

6 Zechariah 12-14

The Perfect Ending

Name one specific thing that you're looking forward to at the moment? eg. a holiday, a birthday, a change at work, finishing study etc.

Looking ahead is a natural part of life. We all look forward to that next 'thing'. It gives us the drive to persevere. Knowing that something good is ahead can make all the difference. And it was certainly the case for Israel who returned after the period of exile. The Israelites have returned to the land but their situation was still grim. They would have had big questions like, 'Will Jerusalem ever be great again?' 'Will Israel be vindicated before the nations who have oppressed us?' 'Will the Lord be with us despite our ongoing rebellion?' "How can we continue as God's glorious nation when the monarchy has been decimated?" They are questions of despair BUT—the message of Zechariah is all about getting the people to look forward to the time when God will display his love and faithfulness. Zechariah is about giving hope to a despondent people—that God will not give up on his promises, and there is something wonderful ahead. Chapters 12-14 describes this future time as 'that day'. The phrase 'on that day' permeates this end section of Zechariah. Ultimately on this future day there will be absolute perfection, but as we'll see—before anyone can enjoy that reality, on that day there will also be terrible suffering. Let's learn and be greatly encouraged as we finish our journey through Zechariah.

Read Zechariah 12-13

1. How would you describe what God will do for Israel in 12:1-9?
2. The first part of chapter 12 gives us a picture of victory and vindication for God's people. For the Jew who has returned from the exile, what a great day to look forward to! But there's something terrible in store as well. In verses 10-14, what happens?
3. In verses 10—who will do the piercing?
4. Who will be pierced?
5. This is unimaginable—God's own people will stab God. And how could God let himself be stabbed anyway? But the result is an outpouring of grief and mourning. But how can such sin of the nation be dealt with? What answer does 13:1 give?

Fill in the following table to see how the events surrounding Jesus' death is the fulfilment of 'that day' that God promised?

Verses	Events Described	New Testament
12:10-14		John 19:33-37; Luke 23:48
13:1		John 13:3-8
13:7		Matthew 26:31-35, 56

Questions

6. In seeing how Jesus is the fulfilment of God's promises in Zechariah—how does that shape your thinking and attitude about Jesus?

In Zechariah 12 we see that 'on that day' God will give Judah and the house of David a great victory. God is their warrior king. **Now read Zechariah 14:1-5.**

7. Keeping in mind that verse 3 is ambiguous (it could be translated, 'the Lord will go out and fight in the nations'), whose side is God on now?

We have to keep both truths together— 'on that day', there will be victory for His people, but 'on that day' there will also be judgement upon Jerusalem. The mention of the Mount of Olives in 14:4—is part of this judgement language. The Mount of Olives was part of a ridge running north-south about 800 metres east of Jerusalem. In this prophecy— the Mount will split in two and flee from Jerusalem which will suffer God's punishment.

8. Read Mark 11:1 & 11:12-23. Which mountain does Jesus say will be hurled into the sea?

9. Jesus make this statement in the context of his curse on the fruitless fig tree. The fig tree was an Old Testament symbol of Israel. And notice that Jesus has just come from the temple corrupted by merchants and traders. With the link of Zechariah 14:1-5, what point is Jesus making by referring to the Mount of Olives?

- Jos 5th
- Jos

10. Read Mark 13:1-4 & 13:14-19. How does Jesus' description resemble Zechariah 14:1-5?

As Jesus promised, the temple was indeed destroyed in 70AD. See Appendix 3 for more information. But 70AD is not the end of the story of God's relationship with his people. It goes way beyond that. And the prophecy of Zechariah certainly speaks of 'that day' to come when there will be pure blessing for God's people in God's holy city. In fact the prophecy speaks of the time when Jerusalem will be raised up and made secure while the surrounding places will be destroyed and left uninhabited (14: 10-11). How do we understand this? It will only make sense if we understand that 'on that day' is not only the events of Jesus' ministry on earth—his life, death and resurrection, but also the time still ahead of us when Jesus will bring to completion of all things, when God's kingdom will fully reign over all the earth.

Read Zechariah 14:6-21

11. How do these verses show the nations related to the city of God?

Read Revelation 21:10-12, 21:22-27; 22:17 and 22:20

12. How do these verses confirm that we are still waiting for what Zechariah promised?

Having read all of Zechariah:

What should our attitude be to our sin? - which required God to be pierced, and the shepherd to be struck.

What can we be confident about?

Realising that we're still waiting for the holy city of God, filled with people of all nations, how should this change our lives now?

Appendix 1

the post exilic era

Year	Prophets/Leaders	Foreign Powers	Events
600	Jeremiah	Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar 605-562	Fall of Jerusalem 597
595	Ezekiel		
590	Daniel		Destruction of Jerusalem 586
540		Persian Cyrus 539-530	Rebuilding temple begins 537
520	Haggai Zechariah	Persian Darius I 522-486	Work on temple resumed. Temple completed 516
480		Persian Xerxes I 480-465	
465		Persian Artaxerxes I 464-423	
458	Malachi Ezra		
445	Nehemiah		

Nehemiah lists a priest called Zechariah from the family of Iddo (Nehemiah 12:16). This could be the same man but other than that, there's not much we know about him. But one thing is clear – along with Haggai, he played a key role in rousing the elders under Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest to complete the rebuilding of the temple. You can read about Zechariah and Haggai in Ezra 5:1-2 and Ezra 6:14.

Appendix 2

the history of the temple

BC	
1300	The exodus from Egypt; tabernacle erected. The tabernacle was like a mobile temple. It was designated as the place where God would dwell amongst his people during their time of travelling to the Promised Land.
1250	Entry into Canaan.
970	Foundation of Solomon's temple is laid.
963	Solomon's temple complete.
586	Destruction of the first temple by the Babylonians. Jews taken into exile.
537	Persians conquer Babylon. Make the decree that the Jews can return to Jerusalem. Second temple begins and halts.
520	Messages from Haggai and Zechariah.
516	Second temple completed.
168	Destruction of the second temple by Antiochus Epiphanes.
19	Herod begins reconstruction of the third temple.
4	Reconstruction substantially complete at Herod's death.
AD	
30	Jesus predicts the destruction of Herod's temple.
63	Finishing touches made to Herod's temple.
70	Herod's temple destroyed by the Roman army.

This table of keys dates is taken from 'On that Day' Zechariah Interactive Bible Study, Mattias Media, Tim McMahon.

Appendix 3

the fall of Jerusalem, 70 AD

This is how Wikipedia gives the history of the event:

The Siege of Jerusalem in the year 70 AD was a decisive event in the First Jewish-Roman War. It was followed by the fall of Masada in 73 AD. The Roman army, led by the future Emperor Titus, with Tiberius Julius Alexander as his second-in-command, besieged and conquered the city of Jerusalem, which had been occupied by its Jewish defenders in 66 AD. The city and its famous Temple were destroyed. The Arch of Titus, depicting and celebrating the sack of Jerusalem and the Temple, still stands in Rome.

Despite early successes in repelling the Roman sieges, the Zealots fought amongst themselves, lacking proper leadership. They lacked discipline, training, and preparation for the battles that were to follow.

Titus surrounded the city, with three legions on the western side and a fourth on the Mount of Olives to the east. He put pressure on the food and water supplies of the inhabitants by allowing pilgrims to enter the city to celebrate Passover, and then refusing them egress. After Jewish sallies killed a number of Roman soldiers, Titus sent Josephus, a Jewish Historian, to negotiate with the defenders;. Titus was almost captured during this sudden attack, but escaped.

After several failed attempts to breach or scale the walls of the Antonia Fortress, the Romans finally launched a secret attack, overwhelming sleeping Zealot guards and taking the Fortress. This was the second highest ground in the city, after the Temple Mount, and provided a perfect point from which to attack the Temple itself. Battering rams made little progress, but the fighting itself eventually set the walls on fire, when a Roman soldier threw a burning stick onto one of the Temple's walls. Destroying the Temple was not among Titus' goals, possibly due in large part to the massive expansions done by Herod the Great mere decades earlier. Most likely, Titus had wanted to seize it and transform it into a temple, dedicated to the Roman Emperor and to the Roman pantheon. But the flames spread quite quickly and were soon unquenchable. The Temple was destroyed at the end of August, and the flames spread into the residential sections of the city. The Roman legions quickly crushed the remaining Jewish resistance. Part of the remaining Jews escaped through hidden underground tunnels, while others made a final stand in the Upper City. Josephus had acted as a mediator for the Romans and, when negotiations failed, witnessed the siege and aftermath. He wrote:

Now as soon as the army had no more people to slay or to plunder, because there remained none to be the objects of their fury (for they would not have spared any, had there remained any other work to be done), [Titus] Caesar gave orders that they should now demolish the entire city and Temple, but should leave as many of the towers standing as they were of the greatest eminence; that is, Phasaelus, and Hippicus, and Mariamne; and so much of the wall enclosed the city on the west side. This wall was spared..... but for all the rest of the wall [surrounding Jerusalem], it was so thoroughly laid even with the ground by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it [Jerusalem] had ever been inhabited. This was the end which Jerusalem came to by the madness of those that were for innovations; a city otherwise of great magnificence, and of mighty fame among all mankind.

Josephus claims that 1,100,000 people were killed during the siege, of which a majority were Jewish. 97,000 were captured and enslaved. Many fled to areas around the Mediterranean. Titus reportedly refused to accept a wreath of victory, as there is "no merit in vanquishing people forsaken by their own God".

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_\(70\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_(70))