

God Remembered
Zechariah 14:1-7
Chapter 21
“The Darkness Before The Dawn”

The Lord’s Triumph and Reign

Look, a day belonging to the Lord is coming when the plunder taken from you will be divided in your presence. I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem for battle. The city will be captured, the houses looted, and the women raped. Half the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be removed from the city.

Then the Lord will go out to fight against those nations as he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. The Mount of Olives will be split in half from east to west, forming a huge valley, so that half the mountain will move to the north and half to the south. You will flee by my mountain valley, for the valley of the mountains will extend to Azal. You will 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.

On that day there will be no light; the sunlight and moonlight will diminish. It will be a unique day known only to the Lord, without day or night, but there will be light at evening.
Zechariah 14:1-7

The first portion of **Zechariah Chapter 12** and the first portion of **Zechariah 14** are closely tied. In chapter 12, we read of the siege that will take place when all the nations of earth surround the nation of Israel. It will be Satan’s final push to annihilate the chosen people of God. We see in chapter twelve that although the attack will be vicious beyond compare, God will see to it that the city of Jerusalem will remain standing on its site (**Zechariah 12:6**). The LORD will enable the Jewish armies to fight with superhuman strength against their foes on every side (**12:8**). Until ultimately, God Himself will go to war against the enemies of Jerusalem and utterly destroy them (**12:9**).

In the fourteenth chapter of Zechariah’s prophecy, we are given more insight into the battle itself. And we see there while Jerusalem will not be totally destroyed, it will be taken over by the enemy for a brief moment in time. God will allow the invading armies to pillage and plunder the city and many Israelis will be slain in this brutal conflict. So the question we must ask ourselves is; why would God allow the enemy to gain so much ground before He intervenes?

To understand the reasoning behind this, one must remember that not all of Israel will reject the rule of the anti-christ. In fact, quite a few of them will believe him to be their promised messiah. And as such, they will remain allied to him. When the end comes, they will be destroyed, along with the rest of fallen mankind. But what of God’s covenant promises to preserve His people?

Throughout the ages, God has often preserved His chosen ones as a “*remnant*”. Not all of Israel have been promised to endure, but only those whom God has chosen to do so will remain. For an example of this, we need only look back into a dark time in Israel’s history when Elijah the Tishbite, God’s prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel, was seemingly the last of his kind. After his famous confrontation with the prophets of Baal (**1 Kings 18**), he even became convinced that he was the only one left in the entire region that still remained loyal to God (**1 Kings 19:10**). The LORD’s reply to him was a wake up call to the old prophet:

But I will leave seven thousand in Israel — every knee that has not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him.
1 Kings 19:18

So you see, God preserved a remnant of His people in order to fulfill all His covenant promises to them. Just because many had turned aside to worship a foreign God did not mean that all of them had. And it was through that small number, that the line of Israel would continue. It must always be remembered that God will finish what He has begun, and there is nothing that Satan, or anyone else on earth for that matter, can do to bring about an end to His plans.

In the same manner, when the anti-christ is able to draw many of God's chosen people on a path to their own destruction, there will be a remnant preserved by God who will be shielded from his deception. They will be heavily persecuted for doing so, many at the cost of their own lives, but the remnant will prevail. As the enemies of God press in on Jerusalem, those who have forsaken reason and worshipped the anti-christ will be consumed (**Zechariah 14:1-2**). And it will seem that there is no hope for Jerusalem.

The holy city will be plundered and the enemy invaders will divide the spoils of war within the sight of its fallen inhabitants (**vs. 14:1**). The devastation will be unimaginable, as Israel's darkest day in history begins to unfold. It will be a hopeless scene of unspeakable atrocities against the Jewish people. Just recently, we witnessed the brutality of Hamas as they viciously attacked Israeli citizens in a cowardly act of terrorism, which led to months of bloody conflict. As bad as that was, it will pale in comparison to Israel's darkest day.

When the LORD said to Zechariah, **"Look, a day belonging to The LORD..."**, it is probably best not to consider this to mean a 24 hour day, more than likely it simply refers to a point of time in history. The siege over Jerusalem will be a horrific bloody conflict culminating in the surrender of the Israeli forces and and brutality that will ensue afterwards. If that time were not cut short, no one would survive (**Mathew 24:22**). But God will see to it that His remnant will.

Just as everything seems hopeless, a darkness like twilight will descend upon the land, and a great earthquake will shake the very foundations of Jerusalem. And the King of kings and LORD of lords will descend and stand upon the Mount of Olives (**vs. 3-4**). The great mountain which would ordinarily be a hindrance to keep the people from escaping will be split in two, when Christ descends upon it, and a valley will be created for the remnant to escape from their enemies (**vs. 4-5**). The Remnant of God's people will flee to an unknown location that the Scriptures simply refer to as Azal (pronounced aw-tsah' and meaning preserved). It will be a preordained destination, which God has preserved for the protection of His elect.

When Jesus was teaching His disciples about the end times, He took them up on a mountain top for the lesson. You guessed it! It was the Mount of Olives! The message He taught them there, now famously known as "The Olivet Discourse", can be found in Chapters 24-25 of Matthew's Gospel. It has been preached many times from many pulpits. But I can honestly say, that I have never heard it tied to the prophecies of Zechariah, and that is disappointing. Allow me to share a portion of this famous sermon with you now and see if its meaning becomes a bit clearer.

"...You are going to hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, because these things must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines, and earthquakes in various places. All these events are the beginning of labor pains. Then they will hand you over to be persecuted, and they will kill you. You will be hated by all nations because of My Name. Then many will fall away, betray one another, and hate one another. Many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. Because lawlessness will multiply, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. So when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand) then those in Judea must flee to the mountains. A man of the housetop must not come down to get things out of his house, and a man in the field must not go back to get his coat. Woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days! Pray that your escape may not be in

winter or on a Sabbath. For at that time there will be great distress, the kind that hasn't taken place from the beginning of the world until now and never will again. Unless these days were cut short, no one would be saved. But those days will be cut short because of the elect...." **Matthew 24:6-22**

Zechariah tells us that upon the fall of Jerusalem, the sun's light will not shine through the gloom. It will be a day that feels like an eclipse, a time of twilight, and then in the evening, when Christ comes with His holy ones (meaning the angels and the saints of God, namely the *raptured Church*), the evening will light up as the brightest day as The King stands upon the holy mountain and declares His victory over the enemies of our God! For it will be the very darkest in Israel, just before the dawn of a new age, when The Prince of Peace ushers in The Kingdom of God.

It will be a unique day known only to the LORD, without day or night, but there WILL BE LIGHT AT EVENING. **Zechariah 14:7** (emphasis added)

Even so, Come LORD Jesus!

Because Our God... Remembers!