

INTRODUCTION TO THE CLIMACTIC BATTLE OVER JERUSALEM – ZECHARIAH 12

The ancient rabbis said, *"Ten measures of beauty descended to the world. Nine were taken by Jerusalem and one by the rest of the world."*

The name Zechariah means "God Remembers" in the sense that He cares for. The theme is "The Temple & Messianic Advents".

Historical Setting of Zechariah

536 BC – Return from Babylonian Captivity (Start Rebuilding Temple)

535 BC – Rebuilding HALTED

520 BC – Zechariah's Ministry Begins (Duration c. 520-480 BC)

515 BC – Temple Completed

Background to Zechariah 12

There is only ONE city in all the Bible that we are specifically told to pray for – the city of JERUSALEM (cf. Ps. 122:6-7, Isa. 62:7).

Jerusalem is mentioned more than any other city in the Bible, being named 817 times. It was King David who captured the city around 1000 BC (cf. 2 Sam. 5:6-9), which was then named ***"the city of David"*** (cf. 1 Chron. 11:7). It was here that Solomon constructed the temple (cf. 1 Ki. 5-6, 2 Chron. 3-4).

From the divine perspective, Jerusalem is the CENTER of the world (cf. Ezek. 5:5). Jerusalem is said to be the apple of God's eye (cf. Zech. 2:8). It is said to be God's chosen habitation (cf. Ps. 132:13-14).

It is to Jerusalem that the LORD will one day return (cf. Zech. 14:4) and dwell in her midst, according to Zechariah 8:3. Ps. 48:2 refers to Jerusalem as ***"the city of the great King"***.

In the kingdom, Jerusalem will be called ***"The Throne of the LORD"*** and ***"all the nations of the world shall be gathered to it"*** (cf. Jer. 3:17). It shall be called ***"the City of Truth"*** (cf. Zech. 8:3). It will be the TRUTH CENTER for the entire world! Jerusalem will also be called ***"The Mountain of the LORD of hosts, the Holy Mountain"*** (cf. Zech. 8:3, Isa. 2:2-3).

Jerusalem is like a "magnet" that ultimately will attract all the nations of the world to her (cf. Zech. 14:2, 16). Today, Jerusalem is important to three world religions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The 35-acre Temple Mount is the most contested and volatile piece of real estate in the world.

Israel is the epicenter of the world, Jerusalem is the epicenter of Israel, and the Temple Mount is the epicenter of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem means "**City of Peace**", but the one thing that has consistently been missing from Jerusalem for the last 3,000 years is PEACE.

Zechariah is a prophetic book which begins in chapter one by calling Israel to repentance. Jerusalem in the end will be restored to being the WORSHIP center and the TRUTH center of the world. It will be the capital of the Messiah's worldwide kingdom. But in order for this to come to pass, Israel must first of all come to REPENTANCE. The book of Zechariah begins with an emphasis on repentance (cf. 1:1-6) and it ends there as well, as seen in Zechariah 12-14.

Israel's repentance will usher in the Second Coming of Christ; in which He comes to Jerusalem to set up His kingdom (cf. Acts 3:19-21).

Throughout her history, Israel has had many false shepherds. Finally, as prophetically depicted in Zech. 11, when the true shepherd (Jesus, the Messiah) came, He wasn't valued. In fact, He was betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (cf. Zech. 11:12-13).

Therefore, God is going to allow one final false shepherd to come to the fore, namely the Antichrist, as portrayed at the end of Zech. 11.

Given this information, the picture looks bleak for Israel. Through the years, Israel has suffered greatly.

Examples include: the Spanish Inquisition, the Russian pogroms, the Nazi Holocaust, the never-ending wars since Israel has been re-established as a nation, and the current rise of anti-Semitism throughout the world. Add to this the coming climactic false shepherd Antichrist who will be so devastating to Israel.

In view of all this, one might be tempted to ask, "**Has God forgotten Israel?**" Well, that brings us to the last oracle in Zechariah.

This is the rest of the story. This is where the story ends.

We find here that the whole world is headed towards Jerusalem. The entire world is going to attempt a hostile takeover of Jerusalem. But that is going to lead to a divine intervention that results in the conversion and deliverance of God's people Israel, in conjunction with the Messiah's glorious Second Advent. This is what Zech. 12-14 is all about.

This section in Zechariah 12-14 has 3 major themes: 1) The final siege of Jerusalem, 2) the Messiah's return to defeat Israel's enemies and set up His kingdom, and 3) Israel's deliverance and conversion. Note that Jerusalem is CENTRAL to the narrative.

In a real sense the whole of redemptive history largely swirls around the city of Jerusalem. It is the epicenter of the world. It is the epicenter of the prophetic future.