

3. AN ENTHRALLING PROPHECY RUINED BY AN APPALLING INTERPRETATION!

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And all Israel will be saved, as it is written ... (Romans 11: 26).

We are now at the point where we see Jerusalem surrounded by a massive international military force in an end-time battle to end all wars. God has told us that **all the nations of the earth** are going to **be gathered against** Israel and against Jerusalem on that Day.

This occurs at the end of **The Great Tribulation**, also called “**Jacob’s Trouble**” because Israel will be at the epicentre of the world’s attention as this age winds up. This will be a time of **distress unequalled from the beginning of the world until now**, which God will cut short for **the elects’ sake**, otherwise **no one will survive** (Matt. 24: 21-22). (¹)

On that day the nations will lift the intoxicating cup to their collective throats to propose a toast --- “To Israel’s destruction! Let’s wipe her off the face of the map!” The nations will come together from near and far, from north, south, east and west, to cast Jerusalem like a stone into the sea. They will **take their stand together against the LORD and against His Messiah** with the boast, “We’ll **break their chains!** We’ll throw this troublesome rock into the sea forever!”

But the One enthroned in heaven laughs; the LORD scoffs at them saying, “I have installed My king on Zion ... (Ps. 2). God has decreed He will not abandon Israel. He will send His Son to the rescue, and all who try to heave Israel into the sea will rupture themselves badly.

THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS

This gathering of the nations, already on the move, will be driven by Satan’s rage. He is likened to **an enormous red dragon with seven heads ... who leads the whole world astray ... and he pursues the woman who had given birth to the male child ... and spews water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent ... (Rev. 12: 3,9,13,15)**. Yet God will fight for His cause and all who strike Jerusalem will reel back staggering like drunkards (Zech. 12: 1f).

It is the LORD God who has said that He is the One who is dragging the nations to their day of reckoning. And to those with eyes to see --- because we believe His prophetic word --- we can spot current day developments already heading towards this

¹ Are **the elect** both the saved Jews and Gentiles (the international New Testament Church) alive when Christ returns? Or perhaps **the chosen** in the more immediate context are the Jews in Israel who will come to faith in him as their Lord and Messiah at the *Parousia*? Personally, I favour the latter as the rest of this article will adumbrate, but there is latitude here.

denouement. Anti-Semitism, or to use the more politically correct term, anti-Zionism, is rampant. Most nations, if not all nations, propose to divide the Promised Land --- a man-made solution which the God of Israel does not accept.

Israel's total annihilation is going to be a near thing --- she is being judged as well. Thus, when the nations gather for battle in the **Valley of Jehoshaphat** the destruction and pillaging will reach all the way to Jerusalem; **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 (Zech. 14: 1-2).**

THIS WILL BE THE DAY!

But ... just when Israel's enemies are overflowing her land looting and torturing in the very streets of Jerusalem, just when it seems the Devil and his armies will succeed in obliterating every last vestige of the Jew, that just then God is going to supernaturally intervene --- at the 59th second, of the 59th minute before midnight --- when Israel lifts up her eyes towards heaven and desperately cries for salvation --- God will arise.

This will be the day when God **will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication (Zech. 12: 10).**

This will be the day when **the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations; as he fought in the day of battle ... (Zech. 14: 1-5).**

This will be the day when **the deliverer will come to Zion ... (Rom. 11: 27).**

This will be the day when the Lord comes to Israel **with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge ... (Zech. 14: 5; Matt. 25: 31; 1 Thess. 3: 13; Jude 14; Rev. 19: 13).**

This will be the day when the earth is told, **Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen (Rev. 1: 7).**

This will be the day Jesus prophesied to the High Priest, **"I tell you (²), from now on you (³) will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven (Matt. 26: 64).**

This will be the day --- which the angels, who appeared as **two men dressed in white** before the disciples as they stood on **the Mount of Olives** gazing up at the risen Jesus disappearing from their sight, announced --- **"Men of Galilee why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1: 11). (⁴)**

² The "you" Jesus is referring to is the plural "you", for the High Priest and the Council represent Israel.

³ As above for footnote 2.

⁴ This will be the day when **God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him ... and those who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air ... and then we will accompany King Jesus and touch down with him on the earth at the Mount of Olives.**

This will be the day when His feet will stand upon the Mount of Olives which faces Jerusalem on the east. Christians know this moment as the **Parousia**, the Second Coming of Christ, the day when Messiah comes back to Israel.

This will be the day when the Mount of Olives shall be split in two; From east to west, Making a large valley. Half of the mountain shall move towards the north and half of it towards the south. There will be a total disruption of the entire world's geography for a massive rift valley will split the land.

This will be the day when the earthquake to end all earthquakes occurs, for at this moment there will be flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake. The great city [Jerusalem] split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her **the cup** filled with the wine of the fury of His wrath. Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found ... (Rev. 16: 18). (⁵)

This will be the day of cosmic upheaval when the earth helps the woman [Israel] by opening its mouth and swallowing up the flood which the Dragon has spewed out of his mouth (Rev. 12:16).

This will be the day when all Israel will say, "Blessed is he who comes in the Name of the LORD" (Matt. 23: 39)!

This will be the day's most dramatic moment when they will look on Me whom they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son (Zech. 12; 10).

This will be the day when All Israel will be saved (Rom. 11: 26).

In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem ... and the land shall mourn, every family by itself: 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 Shimei by itself, and their wives by themselves; all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves (Zech. 12: 11-14).

This is a very Jewish scene of mourning. The Jewish people will be overcome with overwhelming grief once they realise the enormity of their previous rejection of Yeshua Ha Meshiach --- Jesus the Messiah. The scales of unbelief will fall from their eyes. The miraculous conversion of Saul (who became the apostle Paul) on the Road to Damascus will happen en masse to the remnant of the nation on the day Jesus rides into town!

⁵ From this we understand that the nations of the earth will be dominated and animated by the same Satanic spirit of defiance against the God of heaven that infused the original Babylon in **Genesis 11**.

I guess, when they see his resurrection glory, and all the angels of heaven at his command, and all the host of those redeemed by his blood now appearing with their immortal bodies, and when they see how the Lord has delivered them from their certain destruction, that their hearts will just melt with a spontaneous and simultaneous sorrow that is filled with joy.

All Israel will be brought to tears when **they look on the one they have pierced** and see his nail scarred hands (**Zech. 12: 10**). And thus the Jews in that final generation which has endured **Jacob's Great Trouble**, will be saved; **As it is written; The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob (Is. 59: 20-21; Rom. 11: 26)**.

Israel's anguish will be especially galling when they realise Jesus' unique Jewish identity as David's greater son. They will see Jesus of Nazareth as their promised king who will lead them into the Messianic age of glory. A whole nation will be raised up from the grave of despair with God's Spirit energising and quickening them.

We used to sing that wonderful hymn: **What a day of rejoicing that will be! When we all see Jesus, we'll sing and shout the victory!** I imagine an awful lot of hugging going on that day!

Yes, that will indeed be a big day, the day of the Lord. You might say, "But how can all this occur in just one day?" Well, I am not claiming infallibility in my outline of these momentous international, and global events. We do look at these things opaquely as through a dark glass, but more than likely, the day will cover a period of more than 24 hours. (⁶)

We use the expression, "Back in my day ..." and we know we are not wanting to be taken to mean a literal 24 hour day. Scripture also uses the term "the day" in various settings and we must do our best to take each mention in its own context. Sometimes it refers to a single 24 hour day. Other times it means a period of time defining a series of related events..

JOSEPH IS REVEALED TO HIS BROTHERS.

Who is adequate to describe this emotionally charged day when **all Israel will be saved**? We get a foreshadowing of it when Joseph's estranged brothers had their eyes opened as to who Pharaoh's second-in-charge really was.

After all the years since their despicable treatment of Joseph when they thought they had eliminated their brother, their moment of truth had come. Their consciences had hounded them for years. They must face their murderous actions square-on.

⁶ Another question often raised is, just how are all the resurrected saints from the Old Testament and New Testament eras, plus those alive at the time of Jesus' return, going to physically fit into the Promised Land? Frankly, I don't know. But I will leave the logistics to the God who says it will be so. I just believe His promise that it will be so.

Of course, Joseph knew who they were, even if they did not recognize him (**Gen. 42: 8**). And his heart was filled with love, full of forgiveness and grace, and the dam of his brotherly affection was at the point of bursting;

Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers.

And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it. Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt. And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you ... to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance (**Gen. 45: 1-7**).

What a day of revelation that was. And what a day it's going to be when, just like Joseph, **Jesus will be the one to weep the loudest**. Oh, I hope and pray with all my heart that you and I will be there by the grace of God to see this moment of national reconciliation.

What a day when King Jesus acknowledges the "born again" Jews as his brothers! What a day when Israel is given a new heart, given **a spirit of grace and supplication** by which they will pour out their sorrow and faith to their elder brother who is now *seen* to be **the ruler over the kings of the earth ... the ruler of God's creation** (**Rev. 1:5; 3:14**).

When they yelled, "**Crucify him! Crucify him!**" they meant it for evil. But God sovereignly overruled it for their final salvation and the world's ultimate prosperity!

Let us continually lift our hearts to intercede and pray for Israel in the meantime. Let us pray for Israel's salvation for her ingathering will be **life from the dead** for all peoples of the world (**Rom. 11: 15**).

GOD'S PLAN FOR THE NATIONS

In fact, many Scriptures indicate that many peoples from the invading and hostile nations will also come to salvation on that great day. He promises a peaceful and prosperous future to the Arabs and other Gentile nations who will submit to Him;

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 (**Isaiah 19: 23-25; Zech. 14: 16**).

What a day! What an *Enthralling Prophecy*. Oh Father God, bring it on! Save your people Israel. Prosper Your Land. Bring everlasting peace to Jerusalem. We pray You hasten the day. In the name of Your Beloved Son Jesus. Amen!

POSTSCRIPT:- AN APPALLING INTERPRETATION

Now I am sad. I wish we could leave it there in the hope that we --- all the redeemed, Jew and Gentile --- will soon be reconciled into one happy family to enter the kingdom of God with everlasting joy. But no! It breaks my heart to have to say that this *Enthralling Prophecy* has been ruined by *An Appalling Interpretation*.

Zechariah's enthralling end-times' prophecy that **they will look on Me whom they have pierced**, raises an obvious question: Who did the prophet actually predict would be **pierced**?

Would it be the Speaker --- the God of Israel, no less --- Who would be **thrust through**? *Could it be Jehovah Himself physically stabbed* by wicked human hands?

Furthermore, when God says He **will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem on the day** when He fights for Israel, and when we remember the two angels telling the disciples that **this same Jesus** who had just been standing on the Mount of Olives as he was lifted up into heaven, would come again to stand in that very place, are we not justified in thinking that Jesus must be God Himself, the so-called second person of the Trinity?

Trinitarians who believe that God has "eternally existed as Three Persons in the One Being", naturally favour the view that once the second Person in that "Godhead" became "incarnate" in Jesus, then indeed God himself could --- and would --- be the one **"stabbed"**. For the same reason those who believe in a triune God say the one touching down to stand on the Mount of Olives must be God Himself standing there in glorified flesh.

Representative of this popular idea is this;

One of the unique things about Zechariah 12: 10 is the manifestation of what Christians have long called the Trinity --- Jehovah (1) pours forth His Spirit (2) and reveals the Messiah (3) ... (⁷) This writer continues;

[Israel] will finally recognize that Yeshua [Jesus] is their promised Messiah who is actually God who clothed Himself in the likeness of human flesh to redeem humankind ... Zecharian 12: 10 is one of the most remarkable verses in the Bible. To me it is obvious that the LORD (Jehovah) is speaking and He says, "They shall look on

⁷ Gerald Rowlands, *The Messiah Comes to Israel: Will a Major Bible Prophecy Soon Be Fulfilled in Israel?* Destiny Image Europe, p147

Me whom they have pierced.” This clearly suggests that Yeshua, the pierced One is actually God manifested as the second person of the trinity.

This revelation will transform the nation of Israel into a people from every tribe of Israel who recognize that Yeshua Ha Mashiach is actually God. (⁸)

Or, more succinctly and perhaps more graphically, we get this from Dr Theo Laetsch;

Jehovah, I AM THAT I AM, pierced by an instrument of death wielded by human beings! (⁹)

So, we are encouraged to believe that, when Jesus died at Calvary, this was none other than YHWH in the person of “God the Son” who was **stabbed through** by wicked human hands.

THE HEBREW TEXT

Nearly all English translations fail at two critical points in their renditions of this key verse in **Zechariah 12: 10**.

Firstly, they would have us believe that on that great day of miraculous rescue, when Messiah is finally revealed to the Jewish people, that Israel will look on him as Almighty God --- **they will look on Me whom they have pierced**.

The Hebrew here is *Aleph lamed yud* which means “**to**” Me. For the Hebrew to say they will look “**on**” Me, it would have to read, *Ayin lamed yud*.

A very helpful friend of mine who reads Hebrew writes in private correspondence to me, “So the translators with even an elementary Hebrew should know this verse reads, “**to Me**” --- “**They will look to Me**” --- *not on Me!*”

Secondly, nearly all English translations omit a little key Hebrew word, “**et**” which means “**because**”. My friend appears to be on solid ground, for the **Jewish Publication Society** translates the verse this way;

“**They shall look unto Me because [et] they have thrust him through ...**” (JPS) (¹⁰)

I hasten to add that the Greek **Septuagint (LXX)** confirms this by saying Israel, on that day, shall **look unto Me [pros me]**. This, then, is a prediction that once the LORD God reveals His Messiah to Israel on that day, the Jewish people will in their hearts turn to the one true God Who has worked all these mighty deeds through His Messiah. (¹¹)

⁸ Ibid, 2010, p108 -109 (Bold emphasis original.)

⁹ Bible Commentary: *The Minor Prophets*, Concordia, St Louis, Missouri, Third Printing, 1970, p 483

¹⁰ “Et”, so my good friend also writes, is “the directive word but there is also a disjunctive *tipeha cantillation* on “Me” [Eli] separating the following phrase which applies to “they” of whom they pierced.”

¹¹ The apostle John applies Zechariah’s prophecy to Jesus on the cross and then to Jesus when he returns at his *Parousia* (John 19:37;Rev. 1:7). This is typical of many prophecies which may have a near and a far fulfillment.

Some will still wish to argue, “But Jesus’ feet are described as God’s feet! What do you say to **Zechariah 14: 3-4** where it says, **the LORD will go out and fight against those nations ... on that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives?** None other than God Himself is going to stand there on the mount, surely?”

This may be answered one of two ways. **First**, some commentators take this to be apocalyptic symbolism. In Scripture, to place one’s feet on a territory or on an enemy is to claim sovereignty and control over that area and people.

Taken this way, Zechariah is simply saying that God is going to win the battle and establish His rulership over Israel and the world. Zechariah says as much for, **On that day ... the LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will one LORD [YHWH] and His Name the only name (Zech. 14: 9). Strict Biblical monotheism will finally stamp out all idols and man-made myths about a triune god! (Zech. 13: 2f)**

Second, we may answer that this is a classic example of the **Hebrew Law of Agency**. This “law” states that when God sends or deputises an agent to speak and to act on His behalf, then that agent is as though he is God Himself.

I only have space here for one classic example of this **Law of Agency**. In **Exodus chapter 7** God commissions Moses to stand before Pharaoh and demand that Pharaoh let Israel go. God encourages Moses by saying, **“I will make you like God to Pharaoh ... (Ex. 7: 1).** The message Moses brings is God’s word, and if Pharaoh dismisses Moses, *he is rejecting God himself*;

“By this you will know that I am the LORD behold, I will strike the water that is in the Nile with the staff that is in My Hand, and it shall be changed to blood” (v. 17). But notice just two verses later where the LORD says to Moses, **“Tell Aaron, ‘Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt --- that they will turn to blood (v. 19).**

Whose staff is this? Is it Moses’s, Aaron’s or God’s staff? It’s **the staff that is in My Hand**, says the LORD. And yet, it is also Aaron’s staff that is in his hand. In Bible understanding then, Moses (and his deputy Aaron) stood before Pharaoh and Egypt *as though they were God Himself speaking and acting!* The **Hebrew Law of Agency** states, **“the agent is as the principal himself”**.

In the very same manner, God’s unique Son, Jesus our Lord Messiah, is invested with all of His Father’s authority. When Jesus speaks, it is God Himself we hear. When Jesus acts, it is God Himself whose action we see. Jesus said so, for he perfectly represents His Father. Jesus stands in the place of God Himself, without being confused *as* God.

This is how we must interpret **Zechariah 14: 3-4**. When Jesus returns to planet earth and plants his human feet on the Mount of Olives, the Bible understands that he will

stand there *as though he is the LORD God Himself!* As God's authorised Agent, Jesus the Son of God stands before the world fully identified *with God but not as God!* (¹²)

¹² For a full exposition of this theme of agency, see *They Never Told Me This in Church!* pp 63.