrew word order emphasizes the fact that the most common and ordinary things of life, such as **the bells of the horses** (i.e., every common horse), used merely to decorate the brute animal, shall in that day be as holy unto the Lord as was the high priest's engraved turban. Why? Because the *entire nation*, cleansed from sin by Messiah, the Servant the Branch, shall be in function and purpose, what the high priest was set to be in Israel--the representative of God to the nation. With the *people cleansed*, the *whole land* and *everything* in it, including **the bells of the common horse** (vs. 20) as well as **every common pot in Jerusalem and in Judah**, are emphatically declared (by the word order) to be **Holiness to the Lord** (vs. 21).

Further to emphasize the fact that *every* phase of life in the kingdom will be sanctified and holy and nothing would any longer be considered secular, the utensils or pots in the Lord's house, to which some degree of sanctity attached, shall be as holy as the strictly sacred *bowls* before the altar. These holy vessels (*mizraqim*, from the root *zaraq*, "to toss, throw, scatter abundantly," Assyrian *zaraq*, Arabic *zaraq*, "throw at") were the **bowls** or "basins" for throwing or tossing a liquid, employed to catch the blood of slain victims and from which it was sprinkled according to the ritual of tabernacle and temple sacrifices at the altar (Exod. 27:3; 38:3; Num. 4:14; I Kings 7:40; Jer. 52:18; Zech. 9:15). These **bowls** were also presented by the princes of the people full of four mingled with oil for a meal or cereal offering (Num. 7:13, 19, 25, etc.).

Every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah [that is, throughout the *Holy Land*] **shall be holy unto the Lord of armies: and all they that sacrifice shall come and boil flesh in them**. Private and domestic life in that glad day shall be as hallowed as priestly ministrations once were in Israel. This will be possible because all such distinctions as profane, secular, holy, and most holy shall come to an end. Everything will be **Holiness to the Lord**, that is, completely sacred in the highest sense of the term, and those who refuse to regulate their lives in accordance with this principle will be summarily and severely dealt with under the stern administration of the King, who "with righteousness shall judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins" (Isa. 11:4, 5).

But despite the swift and severe discipline of that day, it will be administered only because grace has been rejected or disregarded. The preponderating majority of earth's population will then receive the salvation of Messiah into their hearts and gladly pay homage to Him as absolute King, whose law will be written in their hearts. It is because the "knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9) with the removal of moral and spiritual defilement that the condition will be removed that first evoked the distinctions between the holy and the profane. All will then be holy when Israel *as a nation* has "Holiness to the Lord" engraved upon her, as once only the high priest had upon his turban.

A final detail illustrating the universally holy character of Israel in kingdom blessing is given. **And there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of armies in that day**. The term **Canaanite** is best taken as a figure of a morally and spiritually unclean person. The Canaanites were degraded when Israel entered the land. The Old Testament references as well as archaeological discoveries (notably the religious epic literature recovered at Ugarit in North Syria, 1929-1937, and

dating from the fourteenth century B.C.) agree in painting a dark picture of the gross immorality of the Canaanites, particularly because of their low and degrading religion. This was true to such an extent that the term **Canaanite**, as here, became proverbial in Israel for a profane and morally degenerate person.

In that millennial day the temple at Jerusalem will be a House of Prayer for all nations. As such its holiness will be jealously guarded. Nothing that defiles or works abomination shall be allowed to desecrate its sanctity. As the Holy City of Jerusalem itself, it will be the mecca of the millennial earth, and no profane or wicked person shall be allowed to desecrate its holy precincts. Israel, in high priestly glory and service, will adorn it, and the Holy Land with its holy people will grace it. The grand consummation of Israel's hopes and aspirations which it will symbolize, will attest the fulfilment not only of the age-spanning visions and prophecies of Zechariah, but will vindicate the very name of the prophet himself, Zechariah, "The Lord remembers."

Merrill F. Unger, *Zechariah: Prophet of Messiah's Glory* (Zondervan Publishing House, 1963).