Armageddon and the Salvation of Israel
Zechariah 12:1-13:1

Zechariah prophesies a great battle which will come against Jerusalem “in that day;” the Lord will fight for Jerusalem; He will devour the surrounding peoples and pour out His Spirit of grace on the house of David as the Jews will mourn for Him whom they have pierced.

The phrase “in that day” appears 16 times in chapters 12-14; it refers to “the Day of the LORD” an eschatological term that has to do with God’s judgment on an unbelieving world; it is also called “the great tribulation” (Matthew 24:15); the war prophesied is Armageddon---the war to end all wars.

The chapter can be divided into four sections: The siege of Jerusalem, the shielding of Jerusalem, the sorrow of Israel, the salvation of Israel.

The Siege of Jerusalem (12:1-3)

The intervention of God in history... “The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel...” (12:1a); this is a divine message loaded with woe and judgment; the world ends in divine judgment and it comes from the omnipotent God “who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him” (12:1b); all the nations of the earth are gathered against Jerusalem (v3); God is going to intervene in two ways:

1. Jerusalem becomes “a cup of drunkenness” (v.2); the word “cup” (saph) refers to a large basin; those who fight against Jerusalem will drink from that basin and stagger around like helpless drunks.

2. Jerusalem becomes “a heavy stone” (V.3); Jerusalem will be a stone too heavy for the nations to lift; God is clearly involved: He says: “I will make” (vv. 2,3,6); “I
The influence of the Antichrist on Armageddon... (see 2 Thessalonians 2: 3-4,7-9; Daniel 9:27; Revelation 11:1-2).

The impact of the nations attacking... (see Zechariah 14:1-2; two thirds of the Jews are killed (Zechariah 13:8-9).

The insistence from Daniel’s prophecy about Armageddon will come true... In Daniel 11 he writes of wars that occurred 215 years before the fact; wars from 323 BC to 167 BC; so accurate were the details of these battles that atheistic philosophy Porphyry referred to Daniel as a forgery written about 165 BC and not in 538 BC; the Dead Sea scrolls have proved the earlier date for Daniel; he had visions “in the first year of Darius the Mede” (Daniel 11:1) or 538 BC.

In Daniel 11 he prophesies the rise of Alexander the Great and the defeat of the Medo-Persian Empire (vvs.1-3); the death of Alexander and the dividing of his kingdom among his four generals (v.4); the royal marriage between the king of the North (Syria) and the King of the South (Egypt) which ended in divorce, murder, revenge (vvs. 5-9).

He then prophesied the conquests of the king of the North, Antiochus III over Egypt in the Battle of Raphia (vvs. 10-15) as well as his further attempt to get an advantage over Egypt by offering his daughter in marriage to the king of the South hoping she would be a spy; it all backfired as the two fell in love and she turned against her father Antiochus III; in anger he attacked the coastal lands of Greece where he was defeated by a Roman army; and his body was never found (vvs. 16-19).

This gives rise to Antiochus Epiphanes who seized the throne of the North by murdering his son who was the heir to the throne; he wanted to unify the Grecian Empire; he began by attacking Egypt the King of the South; he was stopped by the Romans who came against him from Cyprus (vvs. 20-30); he was so angry that on his return trip to Damascus he stops off at Jerusalem and commits the
“abomination of desolation” by offering pigs on the altar of sacrifice and erecting a statue of Zeus-Olympus in the Holy Place of the temple (vvs. 31-35).

In Daniel 11:36-39, Antiochus Epiphanes becomes a type of Antichrist; the first 35 verses are fulfilled prophecy, but verses 40-45 are still unfulfilled; they prophesy the battle of Armageddon when the nations of world come against the Antichrist; the war begins with all the nations against Jerusalem but ends up with the nations turning against the Antichrist (see Revelation 9:13-21).

The Shielding of Israel (12:4-9)

*The problem for mad hoseman (12:4)*... The horses are confused with mad riders; Zechariah speaks of warfare with horses as it would have been fought in his day; perhaps God causes their weapons to misfire; or the soldiers get drunk and cannot shoot straight, or sends His angels to confuse and scare the enemy as He did in other wars against present day Israel.

*The promises that are remembered from the prophets (12:5)*... The governors of Judah remember that God has promised to protect Jerusalem; the city is under divine protection and the Scriptures of the prophets come to their minds and they are searched out by the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

*The power of Israel’s military (12:6)*... Jerusalem will become like a blazing pot in the midst of a woodpile; the Israeli military will be like a flaming torch among twigs as God miraculously defends the city; today Israel has one of the strongest militaries in the world.

*The priority given Judah (12:7)*... God defends Judah first.

*The protection given Jerusalem (12:8-9)*... The coming of the Messiah protects Jerusalem and defeats the enemies; Jerusalem is temporarily taken; her citizens flee to Jordan to escape the Antichrist (14:1-2); Christ comes to the Mount Olives and defends the city (14:4); God is going to destroy those nations that come against Jerusalem (12:9); He come to wage war (Revelation 19: 20-21).
The Sorrow of Israel (12:10-14)

The work of the Holy Spirit (12:10a)... In the day the Messiah comes to earth at the end of Armageddon they will recognize Him and God will pour His Spirit upon them (see Isaiah 44:3,5); the Holy Spirit bears witness of Jesus (John 15:26; 1 Corinthians 12:3); He is “the Spirit of grace”(see Ephesians 2:8; John 16:8;15:26); He is also called “the Spirit of supplication” who helps us in our prayer life (Romans 8:26 -28); both the Spirit of grace and the Spirit of supplication come upon the Jews at the coming of the Messiah.

The wonderment over the Messiah (12:10b)... The “look” is to contemplate or to look with pleasure like the children of Israel looked on the brazen serpent in the wilderness (Numbers 21:4-9); they will mourn over Him “whom they pierced;” the Romans crucified Christ (John 19:32-37); it pleased the LORD to bruise Him (Isaiah 53:4b,10a); Christ’s death was determined by the predetermined purpose and foreknowledge of God (Acts 2:23).

The weeping of Israel (12:10c-14)... The mourning of Israel is national ( vvs. 10c-11); it will be like the death of Josiah, a godly king who brought spiritual reform to Judah as Judah’s last hope before her fall to Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 23:29,30; 2 Chronicles 35:20-27); the mourning is individual as every family will mourn ( vvs. 12-14); this shows their repentance is sincere.

The Salvation of Israel (13:1)

The cleansing of Israel’s sins (13:1)... On the day of Christ’s crucifixion there will be the fountain of blood for the sins of Israel and the whole world.
The commitment of God to bring Israel under the new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34)... The spiritual cleansing of Israel brings them under the new covenant as the hearts of the people of Israel will love Him and serve Him.

The contrasts between the old and the new covenants... the new covenant is “a surety of a better covenant” (Hebrews 7:22)... The OC demonstrates man cannot keep the law (Romans 3:23), the NC changes hearts so people can obey God (Ezekiel 11: 19-20); the OC brought the knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20), the NC brings forgiveness (Jeremiah 31:34); the OC was “outward” written on stone (Exodus 24:12), the NC is “inward” written on man’s heart (Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 11:19-20; 18:31; 36:26-27); the OC was a schoolmaster to teach our need for Christ and forgiveness (Galatians 3:24), the NC is found in the work of Christ on the cross (Matthew 26:27-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20); the NC is experienced when one is born again.

The compassion of God for Israel and for Jerusalem (Jeremiah 31:35-40)... God said He will never turn His back on Israel; as long as there is sun by day and moon by night, as long as the waves of the sea roar, when those depart so will the seed of Israel cease from being a nation (vvs 35-36); if heaven can be measured and the foundation of the earth searched from beneath, then the seed of Israel will cease to exist (v.37); Paul reminds us a partial blindness has come to the Jews that the Gentiles might be grafted in, but God has not given up on the Jews and when the fulness of the Gentiles has come in then, “all Israel will be saved” (Romans 11:26-27).