



Zechariah - Chapter Fourteen

- II [Zechariah 9:1-14:21 - The Return of the King \(continues/concludes\)](#)
- II.b [Zechariah 12:1-14:21 - The Second Oracle: the People and their Leaders \(continues/concludes\)](#)
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Summary of Chapter Fourteen

The Lord warns the people that a great future battle still awaits the city of Jerusalem that will lead to half the population being taken into exile once more. However, there will come a day when the Lord will become the King of all the earth. He will fight against and subdue all who have opposed him. The opponents who survive the battle shall come to worship the Lord and all things will be restored.

II.b.ii.2 [Zechariah 14:1-21 - Future Warfare and Final Victory](#)

Refer to the chapter summary above.

II.b.ii.2.A [Zechariah 14:1-11 - Jerusalem's Judgement, Deliverance, and Exaltation](#)

Terrible times are yet in store for the people of Jerusalem, but God will visit them and make Jerusalem secure and prominent.

¹ See, a day is coming for the Lord, when the plunder taken from you will be divided in your midst. ² For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses looted and the women raped; half the city shall go into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

Zechariah 14:1-2

I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle predicts a future time that is not specified in Zechariah. However, Zechariah seems to have the very end times in view when Jerusalem will be surrounded and attacked by some type of international force. When the Romans came against Jerusalem in AD 70 they came with a multinational army and brought terrible destruction on the city and its people. Yet there was none of the deliverance that Zechariah will describe in the following verses, so it is difficult to say that this was fulfilled in the Roman attack upon Jerusalem in AD 70. It seems more likely to be the battle predicted to occur when the armies gather at Armageddon (Revelation 16:16).

The city shall be taken and the houses looted and the women raped. Sadly, this describes the fate of many cities and their people throughout history, with the women particularly vulnerable during war. The memory of this in Jerusalem would still have been raw because it had happened in their recent history when Zechariah prophesied: <<*Women are raped in Zion, virgins in the towns of Judah*>> (Lamentations 5:11).

Half the city shall go into exile. This attack against Jerusalem will be severe, but the city itself will not be overthrown, i.e. the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

³ Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. ⁴ On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives, which lies before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley; so that half of the Mount shall withdraw northwards, and the other half southwards.

Zechariah 14:3-4

Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. The trials for Jerusalem are spelled out in the beginning of Chapter 14. Judah's possessions will be divided by her enemies in front of her, and Jerusalem will again be captured, with horrific consequences including rape, plunder, and the exile of a significant portion of her population. Yet at the height of her distress, the Lord will go out once more as a warrior, arriving by way of the Mount of Olives, across the Kidron Valley to the east of Jerusalem, the same route by which he abandoned the Jerusalem temple in Ezekiel 11:23. In a manner typical of such appearances of God, e.g. Psalm 29:1-11 and 50:3; Isaiah 29:6; Micah 1:3-4; and Habakkuk Chapter 3, this theophany will shake the natural order, splitting the mountain in two, creating a valley aligned from east to west along the sacred axis of the temple. Zechariah's vision thus resonates with the upheaval of the earth at

the coming of the Lord depicted elsewhere: <<*Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain*>> (Isaiah 40:4), <<*And there, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east; the sound was like the sound of mighty waters; and the earth shone with his glory*>> (Ezekiel 43:2).

⁵ And you shall flee by the valley of the Lord's mountain, for the valley between the mountains shall reach to Azal; and you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of King Uzziah of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

Zechariah 14:5

Then the Lord my God will come. This valley will provide a way of escape for the inhabitants of Jerusalem to Azal, an unknown location, and an access road for the Divine Warrior to return to his city. He comes accompanied by all the holy ones, either his angelic army, the exiles who return under his protection or the church, whom he will remove from the earth during the Great Tribulation. According to Jude, this was a prophecy much older than from the time of Zechariah: <<*It was also about these that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, 'See, the Lord is coming with tens of thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgement on all, and to convict everyone of all the deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him'*>> (Jude 14-15).

The earthquake in the days of King Uzziah was a traumatic event also mentioned in Amos 1:1-2 <<*The words of Amos, who was among the shepherds of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of King Uzziah of Judah and in the days of King Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel, two years before the earthquake*>>. Although no precise date can be given, significant archaeological finds at Hazor and other cities in the region has found evidence of a major earthquake in the mid 8th Century BC with a magnitude of 8 on the Richter Scale, and with its epicentre northwest of Damascus. This would be within the timeframe of Amos' prophecy.

⁶ On that day there shall not be either cold or frost.

Zechariah 14:6

On that day. It is difficult to determine what period of time is being indicated by the remarkable prophecies in this entire chapter, whether a future time in this present age, or a future Millennial Kingdom and the rebellion that follows it, or the events that surround Christ's return and the beginning of the eternal state: <<*Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours made careful search and inquiry, inquiring about the person*

or time that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated, when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the subsequent glory>> (1 Peter 1:10-11).

⁷ And there shall be continuous day (it is known to the Lord), not day and not night, for at evening time there shall be light.

Zechariah 14:7

The transformation of the natural order at the coming of the Lord continues with a return to the primordial conditions. That day will be like the first day of history, for it is literally ‘day one’ or ‘one (single) day’, a unique day, which is known to the Lord only: <<*But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father*>> (Mark 13:32), and: <<*He replied, ‘It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority’*>> (Acts 1:7).

Just as on the first day, when light and darkness had not yet been separated: <<*Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness*>> (Genesis 1:3-4), so on that day there will be neither day nor night, for at evening time there shall be light. Instead of alternating light and darkness, permanent light will prevail: <<*Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life’*>> (John 8:12), <<*It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honour and eternal dominion. Amen*>> (1 Timothy 6:16), <<*This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all*>> (1 John 1:5), <<*And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign for ever and ever*>> (Revelation 22:5).

⁸ On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea; it shall continue in summer as in winter.

Zechariah 14:8

A perpetual supply of living (or flowing) waters will also emanate from Jerusalem, reaching out both east and west, to the Dead Sea and to the Mediterranean. Such a life-giving river is a common feature in describing sanctuaries, from the Garden of Eden to the New Jerusalem; refer to Genesis 2:10, Psalm 46:4, Ezekiel 47:1-12, Joel 3:18, John 4:10, Revelation 21:6 and Revelation 22:1.

⁹ And the Lord will become king over all the earth; on that day the Lord will be one and his name one.

Zechariah 14:9

The Lord will become king over all the earth points to a time that far exceeds the simple idea of a Messiah who will give Israel deliverance from oppression and bring the people God's presence and blessing, for this predicts a worldwide earthly reign of the Lord himself. Some interpreters see this fulfilled in the reign of Christ in a future 1,000-year Millennial Kingdom, while others see it fulfilled after the final judgement, in the new heaven and new earth; refer to the comments on Revelation Chapters 21-22 on the website. Still others see this as the Lord's reign as exercised by the Messiah, who is regularly expected in the OT to bring the Gentiles into his empire, as revealed for example in Isaiah 11:1-10.

The Lord will be one echoes the fundamental confession of the OT: <<**Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one**>> (Deuteronomy 6:4 NIV). As the Lord's sole kingship is established, so too he becomes the sole object of worship, as confirmed by Zechariah 8:20-23.

And his name one, that is, the Lord's name remains, unlike the names of the idols that were cut off; refer to Deuteronomy 6:13 and Zechariah 13:2. Just as there was one day of the Lord (v.7), so there is one Lord, with one name.

¹⁰ The whole land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem shall remain aloft on its site from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the former gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses.

Zechariah 14:10

The territory of Judah will be turned into a flat plain, from Geba on its northern border to Rimmon, 35 miles or 56 km to the southwest of Jerusalem, in order that the city of Jerusalem can tower over its surrounding countryside: <<***In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.'*** For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more>> (Isaiah 2:2-4).

¹¹ And it shall be inhabited, for never again shall it be doomed to destruction; Jerusalem shall abide in security.

Zechariah 14:11

Jerusalem will be fully inhabited and secure, without fear of it being doomed to destruction by the Lord because of its sins: <<*As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God, which God establishes for ever*>> (Psalm 48:8).

II.b.ii.2.B Zechariah 14:12-21 - The Nations Humbled and Brought into Submission

After the nations have suffered a gruesome defeat, they will dedicate themselves to worshipping the true God in Jerusalem.

¹² This shall be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the peoples that wage war against Jerusalem: their flesh shall rot while they are still on their feet; their eyes shall rot in their sockets, and their tongues shall rot in their mouths. ¹³ On that day a great panic from the Lord shall fall on them, so that each will seize the hand of a neighbour, and the hand of one will be raised against the hand of the other; ¹⁴ even Judah will fight at Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be collected – gold, silver, and garments in great abundance.

Zechariah 14:12-14

This shall be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the peoples that wage war against Jerusalem. Instead of judging his own city, the Lord will now curse the nations that have come against it: <<*His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked*>> (Isaiah 11:3-4). Their bodies will instantaneously rot under the effects of this hideous curse, and they will fight among themselves.

The wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be collected. In the glorious deliverance the Messiah brings, Jerusalem will become a wealthy and influential city once again: <<*Her merchandise and her wages will be dedicated to the Lord; her profits will not be stored or hoarded, but her merchandise will supply abundant food and fine clothing for those who live in the presence of the Lord*>> (Isaiah 23:18).

¹⁵ And a plague like this plague shall fall on the horses, the mules, the camels, the donkeys, and whatever animals may be in those camps.

Zechariah 14:15

The same curse will affect the military animals within their camp: the horses, mules, camels, and donkeys. Judah will also be involved in this conflict, fighting either against Jerusalem, along with the nations; or at Jerusalem against the other nations. In contrast to the spoil that the nations took from Jerusalem in v.1, now Judah will collect vast spoil from the nations who assaulted it.

¹⁶ Then all who survive of the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year by year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the festival of booths.

Zechariah 14:16

Then all who survive shall go up year by year to worship the King. The nations that once came up against Jerusalem for war will now come to the city for the three annual festivals, especially the climactic festival of booths or tabernacles in the autumn. Like Ezekiel before him (Ezekiel 46:9-12), Zechariah envisages ongoing festival worship in renewed Israel but broadens this to include those from beyond Israel's bounds.

¹⁷ If any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, there will be no rain upon them.

Zechariah 14:17

If any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem. This requirement will be enforced by the threat of the judgement of a lack of rain, which would cripple their harvests. While Ezekiel seemed to have understood that foreigners could become members of the covenant community: <<*Then the nations shall know that I the Lord sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary is among them for evermore*>> (Ezekiel 37:28), and: <<*Thus says the Lord God: No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the people of Israel, shall enter my sanctuary*>> (Ezekiel 44:9), Zechariah depicts them as simultaneously retaining their distinctive identities, as confirmed by Isaiah 19:23-25 and Zechariah 8:20-23.

¹⁸ And if the family of Egypt do not go up and present themselves, then on them shall come the plague that the Lord inflicts on the nations that do not go up to keep the festival of booths. ¹⁹ Such shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not go up to keep the festival of booths.

Zechariah 14:18-19

Egypt is singled out for mention with a separate plague, since its crops were watered by the annual inundation of the River Nile, without need for rainfall.

The flooding of the Nile has been an important natural cycle in Egypt since ancient times. It is celebrated by Egyptians as an annual holiday for two weeks starting August 15, known as Wafaa El-Nil.



Crops watered by the Nile

²⁰ On that day there shall be inscribed on the bells of the horses, ‘Holy to the Lord.’ And the cooking-pots in the house of the Lord shall be as holy as the bowls in front of the altar; ²¹ and every cooking-pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be sacred to the Lord of hosts, so that all who sacrifice may come and use them to boil the flesh of the sacrifice. And there shall no longer be traders in the house of the Lord of hosts on that day.

Zechariah 14:20-21

An elevated state of ritual holiness will affect everything within Jerusalem, down to the most humble artefacts. Even the bells of the horses will now be inscribed with the phrase Holy to the Lord, which was previously inscribed on a plate on the high priest’s turban; refer to Exodus 28:36-38.

Ordinary cooking-pots will share the status of the consecrated bowls in front of the altar, so that there might be enough utensils to boil the meat from all the sacrifices. The whole city will become a temple, the place where the Lord dwells among his people, as confirmed by: <<*I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb*>> (Revelation 21:22-23).

On that day there will no longer be traders, or a Canaanite, in the house of the Lord, a reference to those Gentiles who were there in the temple for business reasons, whose presence defiled the holiness of the Lord’s house: <<*Thus says the Lord God: No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the people of Israel, shall enter my sanctuary*>> (Ezekiel 44:9). The temple would finally become a fit place for the Lord to dwell among his people: <<*O Lord, I love the house in which you dwell, and the place where your glory abides*>> (Psalm 26:8).

Zechariah's prophecies looked far into a future in which the Jews would again be exiled from their homeland, and this time scattered worldwide. His prophecies said that Jews would be persecuted worldwide, that Jerusalem would become the centre of attention for the world.

Today, it can be seen that Zechariah's prophecies accurately described the worldwide dispersion and persecution of Jews that has taken place during the past 2000 years. And Jerusalem has indeed become the centre of attention, politically and religiously, for the international community, more so than any other city in the world.