

~Zechariah 14--future or fulfilled?~

In my study of Zechariah, I have found that whatever view one takes of this chapter (2 views are expressed below) one must conclude that it is speaking of an ancient occurrence and not modern or future. I will highlight some terms in the chapter to indicate what I mean. See for yourself and ask yourself: "Is this speaking of a modern or future event, or is it ancient"?

1 A day of the LORD is coming when your *plunder* will be divided among you.

2 I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city.

3 Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle.

4 On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south.

5 You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to *Azel*. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

6 On that day there will be no light, no cold or frost.

7 It will be a unique day, without daytime or nighttime-- a day known to the LORD. When evening comes, there will be light.

8 On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half to the eastern sea and half to the western sea, in summer and in winter.

9 The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name.

10 The whole land, from *Geba* to *Rimmon*, south of Jerusalem, will become like the Arabah. But Jerusalem will be raised up and remain in its place, from the *Benjamin Gate* to the site of the *First Gate*, to the *Corner Gate*, and from the *Tower of Hananel* to the *royal winepresses*.

11 It will be inhabited; never again will it be destroyed. Jerusalem will be secure.

12 This is the plague with which the LORD will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths.

13 On that day men will be stricken by the LORD with great panic. Each man will seize the hand of another, and they will attack each other.

14 *Judah* too will fight at Jerusalem. The wealth of all the surrounding nations will be collected-- great quantities of gold and silver and clothing.

15 A similar plague will strike the horses and mules, the camels and donkeys, and *all the animals in those camps*.

16 Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the *Feast of Tabernacles*.

17 If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, they will have no rain.

18 If the *Egyptian people* do not go up and take part, they will have no rain. The LORD will bring on them the plague he inflicts on the nations that do not go up to celebrate the *Feast of Tabernacles*.

19 This will be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not go up to celebrate the *Feast of Tabernacles*.

20 On that day HOLY TO THE LORD will be inscribed on the *bells of the horses*, and the *cooking pots in the LORD's house* will be like the *sacred bowls in front of the altar*.

21 Every *pot* in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the LORD Almighty, and all who *come to sacrifice* will take some of the pots and cook in them. And on that day there will no longer be a *Canaanite* in the house of the LORD Almighty.

Please notice all the *emphasized words* in the chapter and ask yourself is this is not an ancient occurrence!!

In order for this to be future, to us, is to go back to the Old Covenant with all the old names and practices under the old law. It would not only go against the society in which we live, but totally neglect the work of Jesus. The total context of the language is that of the 1st century. The idea of this being still future to us is preposterous!!

"The prophet Micah uses virtually identical prophetic language to describe God's judgment -- by means of the Assyrian army -- against Samaria and Israel in the 8th century B.C.: "Look! The Lord is coming from his dwelling place; he comes down and treads the high places of the earth. The mountains melt beneath him and the valleys split apart, like wax before the fire, like water rushing down a slope" (Micah 1:3-4; emphasis added). Thus Micah's prophecy describes an apparent physical descent of God, along with the phenomena of mountains melting and valleys splitting, yet that prophecy was fulfilled in Micah's lifetime when the Assyrians destroyed Samaria and took Israel captive in 722-721 B.C."

Following is a series of questions posed to preterist scholar Ed Stevens regarding Zechariah 14:

[QUESTION] Thanks for looking into these things. I'm personally doing a fairly substantial study on the book of Zachariah. So many people around here keep throwing chapter 14 in my face saying, "What do you mean this already happened?" that I am going to have to respond. Any insights?

[FROM ED] Zechariah is one of the most "Messianic" (percentage-wise) of all the OT prophets. It constantly talks about the coming days of the Messiah and His Kingdom and what it will be like. It talks about a remnant who will inherit all the good things. There are TIME statements running through this context connecting all these Messianic events to one time period. There just cannot be two separate TIMES for these events to occur with thousands of years between them. Notice the usage of these phrases:

"these days"
"those days"
"former days"
"in those days"
"this very day"
"then" (or at that time)
"on that day"
"in that day"

Zechariah does not speak of these events as happening in two different widely separated time periods. They are all things that would happen together in the same generation. Events are predicted which we have explicit NT fulfillments for, and then in between those clear first century allusions we have these

other events alluded to which futurists claim are still future. Yet they are all referred to as being events that would happen "in that day." *Time defines Nature*. The events must have happened or else Zechariah is a false prophet. We find here the same kind of apocalyptic language describing these later events as we find in Matthew 24 and other known AD 70 contexts. Use the simple passages to interpret the difficult ones. Notice that Rev. 1:7 quotes or alludes to some of Zech. 12:10. This is supposedly (acc. to Rev. 1:1-3) events that were to occur *soon*. But the language is exactly the kind of "universe-collapsing" language that Zechariah uses a lot of. The interpretative point being that Zechariah is merely describing in apocalyptic language the spiritual nature of the Kingdom and the "world-changing" devastation that is coming on the nation of Israel as a result of the Messianic Kingdom arriving.

[QUESTION] A friend of mine views "Jerusalem" in Zech 14:2 as being the church, etc. That's a rather unusual view, I think, for a Preterist. I'd like your input on it, plus any place where I can get any additional insights on this passage of scripture.

[FROM ED] Zech. 14:2 - I suspect I would agree regarding this application to the church, as long as we are interpreting it in sync with Rom. 11 where the small remnant of Jews become Christians and inherit the blessings of Abraham. The rest of the nation is cut off and destroyed. The Jews who did not accept Christ and who plundered and persecuted the church were destroyed just as this passage teaches.

[QUESTION] My question has to do with the book of Zechariah chapter 14. I have heard this chapter used by preterists to show how Jehovah God foretells of the final judgment He will execute on His rebellious people Israel before the inauguration of the New Covenant . In verse 3 it says "Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle." This verse seems to say that the Lord will fight against those nations who are gathered to fight against Jerusalem. Does it say that the Lord will fight against those nations gathered against Jerusalem or is He saying that He will protect the remnant of the people who shall not be cut off from the city from the latter part of verse 2. Please explain how these verses are to be represented in the preterist view?

[FROM ED] In regard to the first question on 1 Cor. 15:51, all I can do is point you to my book, *QUESTIONS ABOUT THE AFTERLIFE*. In regard to Zech 14, the whole book of Zechariah is Messianic to the core. Go back through the whole book and see how it deals with the whole Last Days period from Christ's birth and ministry, to his crucifixion, burial and resurrection. There are allusions all the way through here to the New Jerusalem and the New Temple that would be built in the last days. Notice the references to the restoration from captivity, and the days of the Messiah that would come after they had returned from captivity. The phrase "in that day" is constantly used throughout the book in reference to the days of the Messiah and what would happen during those days. *This time reference ties all this material together as happening at the same time (the Messiah's days)*. The premils try to lift chapter 14 out of its context and apply it literally, physically, nationalistically, etc. They do not take that approach to everything in the book of Zechariah. There are numerous passages in Zechariah that are quoted or alluded to in the NT. It is evident that they are apocalyptic in nature. So it is here in Zech 14. This is not some new subject totally unrelated to what the rest of the book is dealing with. Jerusalem is going to be attacked. Half of them will be destroyed and the other half will remain in the City. Sounds like Jesus' statements in Matt. 24 -- "one will be taken, and the other will be left." The nation of Israel was divided over Christianity. A righteous remnant (see Rom. 11) went on to inherit the promises made to the Fathers, with the Gentiles were grafted into it with them. Christ returned and judged the nation of Israel. Half was destroyed and sent away into captivity, slavery and Roman torture. The other half remained behind. The Church had been warned to get out of the city and not participate in the revolt. They were the survivors and the remnant into which the Gentiles were grafted. This is simply describing the net effect of

the AD 70 holocaust upon the Jewish nation, and showing WHO was present personally to pour out the judgment upon the Jewish enemies of the Church. On the day of Pentecost, there were Jews there from every nation under heaven. Josephus talks about the Zealots gathering reinforcements from Jewish communities all over the Roman world in every known nation. Truly, the Jewish army was representative of "all nations." Remember there was a "great tribulation" first (Ad 63-66) upon the church (1 Pet. 4:17ff) which was cut short by the outbreak of war against Rome, then the wrath turned away from the Church and turned upon the Jewish persecutors. The Jews did a lot of mean things to the church and tried to destroy her. The persecution may very well have seen half of her devastated. That's why all the warnings in Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, Jude and Revelation against apostasy. But those days of tribulation were cut short, and Christ turned the heat on the Jews. Zech 14:6-8 are very clear as to what is being discussed here. On the day of Pentecost Peter quoted Joel and said there was a "great and terrible day of the Lord" about to come in which "the sun would be darkened..." The language here in Zech 14:6-8 is talking about that same day when the luminaries will dwindle. Living waters (the Gospel message and the Holy Spirit) will flow out of Jerusalem to nourish all the nations. And the Lord will once again be King over all the earth "IN THAT DAY." We just have to get more familiar with the apocalyptic imagery of the OT prophets so we can see what they are pointing to. It helps if we read the whole book and see the flow of the Messianic context leading up to chapter 14. Who is God's real City and Temple in the last days? Who were the real enemies of His true people in the Last Days? Who knew the Church inside out and was in a position to crush it before it was firmly established? The Romans did not understand how Christianity was different than Judaism. But the Jews knew the difference and tried to destroy the church. Unless those days had been cut short, the church would not have survived. Christ came in the nick of time and rescued His saints and destroyed their enemies. The New Jerusalem "dwells in security" now, since nothing can penetrate its heavenly perimeter and overpower it. Its walls are Christ. *Josephus literally records the horrible things mentioned in Zech 14:12ff as happening during the siege in Jerusalem (AD 66-70).* No Canaanite can get into the heavenly kingdom of Christ (Zech 14:21). This has to be referring to the church. Canaanites could get into any physical kingdom that the Jews built. But they cannot get into the heavenly kingdom unless they are born again into the New Nation and City.

[FROM RON] Say, what is Zech 14 all about, really? I want to put a little of that in the stuff I am planning to speak on; I will tell you what I plan to do when I get it all laid out.

[FROM ED] Zech. 14:1 gives a big clue what the chapter is about when it says that the spoil taken from them will be divided among them. God is telling the True Spiritual Israel (composed of both Jews and Gentiles) that their existence will not be threatened forever. There will come a time when the faithful remnant will succeed in establishing a foothold and beachhead. They will ultimately overcome their enemies' attempt to destroy them. Now how is this going to be accomplished? Zechariah draws a verbal sketch using apocalyptic (political cartoon) language. All the nations are confederated against the Holy City (God's people). They have some limited success in persecuting God's people (vs. 2), but the Lord takes those nations to task for attacking His people (vs. 3). The Lord makes a way of escape for His people to get out of harm's way before He comes to destroy His enemies and reward His people (vss. 4-6). The sun, moon and stars will not give forth much light (vs. 6). But, at its darkest hour, light will break forth and living waters will flow out of the Holy City for the people of God (vss.7,8). Jesus said He would build His church and the gates of Hades would not ultimately prevail against it, but there would be a "great tribulation" in which the forces of darkness (the Jews) would attempt to destroy the church. But Christ did establish His kingdom over all the earth and "the land" of true Israel would be changed from a battleground to a peaceful, blessed land of security with no more curse (vss. 9-11). Zechariah describes the condition of those miserable Zealots who stayed in Jerusalem to defend the city against the Romans. The Roman siege of Jerusalem brought the ravages of starvation, disease and infection upon the Jews who remained in the city to fight. Zechariah describes the effects of this as being like a "plague." The Jews in

the city did fight against each other. Even their animals were starved and suffered the effects of the siege. After AD 70, the only way the Jews were allowed to celebrate any kind of feast in Jerusalem was as if they were keeping the *feast of booths*. In other words, the booths were temporary shelters built while on the run, or while out in the fields during harvest or pasturing the flocks. It was the kind of temporary housing they lived in during the wilderness wandering. The usage of that idea here seems to indicate that the Jews were a dispossessed nation. They were kicked out of their land. The only thing they could celebrate was that they were "wanderers" again running from city to city building only temporary shelters in their flight from their persecutors. The new dwellers in the true Jerusalem were the Christians. The spiritual nature of the kingdom is described in vs. 20,21 when it says that it is no longer the pots in the physical Temple that are holy to the Lord, but rather all the cooking pots in which the new sacrifices are prepared are holy to the Lord and there is no Canaanite in the new Temple (the church)

[FROM ED] Somebody needs to take some time out here and write an exposition of the whole book of Zechariah. **:0** Several Amillennialists have done so, and have produced some very good remarks. However, when they get into the NT prophecies, they forget all about what they said in their OT commentaries. They show how the "Israel" and "Jerusalem" in Zechariah is talking about the new spiritual Jerusalem (the church) and that the "enemies of Israel" is not foreign heathen nations (i.e. Rome), but the enemy of the Church (the fleshly Israel). Read the whole book and notice the pure Messianic tone to it. Also, go to a good commentary and your Study Bible cross references to find all the places where Zechariah is quoted or alluded to in the NT. That is a really good study. The way it is used by the NT writers reveals what its true interpretation is in reference to fleshly Israel versus spiritual Israel. Also notice the repetitious phrase "in that day" that is found throughout the context which ties all these events together as things that would be fulfilled in the same time frame. To elasticize this stuff over millennia just will not work. This was talking about a bunch of Messianic events that would ALL take place in the same time period as the piercing of the Messiah.

On the day of Pentecost, there were Jews there from every nation (Gr. ethnos). The Jews were the "nations" who allied themselves together against the Son of God and against His people Israel (the Church). You see this spiritual conflict throughout the context of Zechariah. The Premils have a woodenly literal hermeneutic which demands that all this language be taken physically and nationalistically literal. They are making the same mistake the Jews did. This is why we have had 2000 years of confusion over the interpretation of prophecy.

How does a preterist interpret Zechariah 12:1-10?

I was just reading this the other day in Don Preston's latest book, "WHO IS THIS BABYLON?" from p.103 "Israel's hope and the River of Life"

In the Old Covenant, the River of Life flows from Israel's judgment:

- 1.) In Isaiah 35:4f**, the River flows at the coming of the Lord in vengeance. Patently this cannot be referent to Jesus' incarnation when, "He will not quarrel nor cry out...a bruised reed He will not break" (Mtt.12:19-20). It is a reference to His judgment coming. In Luke 21:22, Jesus said of His coming in judgment against Jerusalem, "these be the days of vengeance when all things that are written must be fulfilled."
- 2.) In Joel 3**, the fountain of cleansing is opened in Jerusalem after the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord (Joel 2:30-32; 3:14f). In Matthew 24:29-31, 34, Jesus quotes Joel, and says it would be fulfilled in His coming against Jerusalem in His generation.

3.) In **Zechariah 13:1**, the fountain for the cleansing of Israel would be opened in the day when, "they will look on me whom they have pierced," (12:10), the day when there would be "great mourning in Jerusalem." Jesus quotes from **Zechariah 12:10** in Matthew 24:30, in His prediction of judgment against Jerusalem.

4.) In **Zechariah 14:1-8**, Jerusalem would be pillaged and captured in the Day of the Lord. The references to "in that day" absolutely limit the references to the opening of the River of Life (v.8), to the day of the siege of Jerusalem, and the Lord's deliverance of His people.

Notice how Zechariah 12:10 and Revelation 1:7 are parallels:

"and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him"

"and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him."

Rev. 1:1,3 "the things which must shortly come to pass... for the time is at hand."

Joseph Gautier

[FROM BRIAN MAXWELL] Well, Zechariah is definitely a tough one, but see if you follow this.

One thing that always confused me before I became a preterist was the way Zechariah could weave back and forth between talking bout Christ's first coming and His second coming. But what I begin to understand is that Zechariah DID NOT see them as two different comings at all, but as one coming. It was my preconceived ideas about two comings that was causing all the confusion. Let's see if I can give an example:

Zech 13:7 Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, says the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

This is a prophesy that is easy to recognize:

Mark 14:27 And Jesus said unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

This prophesy was fulfilled when Jesus walked in the flesh. But the next several verses seem to be referring to the tribulation, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the Coming of the Lord (second).

Zech 13:8 And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, says the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.

9 And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

14:1 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

2 For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

3 Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

Then we get to verse 14:4 where it talks about Christ's feet standing on the mountain

Zech 14:4 And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

I believe that this verse was fulfilled when Jesus actually stood on the Mt. of Olives when He came the first time. I believe Zechariah saw this period of time as being "one". He continues, from chapter 12-14, to talk about Christ's first and second coming all in one breath. Notice how many times he uses the phrase "in that day". He did not see it as two separate events separated by a long period of time, but as one "day", the Day of the Lord. This was the time of salvation. That's why it sounds like he is talking about the first and second coming all at the same time. He saw it as one time, the time when God would come and redeem His people. And that began with Christ's coming in the flesh and was finished when He came and judged the nation and glorified His people. That entire 40 year period was "the Day of the Lord". When understanding this, it makes it easy to see how verse 4 was fulfilled.

I hope that helped some, I don't always explain what I believe very well. Of course there are other examples of this. Look at Zech 12. Verse 9 makes a reference to the second coming. Verse 10, the first coming, and then verse 11 gets right back into the second coming again. The only way this makes any sense is to look at what Zechariah saw as one 'Day of the Lord' with many things being fulfilled during this time, but not necessarily in chronological order. When Zechariah says "in that day", he could be referring to any of the events concerning Christ's coming and the time of redemption, and the second coming and the destruction of Jerusalem.

In Christ, Brian Maxwell

Zechariah 14 and the Coming of Christ

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In the premillennial view of Bible prophecy, the events depicted in Zechariah 14 are most often interpreted as depicting the second coming of Christ when Jesus will descend from heaven and stand on the Mount of Olives and from there set up His millennial kingdom. The chronology outlined in Zechariah, however, does not fit this scenario. Events actually begin in chapter thirteen where it is prophesied that the Shepherd, Jesus, will be struck and the sheep will be scattered (Zech. 13:7). This was fulfilled when Jesus says, "You will all fall away, because it is written, "I WILL STRIKE DOWN THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP SHALL BE SCATTERED"" (Mark 14:27).

What follows describes events leading up to and including the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. God will act as Judge of Jerusalem and its inhabitants. As the king, He will send "his armies" and destroy "those murderers, and set their city on fire" (Matt. 22:7).

For I will gather all the nations [the Roman armies] against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered [Matt. 24:17], the women ravished [Luke 17:35], and half the city exiled

[Matt. 24:16], but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city" (Zech. 14:2).

This happened when the Roman armies, made up of soldiers from the nations it conquered, went to war against Jerusalem. Rome was an empire consisting of all the known nations of the world (see Luke 2:1). The Roman Empire "extended roughly two thousand miles from Scotland south to the headwaters of the Nile and about three thousand miles from the Pillars of Hercules eastward to the sands of Persia. Its citizens and subject peoples numbered perhaps eighty million." 1 Rome was raised up, like Assyria, to be the "rod of [His] anger" (Isa. 10:5). "So completely shall the city be taken that the enemy shall sit down in the midst of her to divide the spoil. All nations (2), generally speaking were represented in the invading army, for Rome was the mistress of many lands."

Thomas Scott, using supporting references from older commentators and cross references to other biblical books, writes that Zechariah is describing the events surrounding Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70.

"The time when the Romans marched their armies, composed of many nations, to besiege Jerusalem, was "the day of the Lord" Jesus, on which he came to "destroy those that would not that he should reign over them" [Matt. 22:110; 24:3, 2335; Luke 19:1127, 4144]. When the Romans had taken the city, all the outrages were committed, and the miseries endured, which are here predicted [Luke 21:2024]. A very large proportion of the inhabitants were destroyed, or taken captive, and sold for slaves; and multitudes were driven away to be pursued by various perils and miseries: numbers also, having been converted to Christianity, became citizens of "the heavenly Jerusalem" and thus were "not cut off from the city" of God [Gal 4:2131; Heb. 12:2225].3"

Forcing these series of descriptive judgment to leap over the historical realities of Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70 so as to fit a future judgment scenario is contrived and unnecessary.

Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle (14:3).

After using Rome as His rod to smite Jerusalem, God turns on Rome in judgment. Once again, Assyria is the model: "I send it against a godless nation and commission it against the people of My fury to capture booty and to seize plunder, and to trample them down like mud in the streets So it will be that when the Lord has completed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, He will say, 'I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the pomp of his haughtiness'" (Isa. 10:56, 1213). "It is significant that the decline of the Roman Empire dates from the fall of Jerusalem." Thomas Scott concurs: *"It is also observable, that the Romans after having been thus made the executioners of divine vengeance on the Jewish nation, never prospered as they had done before; but the Lord evidently fought against them, and all the nations which composed their overgrown empire; till at last it was subverted, and their fairest cities and provinces were ravaged by barbarous invaders."*

And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south (Zech. 14:4).

It is this passage that dispensationalists use to support their view that Jesus will touch down on planet earth and set up His millennial kingdom. Numerous times in the Bible we read of Jehovah "coming down" to meet with His people. In most instances His coming is one of judgment; in no case was He physically present. Notice how many times God's coming is associated with mountains.

"And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. . . . Come, let Us **go down** and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech" (Gen. 11:5, 7).

"So **I have come down** to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey. . . (Ex. 3:8).

"Then **Thou didst come down** on Mount Sinai, and didst speak with them from heaven. . . (Neh. 9:13a).

"Bow Thy heavens, O LORD, and **come down**; touch the *mountains*, that they may smoke" (Psalm 144:5).

"For thus says the LORD to me, 'As the lion or the young lion growls over his prey, against which a band of shepherds is called out, will not be terrified at their voice, nor disturbed at their noise, so will the LORD of hosts **come down** to wage war on *Mount Zion* and on its hill'" (Isa. 31:4).

"Oh, that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and **come down**, that the *mountains* might quake at Thy presence" (Isa. 64:1).

"When Thou didst awesome things which we did not expect, **Thou did come down**, the *mountains* quaked at Thy presence" (Isa. 64:3).

In Micah 1:3 we are told that God "is coming forth from His place" to "come down and tread on the *high places* of the earth." How is this descriptive language different from the Lord standing on the Mount of Olives with the result that it will split? *Micah says "the mountains will melt under Him, and the valleys will be split, like wax before the fire, like water poured down a steep place" (1:4). "It was not uncommon for prophets to use figurative expressions about the Lord 'coming' down, mountains trembling, being scattered, and hills bowing (Hab. 3:6, 10); mountains flowing down at his presence (Isaiah 64:1, 3); or mountains and hills singing and the trees clapping their hands (Isaiah 55:12)."*

What is the Bible trying to teach us with this descriptive language of the Mount of Olives "split in its middle"? ***The earliest Christian writers applied Zechariah 14:4 to the work of Christ in His day.*** ***Tertullian (A.D. 145220) wrote: "'But at night He went out to the Mount of Olives.' For thus had Zechariah pointed out: 'And His feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives' [Zech. xiv. 4]."*** Tertullian was alluding to the fact that the Olivet prophecy set the stage for the judgment-coming of Christ that would once for all break down the Jewish/Gentile division.

Matthew Henry explains the theology behind the prophecy: *"The partition-wall between Jew and Gentiles shall be taken away. The mountains about Jerusalem, and particularly this, signified it to be an enclosure, and that it stood in the way of those who would approach to it. Between the Gentiles and Jerusalem this mountain of Bether, of division, stood, Cant. ii. 17. But by the destruction of Jerusalem this mountain shall be made to cleave in the midst, and so the Jewish pale shall be taken down, and the church laid in common with the Gentiles, who were made one with the Jews by the breaking down of this middle wall of partition", Eph. ii. 14.8*

You will notice that there is no mention of a thousand year reign. Yet, we are told that "the LORD will be king over all the earth" (14:9). So what is new about this language? "For the LORD Most High is to be feared, a great King over all the earth. He subdues peoples under us, and nations under our feet" (Psalm 47:2, 3). This is exactly what happened with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Paul told the Roman

Christians that "the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet" (Rom. 16:20). The church's adversary (Satan) were those Jews who rejected Jesus as the Messiah and persecuted His Bride, the church (see John 16:2). Jesus calls them a "synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 3:9).

Notes

1. Otto Friedrich, *The End of the World: A History* (New York: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, 1982), 28.
2. G. N. M. Collins, "Zechariah," *The New Bible Commentary*, F. Davidson, ed., 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1954), 761.
3. Thomas Scott, *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments, According to the Authorised Version; with Explanatory notes, Practical Observations, and Copious Marginal References*, 3 vols. (New York: Collins and Hannay, 1832), 2:955
4. Collins, "Zechariah," 761.
5. Scott, *The Holy Bible*, etc., 956.
6. Ralph Woodrow, *His Truth is Marching On: Advanced Studies on Prophecy in the Light of History* (Riverside, CA: Ralph Woodrow Evangelistic Association, 1977), 110.
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