

# Deliverance for Judah

Zechariah 12

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## **Zechariah 12:1-9 – The Coming Deliverance**

*The burden of the word of the Lord against Israel. Thus says the Lord, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him:* <sup>2</sup> *“Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. <sup>4</sup> In that day,” says the Lord, “I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. <sup>5</sup> And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, ‘The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in the Lord of hosts, their God.’ <sup>6</sup> In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a firepan in the woodpile, and like a fiery torch in the sheaves; they shall devour all the surrounding peoples on the right hand and on the left, but Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place—Jerusalem. <sup>7</sup> “The Lord will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not become greater than that of Judah. <sup>8</sup> In that day the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the Lord before them. <sup>9</sup> It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.*

### **v1 – What does this first verse tell us about God?**

*Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens:* The section begins with praise for God's creative power, reminding us that He is in control and completely able to accomplish what He predicts.

*foundation of the earth:* brings to mind that the angels were all present and saw this act of creation...

Job 38:4-7 – *Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its*

*cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?*

This supports the “gap theory” where there was an Age of Angels prior to the six days of creation of Genesis.

*forms the spirit of man:* God did more than just make us as physical creatures; He gave us a spirit which has the capacity to have a relationship with Him.

### **v2 – How will Jerusalem be “a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples”?**

God says that in a coming day Jerusalem will intoxicate and stupefy the surrounding peoples. The Arab peoples surrounding Jerusalem have a passion for possessing the city that is not justified by history.

### **Why are so many Islamic nations around Israel so obsessed with their ceasing to exist as a nation?**

Muslims claim Jerusalem as their third-holiest city after Mecca and Medina, but Jerusalem is not mentioned once in the Koran. In addition, during the centuries when Jerusalem was under complete Arab control, no Arab ruler or Islamic leader ever made it the object of a religious pilgrimage. Ultimately, it is a spiritual matter:

Psalm 83:3-4 – *They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted together against Your sheltered ones. They have said, “Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more.”*

### **What makes Jerusalem the third holiest city in Islam?**

Jerusalem's importance to Muslims comes from the belief that in the Dome of the Rock shrine there is a rock where two significant things happened: (1) where Abraham intended to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, and (2) where Mohammed allegedly ascended into heaven.

- Though this tradition is firmly in the Muslim mind, it is of recent origin. It was invented by Yasser Arafat's uncle - Haj Amin el-Husseini, who was the past Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. He promoted this myth in the 1920's and 1930's to arouse Arab passions against the growing Jewish presence there.
- The Dome of the Rock was built not because of the Koran, but because the Muslim ruler Abdal-Malik

wanted to gain revenue from pilgrims and worshippers, and because he wanted to prevent the rebuilding of a Jewish Temple. Islamic passion for Jerusalem is indeed like drunkenness.

### **How do we know that there is a spiritual battle over Jerusalem?**

It is simply not rational. During the Clinton presidency, in peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Israel was willing to concede everything to the Palestinians except sovereignty over Jerusalem. The entire deal was ruined over that one point.

- If Muslim passion for Jerusalem is a mystery, the Jewish claim to the city is entirely Scriptural. Jerusalem is mentioned more than 800 times in the Bible making it worthy of special attention.
- Jerusalem is the only city upon which God has bestowed His distinctive blessing and protection (Ps 132:13-14), and the only city for whose peace we are commanded to pray (Ps 122:6).
- God says He has chosen Jerusalem as the place where He has put His name forever (2 Chr 6:6; 33:7; Ps 46:4; 48:1-8; 87:3). The new heavens and new earth will contain 'the city of my God...new Jerusalem' (Rev 3:12; 21:2). There will be a 'heavenly Jerusalem' (Heb 12:22) but no 'heavenly' New York, Paris, London, Damascus, Cairo, etc.

### **v3 – How will Jerusalem be a very heavy stone for all peoples?**

If Jerusalem will be a cup of drunkenness to all her surrounding peoples, it will be a heavy stone, a burden, for all peoples, presenting for them a problem that cannot be solved (*all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces*).

- Peace in Israel is seen as the hardest not to crack if there is to be peace among the nations.

### **How was this prophecy so amazing when it was originally written?**

Who could have imagined when it was written that all the nations of the world would be involved in deciding the fate of Israel?

- This involvement of all nations in dividing Israel has occurred exactly as prophesied and is still in the process of being implemented.

### **How would those who would seek to heave Jerusalem away be cut in pieces?**

Their effort to divide Israel and remove Jerusalem from them would fail along with consequences that would render them unable to threaten Israel again.

### **v4 – How does God defeat the enemies of Israel?**

By striking their tools of war with confusion and their warriors with madness.

- *Horses with confusion* might be literal but it could also be that the tools they depended on just would not work right.
- *Riders with madness* is what happens to the ungodly: *even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind* (Romans 1:28)... *God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind* (2 Timothy 1:7)

### **When will God open His eyes on Judah and cause their enemies to suffer blindness?**

Though the nations come against Jerusalem with fury, God will protect her. This will find an ultimate fulfillment in the Battle of Armageddon, but we see in foreshadowed in their protection even while they are in unbelief. This shows that Israel being back in the land is permanent and sets the stage for the Tribulation and ultimately the Millennial Kingdom.

### **v5 – What does this verse tell us about that time-frame when God prepares to deliver Israel?**

Two things point to Israel of our day...

1. The leaders of Judah are referred to as *governors*, not kings or princes. This has to refer to the type of government being very different from ancient Israel. Modern Israel will be a democracy as has been the case with other nations in Western Civilization.
2. The governors of Judah are unbelievers saying, *the inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in the Lord of hosts, their God*. Notice that their strength is in the people and faith in God is something the people have, not them. "Religion is the opiate of the masses" (Karl Marx).

### **v6 – What will the governors of Judah be like when God prepares to deliver Israel?**

*I will make the governors of Judah like a firepan in the woodpile*: In that day God will deliver Israel not only through His direct work, but also through blessing and empowering both the governors and inhabitants of Jerusalem. They will be supernaturally empowered by God to defend their land.

### **When will the governors of Judah devour all the peoples around them?**

Since they became a nation again in 1948. Israeli forces have won against superior forces in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, and 1981. Today the Israeli Defense Force is the most powerful in the region and Israel is currently the only nation in the Middle East with nuclear weapons. God has

protected Israel from its inception and has enabled them to build a military capability that has brought them security and stability.

- Each conflict Israel has had since 1948 has resulted in them acquiring more territory.

### **What is the significance of Jerusalem being inhabited again?**

When the modern nation of Israel began in 1948 Jerusalem was not part of it. Jerusalem was acquired by Israel as a result of the 6-day war in 1967.

### **v7 – How come the Lord is showing preference to the tents of Judah over the house of David and Jerusalem?**

The tents of Judah are the average Jews who live beyond the walls of Jerusalem. The house of David is the ruling class.

Matt 20:16 – *the last will be first, and the first last*

### **What did Jesus mean by saying the last would be first? Is a life of poverty necessary to go to heaven?**

No, Scripture is clear that salvation is by grace through faith, not of works (Ephesians 2:8–9) — this is independent of one's financial status.

- Also, Jesus was not teaching an automatic reversal of roles in heaven. There is no heavenly law wherein the poor and oppressed must rule over the rich and powerful.
- Nor will believers who enjoy wealth and prestige on earth be required to somehow be abased in heaven.

Earthly rank will not automatically translate into an inverse heavenly rank.

The most direct interpretation, based on the content of the parable, is that all believers, no matter how long or how hard they work during this lifetime, will receive the same basic reward: eternal life.

- Of course, Scripture also teaches that there are rewards in heaven for different services, but the ultimate reward of eternal life will be given to all equally, on the basis of God's grace in Christ Jesus.

There are several ways in which “the first will be last and the last first” holds true.

- The Jews, who had labored long under the Old Covenant, were jealous of the grace extended to the Gentile “newcomers” (see Romans 11:11).
- Heaven's value system is far different from the world. Those who are esteemed and respected in this world may be frowned upon by God. And those who are despised and rejected in this world may, in fact, be rewarded by God.

Don't get caught up in the world's way of ranking things; it's too prone to error.

Romans 2:11 – *there is no partiality with God.*

### **v8 – What will God do for the inhabitants of Jerusalem when God prepares to deliver Israel?**

*the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David:* King David was renowned for his fighting ability, courage, and success. God promises a day when the weakest in Jerusalem will be as mighty as David; and their leaders can be compared in might to God! This is possible because the angel of the Lord is fighting on their behalf and ultimately it is spiritual warfare.

- We have seen this in Israel's success against all who have sought to engage them in battle.

### **v9 – When will God seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem?**

He has done this in history... what became of the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans? They all have been conquered by people God raised up against them. But, since we are still in the Times of the Gentiles, the ultimate fulfillment will be when Jesus returns to deliver Israel at Armageddon.

Revelation 19:15 – *Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.*

### **Zechariah 12:10-14 – Mourning for the Pierced One**

<sup>10</sup> *“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.”* <sup>11</sup> *In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.* <sup>12</sup> *And the land shall 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; <sup>13</sup> the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of Shimei by itself, and their wives by themselves; <sup>14</sup> all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves.*

### **v10 – What will God pour out on the house of David?**

God will pour out His Spirit... this is the later rain spoken of by Joel with the former rain being at Pentecost.

- The Spirit of grace is God showing His grace to Israel.
- The Spirit of supplication is God answering the prayers of Israel for deliverance.

### **How will Israel respond to God pouring out His Spirit on them?**

*Then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son: They will come to recognize that Jesus was the Messiah and they will turn to Him, the pierced One. His head was pierced with thorns, His hands and feet were pierced with nails, and a spear pierced His side.*

- They will turn away from their trust in the foolish, worthless shepherd and turn their focus on the Good Shepherd.
- *They will look on Him whom they pierced.* They will realize that while they did not bear sole responsibility, they were responsible for the crucifixion of their Savior.

### **Why will the Jews mourn when they realize Jesus is the Messiah?**

The Jewish people will turn to Jesus in repentance, being sorry for their missed opportunity in not recognizing Him as Savior earlier. The mourning will be deep, as if for an only son, the firstborn. Firstborn was synonymous with the most beloved.

### **How does this turning to Jesus fulfill the amazing promise of Romans 11:26?**

Romans 11:26 – *And so all Israel will be saved*  
Before the physical return of Jesus to this earth, the Jewish people, as a nation, will welcome Him as their Lord and Savior.

- The whole context of Zechariah 12 puts this radical conversion in the setting of miraculous deliverance from an attack from the nations.

### **How does Israel turning to Jesus reflect how all believers come to put their trust in Him?**

*They will look ... they will mourn:* Here we see the pattern for coming to Jesus and true repentance. First, we look to Jesus, then we mourn for our sins. Looking to Jesus must come first.

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

### **Why doesn't mourning for sins come before looking to Jesus for salvation?**

It is the Holy Spirit who causes us to mourn over our sins and that comes after we have responded to the conviction of the Spirit to have Jesus in our lives.

- That is why it is not nearly as effective in evangelism to convince people they are a sinner before helping them understand who Jesus is.

### **What does comparing Zechariah 12:10 with Zechariah 12:1 and 12:3 tell us?**

*Thus says the LORD ... says the LORD* – This makes it clear that the Me they look upon is the LORD God - Yahweh - Himself. This is astounding and wonderful evidence that Jesus the pierced One is God, and that Yahweh is the Triune God.

- Simply said, the Father sends the Spirit so that men would look upon the Son.

### **v11-14 – What will the mourning in Israel be like in the day they recognize Jesus as Messiah?**

The repentance that comes to Israel in that day will be like a great mourning, the ultimate fulfillment of the Day of Atonement, the day of national mourning over their greatest sin - rejecting Jesus.

*Like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon:* This refers to the mourning over King Josiah's death (2 Kings 23:29 and 2 Chronicles 35:20-25). He was such a godly king that the whole nation wept bitterly at his death.

### **How is it that *the land shall mourn, every family by itself*?**

This indicates there will be both great individual repentance and great corporate repentance. It seems fantastic to us that Israel as a whole would turn to Jesus and repent of their sin of rejecting their Savior - it is so amazing that we would not believe it unless the Bible so clearly taught it!

### **Why is individual mourning and repentance emphasized here?**

We're not saved as part of a group. Scripture is clear that salvation is a process by which God saves individuals through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Each person must come to Christ individually, not collectively.

1 Corinthians 6:17 – *He who unites himself with the Lord is one with Him in the Spirit.*

### **What applications come to mind from our discussion today?**

- The irrational hatred of Israel is modern day antisemitism a spiritual condition that reveals how close we are to the end of the Age.
- God will restore Israel to the land (happening now) and restore them spiritually as well (stage is being set).
- God will deliver Israel when all the nations are seeking their destruction.
- Israel is regathered in unbelief as a secular nation, but this will change when they recognize Jesus as Messiah.
- As we see the stage being set for God to pour out His Spirit on Israel, we realize how close we are.