

CHAPTER XLI IN THE FIRST DAY

The future glory of the restored nation of the Jews, predicted in chapter ten (see comments), was to be delayed in its accomplishment by their rejection of the Good Shepherd, the dissolving of the covenant between the nation and Jehovah, and the prolonged dispersion following the defeat of Bar Cocheba, the self-acclaimed Messiah in 135 A.D.

Chapters 12, 13, and 14 actually compose a single unit of thought which climaxes Zechariah's prophecy in a blaze of apocalyptic eschatology, some of which is nearly impossible to understand clearly.

The key to these final chapters is found in the phrase "*in the day*" which is repeated no less than sixteen times throughout the passage.

This unit of thought is expressed in regard to two "days," which from Zechariah's point of view remained in the future. The first day and its happenings comprise 12:3-13:7 and prefigures the Messianic age.

The final day of the Lord is described in the final chapter, 14:1-21.

It will be helpful here to go back and read the comment on *yom YHWH* (the day of Jehovah) in the Introduction to Zechariah, Chapter XIX. We noted there four characteristics of "that day:" (1) the judgement of Israel, Judah and the nations of the pre-Christian world, (2) the deliverance and preservation of the remnant during and after the captivity, (3) the first coming of the Messiah and (4) the second coming of the Messiah and His final judgement of all men and nations.

To understand Zechariah's "in that day," we must be alert to all four elements.

The term first appears in Zechariah in chapter three, verse 10. There it refers to the time when Jehovah will bring forth His Servant, The Branch. *In that day*, everyone will invite his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree. The intention is obviously to describe a time of peace and plenty. The significant aspect here is the sending of the Branch and the removal of the iniquity of the land in one day. (*Zechariah 3:8-10*)

As we saw in our study of that passage (see comment) *in that day* here referred to the coming of the living stone and true priest in whom God will remove the sins of His people and invite their neighbors to share the fruits of the Messianic Presence.

THE BURDEN OF THE LORD . . . Zechariah 12:1-2

RV . . . The burden of the word of Jehovah concerning Israel. Thus saith Jehovah, who stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the founda-

tion of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him; Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of reeling unto all the peoples round about, and upon Judah also shall it be in the siege against Jerusalem.

LXX . . . The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel; saith the Lord, that stretches out the sky, and lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him. Behold, I will make Jerusalem as trembling door-posts to all the nations round about, and in Judea there shall be a siege against Jerusalem.

COMMENTS

The lengthy section (chapters 12, 13, 14) in which the term "in that day" is used repeatedly, is introduced as "the burden of the word of Jehovah concerning Israel." Israel as we have seen, is in the minor prophets a term designating the covenant people. The time would come (11:10) when the relationship would be broken off with the Jewish race, but as Zechariah wrote this had not yet occurred. What he is about to write has to do with the fulfillment of God's covenant purpose.

Jehovah is here referred to as the creator of the heavens, the earth, and the spirit of man. These are words calculated to remind the prophet's readers that the purpose which is to be fulfilled is the eternal purpose in the mind of God before creation. It is the reason man was created. It is the reason the covenant was established and a covenant people developed. It is the purpose behind all God's activity in history, both of the Jews and of the nations of the earth. This purpose is the reason God will bring to pass those things which Zechariah is about to describe.

The purpose is stated many times in many ways throughout the Bible, but never more succinctly than the Pauline statement of *Ephesians 1:3-10*. There the apostle informs us that, before the foundation of the earth, God chose in Christ to have a people holy and pure and adopted to Himself as children. That purpose and its accomplishment in Christ is the meaning of the entire Bible.

The days referred to by "in that day" in these chapters are two different periods. The first is addressed to Israel, the covenant people (*v. 1*) and has to do with the first coming of the Messiah who will be looked upon as pierced (12:10).

The second period referred to by "in that day" is designated by "Behold, a *yom* YHWH (day of Jehovah) cometh" (14:1). It has to do with the final consummation and the second coming of the Messiah.

IN THAT DAY (1) . . . Zechariah 12:3

RV . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all the peoples; all that burden themselves with it shall be sore wounded; and all the nations of the earth shall be gathered together against it.

LXX . . . And it shall come to pass in that day that I will make Jerusalem a trodden stone to all the nations; every one that tramples on it shall utterly mock at it, and all the nations of the earth shall be gathered together against it.

COMMENTS

The first statement of what will happen "in that day" is made briefly in *Zechariah 12:3*. It introduces the time of Messiah's first coming, and is addressed to Israel (*v. 1*). Israel at the time of this writing could be none other than the faithful remnant among those Jews who had returned from exile.

In the time of Messiah's first coming, Jerusalem will be made a burdensome stone for all the peoples. This statement sets the stage for the struggle described in the next three verses.

IN THAT DAY (2) (3) . . . Zechariah 12:4-6

RV . . . In that day, saith Jehovah, I will smite every horse with terror, and his rider with madness; and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the peoples with blindness. And the chieftains of Judah shall say in their hearts, The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in Jehovah of hosts their God. In that day will I make the chieftains of Judah like a pan of fire among wood, and like a flaming torch among sheaves; and they shall devour all the peoples round about, on the right hand and on the left; and they of Jerusalem shall yet again dwell in their own place, even in Jerusalem.

LXX . . . In that day, saith the Lord Almighty, I will smite every horse with amazement, and his rider with madness; but I will open mine eyes upon the house of Juda, and I will smite all the horses of the nations with blindness. And the captains of thousands of Juda shall say in their hearts, We shall find for ourselves the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the Lord Almighty their God. In that day I will make the captains of thousands of Juda as a firebrand among wood, and as a torch of fire in stubble; and they shall devour on the right hand and on the left all the nations round about; and Jerusalem shall dwell again by herself, even in Jerusalem.

COMMENTS

During the time of the Messiah the Jews would struggle with all nations. Jehovah will sustain them in the struggle and they shall "yet again dwell in their own place." (see comment above on 10:6)

Please note this is to be during the time of the Messiah, *ie.* in the Messianic age.

IN THAT DAY (2) . . . verses 4-5

Historically, that form of attack against which the Jewish defense had proved least effective was a cavalry charge. It was this from which Jehovah had miraculously delivered them in the exodus. (cf. *Exodus 15:19-21*) God promises symbolically to protect the Jews in their weakness. He will "open His eyes" and watch over them.

At the same time He will smite the horse of the peoples with blindness. Those who seek to destroy the Jews will plunge blindly to their own destruction. We have seen a classic example of this in our day in Nazi Germany.

The strength of the Jews over the centuries of the Christian era has been their regard for Jehovah worship, here symbolized by the name of Jerusalem, the center of monotheism.

IN THAT DAY (3) . . . verse 6-7

In the day of Judah's restoration to her homeland, though small, she will consume the enemies that surround her.

They of Jerusalem, *ie.* the Jews who are true to the worship of Jerusalem, "shall again dwell in their own place, even Jerusalem." It is interesting to note that in the establishment of the Jewish state at present, the Orthodox Jews are virtually all gathered in a selfimposed ghetto in the city of Jerusalem.

IN THAT DAY (4) . . . Zechariah 12:8

RV . . . In that day shall Jehovah defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of Jehovah before them.

LXX . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and the weak one among them in that day shall be as David, and the house of David as the house of God, as the angel of the Lord before them.

COMMENTS

Ask any modern Israeli to explain the fantastic success of his little country against impossible odds in the four wars they have fought and he will reply, "We know why we are fighting." Zechariah foresees the weakest of them as strong as David, inspired by the knowledge that God is "on their side." (cp. *v.* 5)

IN THAT DAY (5) (6) . . . Zechariah 12:9-14

RV . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of the Shimeites apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

LX . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and compassion; and they shall look upon me, because they have mocked me, and they shall make lamentation for him, as for a beloved friend, and they shall grieve intensely, as for a first-born son. In that day the lamentation in Jerusalem shall be very great, as the mourning for the pomegranate grove cut down in the plain. And the land shall lament in separate families, 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; the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of Symeon by itself, and their wives by themselves; all the families that are left, each family by itself, and their wives by themselves.

COMMENTS

IN THAT DAY (5) . . . v. 9

Jehovah Himself will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. Since God does what He attempts to do, it will be a black day for anyone who attacks the city He defends.

This is a significant verse, in as much as every attacker of Jerusalem to the present day has been successful in overthrowing it. If it means symbolically that God will defend His worshippers against the attacks of skepticism, as some have suggested, this has been done repeatedly in all ages.

If, on the other hand, this verse describes the defense of Jerusalem literally in the days of the present restoration of the Jewish nation, one may rest assured that any nation will be defeated who attempts the overthrow of that city.

(Verse 10) It is this verse which fixes "in that day" in this section as the Messianic age. It would be difficult to imagine a clearer prediction of the detail of Christ's crucifixion. As Halley points out, "this description is in nowise applicable to any other known person."

IN THAT DAY (6) . . . v. 11-14

The apostle John sees in Jesus' death the fulfillment of this verse. (cp. *John 19:34-37*) John also recalls this verse in connection with the second coming. (cp. *Revelation 1:7*)

Some have seen in the mourning for Him Whom they have pierced a prediction that the Jews will be converted to Christ. This cannot, of course, be ruled out. Paul speaks of the possibility that the Jews who rejected Jesus may be grafted into God's true Israel. This, however, is definitely conditioned upon ". . . if they continue not in their unbelief." (*Romans 11:17-24*)

In view of the nature of conversion, which is *always* an individual experience, it seems unlikely that the whole Jewish nation could be said to be converted. It seems more likely that this mourning came to pass at the preaching on Pentecost, when those who stood accused of murdering their Messiah, were cut to the heart so deeply that three thousand of them accepted Him as "both Lord and Christ." (cp. *Acts 2:22-41*)

The mourning over the pierced one is compared to "the mourning of Hadad-Rimmon in the valley of Megiddo." This was probably the village in the plain of Megiddo where king Josiah was killed in

the battle against the Egyptians. (cp. *II Chronicles 35:22-25*) There had been great mourning at his death because it marked the end of his great religious reform.

The mourning is from the highest (David) to the lowest (Nathan) of the royal house, and from the highest (Levi) to the lowest (Shemei) of the priestly order. All the families that remain, *ie.* those who are of neither the kingly or priestly houses, shall also mourn.

Each family shall mourn alone, and the women separately from the men. (cp. *Exodus 15:1,20*)

IN THAT DAY (7) . . . Zechariah 13:1

RV . . . In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.

LXX . . . In that day every place shall be opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for removal and for separation.

COMMENTS

In connection with the mourning over Him Whom they pierced, a fountain is to be opened for sin and uncleanness. Sin is transgression against the law of God. Uncleanness is that condition of one's soul which makes him unfit for the presence of God. The death of David's Branch (cp. *3:8* and *6:12*) Who is seen here in the hour of His death (pierced) provides the fountain for sin and uncleanness.

Jesus' understanding of the Old Testament was that the Christ should suffer, and rise again the third day. When this has been done, repentance and remission of sins is to be preached in His name. (cf. *Luke 24:44-47*)

The death and resurrection opened the fountain. The preaching of repentance, which is a deliberate decision for the will of God by one who has stood against it, relates the fountain to sin which is a transgression of the Law. Remission of sins, which is God's answer to the moral impurity resulting from sin, relates the fountain to uncleanness.

An entire volume could be written showing, from Scripture, that this fountain is the blood of Jesus.

IN THAT DAY (8) . . . Zechariah 13:2-3

RV . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered; and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. And it shall come to pass that, when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of Jehovah; and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth.

LXX . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will utterly destroy the names of the idols from off the land, and there shall be no longer any remembrance of them: and I will cut off the false prophets and the evil spirit from the land. And it shall come to pass, if a man will yet prophesy, that his father and his mother which gave birth to him shall say to him, Thou shalt not live; for thou hast spoken lies in the name of the Lord: and his father and his mother who gave him birth shall bind him as he is prophesying.

COMMENTS

Still referring to the Messianic age, Jehovah promises that the names of idols will be cut out of the land and forgotten. Idolatry is frequently associated with uncleanness. (eg. *Ezekiel* 36:25 cp. *Romans* 1:18-ff)

The preaching of the Christian gospel is generally credited with ministering the *coup de grace* to the classic idolatry which had been a constant blight on the Jews throughout their pre-Christian history. Excepting for the shrines of Catholicism, one will search the holy land in vain for such practices today.

The prophecy condemned here is false prophecy. The passage is a sort of paraphrase of *Deuteronomy* 13:6-10, 18:20 which roundly condemns false prophets. Should any utter such prophecies he would incur the wrath of his own parents. The loyalty of Messiah's people to Him will exceed the tenderest natural affections. (cp. *Matthew* 10:37 and *Luke* 14:26)

IN THAT DAY (9) . . . Zechariah 13:4-6

RV . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he prophesieth; neither shall

they wear a hairy mantle to deceive: but he shall say, I am no prophet, I am a tiller of the ground; for I have been made a bondman from my youth. And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds between thine arms? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.

LXX . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision when he prophesies; and they shall clothe themselves with a garment of hair, because they have lied. And one shall say, I am not a prophet, for I am a tiller of the ground, for a man brought me up thus from my youth. And I will say to him What are these wounds between thine hands? and he shall say, Those with which I was wounded in my beloved house.

COMMENTS

The false prophet shall himself be ashamed of his calling and his vision. In *Acts 19:13-20*, Luke records a detailed description of one incident when this became literally true. Following their conversion at the preaching of Paul, certain false prophets, whom Luke describes as practicing magical arts, repented of their false teaching and burned their own books.

(Verse 6) Here is another clear prediction of the crucified Messiah. Its presence in this particular context, just following the reference to false prophets could be misleading. *Him* in this verse refers not to the false prophet, but to Him Whom they have pierced. (12:10)

The wounds "between thine arms" are a vivid description of the scourging suffered by Jesus. The word is *makkah* and means a wound made by a stroke or blow.

We are reminded of *Isaiah 53:5*, "*He was wounded (chalal—pierced) for our transgression and by His stripes we are healed.*"

He was wounded in the house of His friends. To quote a cliché, with friends like that, He needed no enemies!

EPILOGUE TO THE FIRST DAY . . . Zechariah 12:7-9

RV . . . Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith Jehovah of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn my hand upon the little ones. And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith Jehovah, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left

therein. And I will bring the third part into 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, Jehovah is my God.

LXX . . . Awake, O sword, against my shepherds, and against the man who is my citizen, saith the Lord Almighty: smite the shepherds, and draw out the sheep: and I will bring mine hand upon the little ones. And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts thereof shall be cut off and perish; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and I will try them as silver is tried, and I will prove them as gold is proved: they shall call upon my name, and I will hear them, and say, This is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God.

COMMENTS

(Verse 7) When Peter preached the first recorded sermon following the resurrection, he pointed out that the suffering of Jesus had been by "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." (*Acts* 2:23) Here is evidence to support that claim.

Jehovah of hosts, *ie.* the God of the covenant, gives specific orders that the sword awake against the shepherd. We have seen that the good shepherd of Zechariah is indeed the Christ (see on *11:10-ff*). That this Christ is Jesus, Who was crucified by the Romans is evidenced by the particular weapon named to symbolize those who were to smite Him. Many ancient powers were symbolized by their most characteristic weapon, *eg.* Persia by the bow, Egypt by the chariot, Greece by the lance and phalanx, etc. Rome is characterized by the short sword. Because of prevailing circumstances at the time of Jesus' trial, He could be legally executed only by Rome, since the Jews were denied the right of capital punishment. (There is much question concerning the legality of Jesus' trials, but there is no doubt His execution was performed by Romans.)

Jesus Himself applied this verse to His own death. (*Matthew* 26:31, *Mark* 14:27). At His arrest, His disciples fled or followed afar off. During and after His crucifixion all but John were in hiding, and John apparently joined the others just following His death. The sheep were indeed scattered when the Shepherd was smitten.

Here is further evidence that "in that day" in this section applies to the day of the Messiah rather than to the time of the end.

(Verse 8) After the death and resurrection of Jesus, the number of his followers was greatly reduced. Apparently there were five hundred who could be counted as disciples (cf. *I Corinthians 15:6*). One hundred twenty were present when the church was born on Pentecost (cf. *Acts 1:15*). If one adds the three thousand baptized that day, the number totals some three thousand, six hundred. It was a small group indeed, compared to the six hundred thousand Jewish males who formed the original flock. (*Exodus 12:37*).

(Verse 9) The few followers of Jesus in the early days of the church soon found themselves the object of the most savage religious persecution ever, to that time, raised against a people. Peter described this persecution in words borrowed from *Zechariah 13:9*. "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (*I Peter 1:6-7*)

There is no doubt the early church interpreted these verses in reference first to Jesus and then to themselves.

To those who endured persecution, Jehovah gives recognition that they are His people. They acknowledge Jehovah as their God. Both terms, people and Jehovah, are covenant terms. The church is God's new Israel!

Chapter XLI—Questions

In the First Day

1. The future glory of the restored Jewish nation was delayed by their_____.
2. The key to the final chapters of Zechariah is found in the phrase _____.
3. This term describes two days which from Zechariah's point of view were both in _____.
4. The first of these days describes _____.
5. The second "day" describes _____.
6. Review the four characteristics of the day of Jehovah. (See introduction of Zechariah.)
7. Zechariah's first use of "in the day" (3:8-10) refers to _____.
8. What is the significance of the term *Israel* in *Zechariah 12:1*?

9. Why does Zechariah here refer to Jehovah as the creator of the heavens and the earth and the spirit of man?
10. The first period referred to by "in that day" is addressed to _____ and has to do with _____.
11. The second period referred to as "in that day" has to do with _____.
12. Several things are said to be going to happen in the Messianic age. Each is introduced by "in that day." They are:
 - a. In that day (1)
 - b. In that day (2)
 - c. In that day (3)
 - d. In that day (4)
 12. e. In that day (5)
 - f. In that day (6)
 - g. In that day (7)
 - h. In that day (8)
 - i. In that day (9)
13. *Israel* at the time of Zechariah could be none other than _____.
14. What of Jerusalem in the time of Messiah's first coming?
15. What was to be the relationship of the Jews to all nations during the Messianic age?
16. Historically the military action against which the Jews were least effective was the _____.
17. What is meant by Jehovah smiting the peoples and horses with "blindness"?
18. Who are "they of Jerusalem?" (12:7)
19. How does *Zechariah* 12:10 fix this section as being fulfilled in the Messianic age?
20. Compare *Zechariah* 12:10-14 with *John* 19:34-37.
21. What is the condition upon which Jews may again become part of God's true Israel? (cf. *Romans* 11:17-24)
22. Conversion is always an _____ experience.
23. How was the mourning over Him who they had pierced fulfilled on Pentecost?
24. Who are "all the families that remain?"
25. In connection with the mourning over Him whom they pierced a _____ was to be opened for _____ and _____.
26. The _____ opened the fountain.
27. _____ relates the fountain to sin.
28. _____ relates the fountain to moral impurity or _____.
29. _____ is frequently associated with uncleanness.

30. The _____ is generally credited with ministering the *coup de grace* to classic idolatry.
31. What prophecy is condemned during the Messianic age?
32. How does *Zechariah 13:6* relate to Him whom they pierced?
33. What is meant by the wounds "between thine arms?"
34. Discuss *Zechariah 12:7* in light of *Acts 2:23*.
35. What nation is symbolized historically by the sword?
36. Jesus could be legally executed by _____.
37. Compare *Zechariah 13:7* to *Matthew 26:31* and *Mark 14:27*.
38. Following the death of Jesus the number of His followers was about _____.
39. Compare *Zechariah 13:9* and *I Peter 1:6-7*.
40. To those who endured persecution, Jehovah gives _____, and they acknowledge _____. Both are _____.
41. The _____ is God's new Israel.

CHAPTER XLII

IN THE SECOND DAY

If our overall understanding of Zechariah to this point is correct, chapter fourteen, deals almost exclusively with eschatology. Eschatology may be defined simply as the study of the last things, or last times.

Most commentators agree that this is the subject matter of the present chapter. However, unanimity of opinion concerning Zechariah's last chapter ends with this agreement. Rabid pre-millennialists have a field day here, as they do with the other apocalyptic writings of the Bible, because of the apocalyptic nature of the work itself. They see here the proof of their contention that Jesus plans, upon His second coming, to establish an earthly kingdom which will stand for a thousand years, and in which the Jews, with Him as king, will rule the world, and in general do what Jesus refused to do the first time He came to earth. They also claim the Jews will do what the church has failed to do, namely convert the world to Jehovah and Christ. These conclusions are arrived at by ignoring the symbolic nature of apocalypsis almost entirely.

The post-millennialists on the other hand, shift from the literal to the symbolic and back with surprising ease and assure us the last chapter of Zechariah describes the bringing of the world to the worship of God during our present Messianic age. When this is done, Messiah, they claim, will return and reign over a perfect world. The fact that