

Zechariah 14 Victory (part 5: Blessings & Salvation Through Judgment)

Today, we come to the end of Zechariah's words, the Word of God both to physical Israel in their day and to us as the Church of Christ. Now, I know there are differences of opinion on how these realities are fulfilled, whether they will be fulfilled in a "future" Jewish community. Or, whether they are fulfilled in the church. And I think you know where I stand. I believe these prophecies as Zechariah looks to the future; "in that day" refer to the Kingdom of Christ. This includes both Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:11-22). I believe this Kingdom began with his coming in the flesh as God's Messiah, God's true priest, God's true shepherd, God's true servant. He was born in the flesh. He lived a sinless life. He laid down his life as a sacrifice. He rose again. He ascended back to the glory at the Father's right hand (Heb. 1:1-3). And, He has poured out upon his people the Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee that his kingdom will never fail, but will continue, until one day, the Son will hand the kingdom over to the Father.

And in every way that physical Israel failed to bring about the kingdom of God Jesus did not. In this way, Jesus IS the TRUE Israel. And ALL who believe in Him can be called today, "***the Israel of God***" (See Gal. 6:16). We are the church! And Christ is building his church; the gates of hell will not prevail! This is what Zechariah 14 is all about! We must remember that the prophets spoke in terms that physical Israel would understand. And, that's all they had. But, when we come to the NT and the Kingdom of the Son, we see FULFILLMENT. In Col. 2:17, speaking of OT Mosaic laws, Paul says: "**These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.**" In Heb. 9:9 the author speaks of the priestly system saying, "**these things are symbolic of the present age**" (See also Heb. 9:23; 10:1). Over and over again the NT authors see the words of the prophets fulfilled in Christ, in the KINGDOM of the Son.

Think of a seed. When I put my blue lake bush seeds into the ground, what happens 90 days later? There is full grown plant with beans. In the same kind of way, the words of Zechariah are the seed. But now, in Christ, we have the plant. And, I believe this "plant" is still growing and one day will be complete. And I believe all the events of history are progressing to a time when ALL God's enemies will be made his footstool (See Ps. 110:1; Luke 20:43; Acts 2:35; Heb. 1:13, 10:13). I believe this is how we must see the words of Zechariah as he looks forward to the "day." I like to view the Kingdom as inaugurated as "having come" in the Son. But, we wait for the consummation of the kingdom, when the Son will turn the kingdom over to the Father. What physical Israel had in "seed" form, we are now seeing played out in the Kingdom of the Son. The plant is growing until one day, God will make ALL things NEW. I think we see this kind of escalation in Zechariah. This means the principles are the same, but there is a finality to his prophecies.

With this in mind, I would like to highlight two principles from cp. 14 (more coming next week) that are displayed today as we live in the days of the Kingdom of the Son: 1) Blessings and 2) Salvation through Judgment.

1. Blessings. God blesses his people. We see this in 14:1 with the reality of spoils. **“Behold, a day is coming for the Lord, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst.”** Here, we see God fighting for his people and dividing the spoils of war to everyone. These are blessings! This is both clear in the OT and the NT. Last week, we saw a separation of God’s people from those who are NOT God’s people. And God’s people will call upon him and they will be blessed. Look back to 13:9: **“And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say They are my people; and they will say The Lord is my God.”**

Brothers and sisters, this is covenant language. From Adam to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses, to David, it is God’s intention to bless his people. With Adam, we read: **“And God blessed them and said to them ‘Be fruitful and multiply . . .’** (Gen. 1:26-28). With Noah, in Gen. 9:1, after the flood, we read: **“And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply . . .’** In Gen. 12 God calls Abraham to leave his country, saying, **“And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great . . .”** With Moses, speaking about his people, says, **“I also establish you . . . I will give you the land of Canaan . . . I will be your God and you will be my people.”** In the same way, Zechariah repeats these words and says, **“God will bless you.”**

God ALWAYS blesses his people. And NOW, in the New Covenant, in the days of the Kingdom of the Son, a FOUNTAIN is opened up (v. 13:1). And Christ IS the Fountain! By his death and resurrection, his ascension, and the sending of the Holy Spirit, the people of God are receiving (NOW) the spoils of victory. As Peter says in Acts 5:31: **“God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.”** I think back to Is. 53:11-12, using the same kind of language as Zechariah. He says: **Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.”**

Brothers and sisters, TODAY, if you are a Christian, you have been and are being blessed. And this isn’t through health, wealth, and prosperity! If you go and read John 15-17 Jesus speaks of the glory of the Father and of the Son and says that He gives his children ETERNAL LIFE. He gives us his WORD. He gives us power through the Holy Spirit. EVERYTHING, EVERY blessing flows down to us. Now, your sins are forgiven. Now, the wrath of God your sins deserve has been taken away. Now, you have been justified by the blood of Christ. Now, you are being sanctified through the power of the Holy Spirit. In Christ, NOW, we have come to the heavenly city (Heb. 12:22). BUT, we also wait for the consummation all things and a “city” to come (Heb. 13:14). Sin, the devil, death, still remain. There are still spoils to come. And they are beyond what we can think or imagine.

This passage also looks forward to the day of Christ's return, to the great judgment, and the consummation of all things, which still takes place in the Kingdom of the Son. (We will consider these verses more next week.) But, look at vv. 6-8: **"On that day there shall be no light, cold, or frost. And there shall be a unique day which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night, but at evening time there shall be light. On that day living waters shall flow out of from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter. And the Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day the Lord will be one and his name one . . ."** And in v. 11: **"And it shall be inhabited, for there shall never again be a decree of utter destruction. Jerusalem shall dwell in security."** Look at v. 14: **"And the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be collected, gold, silver, and garments in great abundance."** Then down in vv. 20-21: **"And on that day there shall be inscribed on the bells of the horses, Holy to the Lord. And the pots in the house of the Lord shall be as the bowls before the altar. And every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holy to the Lord of hosts, so that all who sacrifice may come and take of them and boil the meat of the sacrifice in them. And there shall no longer be a trader in the house of the Lord of hosts on that day."**

What beautiful words of comfort as we live in this world of sin and evil and destruction! The battle still rages (Eph. 6:10-20). But, the spoils of Christ's victory are given to us now! God blesses us NOW! Yet, there is more to come! A couple applications.

Application: We still wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus when ALL the "spoils" will come to us! This gives us hope! By faith, we look forward to such a time.

Application: God will keep his people secure. God kept Israel safe. No matter what happened to them, He kept them. He kept them as a physical people. And, he always kept a remnant, those with faith, those who trusted his promises (promises like we are reading today.) In the same way today, God is keeping his people safe. This doesn't mean we will not go through the "fires" of this life (13:9 – last week). We will! (LITERALLY after what we've seen this week). But, God is faithful! He will see you through! Look at vv. 10-11: **"The whole land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem shall remain aloft on its site from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the former gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses. And it shall be inhabited, for there shall never again be a decree of utter destruction. Jerusalem shall dwell in security."** Let's move on.

2. Salvation through Judgment. Our passage is FULL of VICTORY! But, at the same time, it is FULL of judgment. BUT, they go hand in hand. God always brings VICTORY to his people through a context of JUDGMENT! Let's look through the text again and notice these two threads. In vv. 1-5 we read: **"Behold, a day is coming for the LORD, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half**

of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward. And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.” And then, as we’ve read already in vv. 6-11, there is salvation. V. 6 “***no light, cold or frost.***” V. 7: It will be a day of “***light.***” In v. 8, “***living waters***” flow all year round. In v. 10: Jerusalem will be safe. And then again v. 12 we see judgment. God will fight against the nations of the earth that come against Jerusalem. In v. 13 we read there will be a great “***panic***” with great fighting. And then again v. 14 “***gold, silver, and clothing***” will be collected for Jerusalem. And at the same time we see in v. 15 a “***plague***” that will fall upon all the animals. And again in v. 16: we see that all survivors from the nations will “***go up to Jerusalem and worship,***” “keeping the feast of booths.” Then again in vv. 18-19 God takes away rain and sends a plague upon “***Egypt***” and judges the nations that do not go up to Jerusalem and keep the “feast of booths.” And finally in vv. 20-21 we see that ALL things are made holy. This is the way the Book ends: Complete Victory Through Judgment! Salvation through judgment!

With this in mind, in closing, I want speak about some principles of judgment and salvation.

1. First, God must judge ALL sin. Whether it is Satan’s sin or Adam’s sin or your sin or my sin, God will judge all sin. As Rom. 1:8 says, “**For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.**” Since sin entered the world, this has always been the case. “**The wages of sin is death**” (Rom. 6:23). This is both physical death and separation from God forever in place called hell. Brothers and sisters, if there were no sin, there would be no judgment.

2. God shows mercy to sinners. Now, we know that we are saved because of the grace of God. But, behind this grace, we find mercy. And I would argue that alongside this “mercy” we find love to be the cause; for God is love. This is why, after Adam and Eve sin, they find a promise of mercy. And the reason I highlight mercy is because God did not have to save Adam and Eve or anyone, for that matter. Instead, he made a promise that Eve would continue to have children, and one day, a savior would come from “woman.” And this savior, though he would be “**bruised,**” he would also “**crush**” Satan’s head and bring salvation. This is salvation through judgment. In this promise, there is a great divide; one group of people will be saved and another group will NOT be saved, but will receive just punishment (judgment). Brothers and sisters, this is EXACTLY what we’ve seen throughout history. God keeps a people for himself as he shows them mercy. And God judges others, who end up being the enemies of God. This is what we’ve seen throughout Zechariah. There is always a people who are saved, who escape judgment. Now, let me ask, “*How can this be?*” “*Which of us are not sinners?*” “**For all have sinned and fall**

short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). You know the answer because you know the promise. Zechariah did not know what we know. He looked forward. We look backward. It is the cross of Christ!

3. God’s judgment falls upon the Son. This is the cross of Christ. Now, you might say, what does Zechariah 14 have to do with the cross of Christ? Well, the entire Book has been about Christ. We saw this last week as God’s “shepherd” is struck down. The things he speaks of in this chapter do not happen if there is no judgment upon the Son. There are NO BLESSINGS if judgment does not fall upon the Son. If there is no cross, there is ONLY judgment upon ALL sinners in this world. There is no salvation for the people of God if there unless there is what I often call the “great exchange.” As the perfect, sinless, sacrifice Christ laid down his life. He died. In this way, the GREATEST place of judgment becomes the GREATEST place of blessing!

There is certainly more to be said from this passage (next week). But for now, we must know that that God WILL bless his people. He will give us salvation. But, this salvation always comes in the context of judgment.