



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Zechariah 14:1-21

"Jerusalem, Advent and Kingdom"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the word of God and for the light that it sheds upon our path. We thank Thee for the section of the Old Testament into which we have been looking over the past number of weeks. And we thank Thee, Lord, for the way in which we have been refreshed as we have been given wonderful pictures of the future that lies before all of us who are the children of Abraham by faith.

We thank Thee for the promises of the Abrahamic covenant and the Davidic covenant and the new covenant. We thank Thee for the share in them that Thou hast granted to us in grace. We look forward also, Lord, to the completion of the program of God and the salvation of the ethnic nation of Israel. We thank Thee for the way in which that is so set out in holy Scripture. We thank Thee, Lord, for the encouragement that it is to us, because it reminds us of the faithfulness of our great triune God to the promises that have been.

And now, we ask that Thou wilt be with us tonight as we look into the last chapter of the prophecy of Zechariah. Guide our thoughts and as we read through the chapter and comment upon it and seek to discover its sense, give us understanding, Lord. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] We're turning to Zechariah chapter 14 and our subject tonight is, "Jerusalem, Advent and Kingdom." Some people find it very difficult to believe a chapter like Zechariah chapter 14. It has some rather interesting things in it, some things that may seem very strange. We have, for example, the Mount of Olives cleaving in the midst toward the east and toward the west. We read of a very great valley being formed. We read of half of the mountain removing toward the north, half of it toward the south. We also read that, "The land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: (and we read) it shall be lifted up and inhabited in her place."

We read in effect that Jerusalem shall be above the places round about it whereas at the present time, it is below places that are round about it. And so, great geographical changes are set out in chapter 14 and some people find that very difficult to believe. What it really comes down to probably is that it's safer to believe God than those who would seek to explain this away.

We do read in verse 1 of chapter 12, "The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him." And when you read from chapter 12 through chapter 14, you see that this is one burden that has come from the Lord and chapter 12, chapter 13, chapter 14, they make up this burden. And this burden is said to be from the Lord who stretches forth the heavens and lays the foundations of the earth and who forms the spirit of man within him.

It's almost as if Zechariah has anticipated the fact that people would think this would be very strange. The geography of the Holy Land being changed and, as if to anticipate it for careful students of the Bible, he states, that this is part of the burden and it's the burden of the Lord who is one who stretches forth the heavens and lays the foundation of the earth. And so, when we think about the Lord, it becomes a very small matter for these events to transpire that are set out here in chapter 14. Zechariah is looking into the future and he writes of the final struggle over Jerusalem. He writes of the

Second Advent of the Messiah, "His feet will stand on the mount of Olives" and then he writes of the Messianic kingdom that follows, the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The chapter can be looked at as a chapter in which we proceed from difficulty to finally Jerusalem as the light of the world. For in the first six verses or so, we have the story of a conflict about the city of Jerusalem and actually the people who are in the city of Jerusalem are losing the fight. And then in the 7th verse, which is something of a turning point, "But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light." And then we read of the things that the Lord God is going to do so that the defeat is turned into victory by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And then the last part of the chapter describes all of the blessings of that kingdom that shall ensue. And we read,

"In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts. (So it's a rather remarkable chapter and a very fitting conclusion to the prophecy of Zechariah. We turn, first of all, for a look at the battle that takes place over the city of Jerusalem. We read in the first two verses of this) Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. (Incidentally, that expression, "Behold, the day of the Lord" is really an expression that is a little bit different from the usual statement "the day of the Lord." It really literally is "a day is coming for the Lord" and I think the New American Standard Bible has made that correction of the Authorized Version. So it really should be read, "A day is coming for the Lord") and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses

rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city."

Now what this is is a fuller explanation of what we looked at when we looked at chapter 12, verse 1 through verse 9. And there we read of a struggle that is going to take place in the last days. For example, the 4th verse of chapter 12 says, you may remember this if you were here a couple of weeks ago, "In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment (or madness), and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness." So what we have here is a fuller development of chapter 12, verse 1 through verse 9.

This is a place in the word of God, which is very difficult to phantomize as so many have done by seeing in it really relatively nothing at all. Some of you may have read the comments of Dan Griffin, pastor of the Cliff Temple Baptist Church just a few days ago, in which speaking about Jerry Falwell, and there are many things about Jerry Falwell that I would not go along with him about, but he is a Christian man. And, so far as I know, a relatively sound Christian man. He's an Arminian, but nevertheless, he's a very sound Christian man. His theology isn't my theology. I think mine's better, but anyway, Dan Griffin, the pastor of the church says, "He's really an individual who doesn't know the Lord" as he was quoted in the paper. He says, "I don't think he knows who Jesus is and I don't think he understands the Bible and he's stuck on that pre-millennial hog wash." [Laughter] So this passage, however, it's very difficult to phantomize.

You may make statements like that and get everybody to laugh, but you are responsible to explain the Scriptures. And when we turn over to passages like Jeremiah chapter 32 and say verse 32, let me see, I'm sorry, verse 42; Jeremiah 32 and verse 42, "For thus saith the LORD; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them." It's very easy for people

to say, "Well, the promises of the Old Testament shall not be fulfilled to the nation Israel like the Old Testament appears to say that they will, but they are going to be fulfilled with reference to the church. But really, how can you explain this in this way?"

"Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people Israel, so will I bring upon the church of Jesus Christ all the good that I have promised them." One could not read it that way. This text really can only be understood of the nation Israel, "Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them." We cannot explain away the Scriptures by substituting for Israel the term church. It just will not go. So, as I say, we may find it very difficult to understand some things, but nevertheless the answer is not in phantomizing away the word of God.

C. G. Trumbull who was at one time associated with the *Sunday-School Times* took a trip to Korea where a tremendous work of evangelization had taken place in the early part of this century. In fact, there was a great revival there and Mr. Trumbull was interested in the way in which they had responded to the word of God concerning the second coming of Christ. And so, he asked one of the Koreans whether the Korean Christians believed in the second coming of Christ. And he received this answer, "Oh, yes, they believe the Bible. It's only when some missionaries come and tell them something different that they begin to have any doubts."

When one reads the Bible and reads in its normal plain speaking then, I think, the answer usually is, we sense there's going to be some great disturbances in the future, we see that the Lord Jesus Christ is going to come, we see that he is going to fulfill the promises that he has made to the nation Israel, and we see he's going to rule and reign upon the earth. That seems to be the simple reading of the word of God.

Now if this is so, then when we come to Zechariah chapter 14 and we read about his coming and his feet standing on the mount of Olives we'll, of course, have to presuppose some of the things that have been said in the previous prophetic language of

the Old Testament. I have made this comment several times as we have been looking at the Book of Zechariah and it is this that Zechariah was obviously a very close student of the prophets. And he was particularly a close student of the prophecy of Isaiah. One sees that because he cites his prophetic texts in language that is often derived from those prophets.

Take the simple instance of the branch, which he mentions twice. Well, that's a term that is found in the prophecy of Jeremiah and it's found in the prophecy of Isaiah. So he was a student of previous revelation and you'll remember that those prophets wrote before him and studied them. You can also find him from time to time citing passages that have to do with the five books of Moses. That's one of the things that almost all of the scholars of the Book of Zechariah point out that he was a student of the word of God. So we're not presupposing something that he would not have presupposed if he were to tell us what we are to think about in the light of what he writes here, because it's obvious that he's leaning on things that have been developed in other passages of the Scripture. What is involved in this is that there is going to be a regathering of the nation Israel, because they will be there in Jerusalem when the Lord Jesus' feet stand upon the mount of Olives.

Now it's evident, too, that they were will be there in unbelief and it will be as a result of the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus that those who are left there will come to faith. That's plain from chapter 12 and verse 10. Then where he says that, "In that day he will pour out upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced." So that's something that is going to happen in the future and if this is the enlightenment of people in Jerusalem, it's obviously they're there in unbelief. So this presupposes that they are there in unbelief.

It presupposes also the rise of a world ruler and, also, a confederation of the nations, because all of the nations are said to be gathered against Jerusalem. Take a look

at verse 2, "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle." So what we have here is an agreement of all the nations and they are seeking to take the city of Jerusalem. Well that's, of course, something that's set out so plainly for us in passages like Revelation chapter 13 or in the Old Testament in the prophecy of Daniel. What I think is also indicated by this is that there is going to be a kind of covenant that the anti-Christ is going to make, which will be broken as Daniel chapter 9 and verse 27 brings out.

Also, since we have all of the nations gathered together against Jerusalem and half of them go off in captivity and the other half are besieged and left within the city. Well, surely, this is very closely related to what Jeremiah says when he speaks about the time of Jacob's trouble in Jeremiah chapter 30 and verse 7. So the kings of the earth are struggling for power and evidently they sense that Jerusalem is a last bastion for that which stands for the interests of the Lord God. If you were to put it in the language that people talk about today, it's secularism or paganism seeking to destroy the last bastion of that which stands for the Lord God. So this great coalition against the city and is representative of that.

One also thinks, thinking about later revelation, of the scene described in Revelation chapter 17 and verse 12 when the beast and his armies are fighting against the Lamb. Who would ever think that a wild beast would be defeated by a little lamb, but that, of course, is what we read in Revelation chapter 17, verse 12 through verse 14. So a great deal lies behind this chapter and I think it's fair to say that we need to keep those things in mind.

I think, also, what this chapter reveals is something about the nature of man that most of our evangelicals have forgotten and that is that man is truly utterly depraved. There is a magnificent in Psalm 9 and verse 20 in which the Psalmist says, "Put them in fear, O LORD: that the nations may know themselves to be but men." When we think about the nature of men, we think of men as being utterly depraved.

This is something that Jerry Falwell does not understand completely because he and people who follow his particular line of theology like to talk about the freewill of man and that the decision is ultimately human decision. I think most of those people really have not thought through things like that and, therefore, they present that kind of theology in which there is an inherent contradiction for they say at the same time, they will talk about the sin of man.

What the General Confession of the Anglican Church says is absolutely true, "There is no health in us." D. R. Davies, the convert from liberalism and Communism and Socialism, particularly, to the truth of the word of God said that after he had come to understand the truth of the Bible that he loved to swat people with the doctrine of the depravity of man. And he said, "I don't know of anything better to do it with than the General Confessions, "There is no health in us." I agree with that. That statement, "There is no health in us" is a clear presentation of the nature of man.

Well, the whole city now is opposed by all the nations and what is described in verse 2 is a victory for the nations, "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city." In other words, the city is taken, plundering and havoc takes place, as usually takes place when cities are defeated, but nevertheless there are some left in the city. In fact, he describes it as half of them. Then in verse 3 through verse 7, we have the story of the advent.

Now this is not a surprise to us because we study Zechariah knowing that our Lord ascended to heaven from the mount of Olives and we know that the angels were standing about and the disciples were looking as our Lord went up into heaven. And you'll remember that the angel spoke, "Why stand ye looking up into heaven? This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." And so, the Lord Jesus who went into heaven bodily and visibly and personally from the mount of

Olives shall stand upon the mount of Olives in the latter days. Listen to verse 3 through verse 7 and I'll read these verses,

"Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal (There's some question about the meaning of that. It's possible to take it as a Hebrew word, but taking it as the Authorized Version does, it's taken as a place. Unfortunately, we don't know specifically of a place by the name of Azal, which doesn't mean that there was not one, of course.): yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light."

Now in the light of this statement this is what one commentator has said concerning our Lord's feet standing upon the mount of Olives. This is a Christian minister, incidentally. This is an Episcopalian minister from Boston and he is no longer there, but the *Interpreter's Bible*, a relatively modern commentary, has included his comments. This is what he says, "They watched the skies for his return. They forgot or perhaps they never knew that things seldom come back the way they go. History never repeats itself quite. When Aristotle came back through Aquinas, it was not exactly the same man who tutored Alexander. The people we love always come back to us, but seldom do they come in exactly the same way that they left us. In the glance of a young

daughter's eye, a wife lost early may come back to her husband across a page of poetry, years after a friend comes back to his comrade. Those, therefore, who have watched the sky for Jesus have been disappointed and so will they always be (Have you been looking for the second coming of our Lord? He says you'll always be disappointed.) He will never come back that way. He will come in the need of this dreadful hour. He will stand crucified above the debris of our wrecked cathedrals pointing to our shame and promising his helm. He will come in the closed rooms of our secret lives to quiet our horrid breathing and steady our rapid pulse. With him will come all good and true things not just as they left will they return, but purer, stronger, and more real."

Well, you can see the things he's interested in. He has high blood pressure [laughter] and so, he's thinking about how the Lord can help him with his high blood pressure. Well, I don't deny that and we as Christians know that in all of the experiences of our life we have relationship with the Lord and we can expect him to be with us. But it's striking that these apostles who knew all of those things, nevertheless still looked for his coming. And long after this promise was given in Acts chapter 1, the Apostle John concludes the last book of the New Testament with a reference to his own hope of the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our contemporary, that's very true, but he's also coming again in bodily form.

Let me just make a comment on several of the expressions, "Then shall the Lord go forth." Perhaps there was no greater manifestation of the power of God previously than that that was manifested in the submerging of Pharaoh when the children of Israel went through the Red Sea. And human insolence, perhaps, reached some of its high point in the challenge that Pharaoh posed. But human insolence will be submerged just as Pharaoh and his hosts were when the waters pour over them, "The Lord shall go forth and fight against those nations as when he fought in the day of battle."

He talks about the fact that there are going to be some geographical changes and a very great valley; a great fisher from east to west like the Red Sea deliverance. In fact,

the Lord Jesus may have been thinking about this when he talked in Mark 11 and verse 23 about the fact that people could by faith say to this mountain, "Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith." It may be that our Lord was thinking of this when he referred to the power of a person's faith.

It's a well-known fact, incidentally, that Palestine does exist over a great rift. It begins at Asia-Minor, goes all the way down into Ethiopia and Africa, and the lowest part of it is right there at the Dead Sea. Back in years past when Britain had authority over the Land of Palestine, British ships used to fly in sea planes and land on the Dead Sea and as they came down they frequently would say over the loud speaker to the people who were there, "We are now flying one thousand feet below sea level." Because it is thirteen hundred feet below sea level there and, in fact, the great rift there goes down as far as I think a bit over twenty-five hundred feet. So there is, strictly speaking, just looking at it from the standpoint of a person who knows the land, there is a great rift there known by those who study fishers and earthquakes. We read that the Lord shall come. He shall go forth and he shall fight against those nations. And then, in verse 5, "And the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." So amidst the tumult, amidst the flight, then the Lord Jesus comes.

Now this, I think, is the place where we are to put Zechariah chapter 12 and verse 4 through chapter 13 and verse 2. The passage that we looked at two weeks ago in which we have, "I will pour upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication." In other words, the efficacious grace that leads to the salvation of those who are left in the city, that outpouring of efficacious grace, takes place at this particular point. So the Lord shall come and then they shall see him and they shall mourn for him when they realize that two thousand years or so ago, or plus, however long this will be, we don't know, nineteen hundred and fifty years or so plus, they have crucified their own Messiah.

We notice, too, that it says, "and all the saints shall with thee." Now I would think that that's a reference not simply to the angels, but that's a reference to the Old Testament believers as well. And, in fact, all of the believers of New Testament times who have died and who have gone to be with the Lord. In other words, they shall accompany him back to the earth. So angels, the church, those shall all come with him to the earth in his great triumph. Then we read in verse 6, "The light shall not be clear nor dark.

Actually, the Hebrew text says, "There shall be no light. The precious ones shall contract themselves." The New American Standard Bible has, "There shall be no light, the luminaries will dwindle." The New International Version translating the Hebrew text, which is difficult to render here translates, "There shall be no light, no cold or frost." But it is a unique day in human history that's the point, the major point that Zechariah makes. It will be a unique day in human history. A kind of eerie, supernatural light for sunlight will be no more, but there will nevertheless be light. And then, verse 7, I think is the turning point of the chapter, "But it shall one day, which shall be known to the Lord. Not day nor night shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light." In other words, permanent light because the presence of the Lord is there.

Now the fact that this is a day which is not known to the Lord is very interesting, because remember, that's one of the things that Jesus said when he was here. About the Second Coming, "Why that's something that no man knows the time of it, the angels don't know it, not even the Son of man, but my Father which is in heaven." Now sometimes we forget that the Lord Jesus is still today a man. He is the glorified man; of course, if you know your theology you know he will always be a man. But he is the God-man and being the mediatorial man, he's still at the right hand of the Father doing his mediatorial work. He's accomplished his saving sacrifice and he is there praying in order that he may secure for his people all of the benefits that he has won by the shedding of his blood. And so, that is what he is doing. He is doing his unfinished work. He is praying, but he's still a man and he is still a mediator and, therefore, he is still subject to the Father's

direction. That's why even today, I don't know, the Scripture doesn't say this. I'm just going to say that the time of his second coming is something that is in the Father's hand.

Now when he comes, of course, he will come at a word from the Father and his coming will not be a coming in grace as his first coming, it will be a coming in judgment. As David said in the 2nd Psalm,

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed. (This sounds almost as if it's a theological comment on Zechariah 14 in the gathering of all the nations against Jerusalem). And they are saying, Against the Lord, against his anointed (that's the word for Messiah, against his Messiah) Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh (You don't have God in Scripture laughing very much, do you? But he does laugh in judgment): the LORD shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. (He goes on to say,) Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession."

So what we look forward to is the day when the Lord Jesus at the right hand of the Father asks of the Father, "May I not have the nations of the earth and the kingdoms of the earth?" And the Father will say, "This is the time" and the Lord Jesus will come and God will speak through the Messianic King in wrath at that time and that is what we have then here.

Now the rest of the chapter is a chapter which speaks of the blessings of the kingdom age. We'll read through a few of them now,

"And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one."

This is a reference to the fact that there is to be a kingdom of God upon the earth and our Lord will be King over that kingdom. We sometimes have people say that the New Testament does not contain any record of land promises and, therefore, we are not to think of land promises. I like to raise the question, well; first of all, what was the Bible of the early church? Well, the Bible of the early church was the Old Testament. They didn't have the New Testament. They had the Old Testament. That was the Scriptures for them. They were filled with promises of blessing involving the land.

Secondly, I'd like to point out that Peter in his second epistle in chapter 3 and verses 1 and 2 makes the point that those who listen to him should follow the teaching of the apostles and of the prophets. So they regarded those prophecies of the Old Testament as still being vital, valid, living prophecies. And then I'd like to point out this, some people that we should not believe anything from the Old Testament or referred to by the Old Testament unless it is repeated in the New Testament. I'd like to turn that around and say that we are to believe everything in the Old Testament unless it is specifically said to be no longer true by the New Testament such as the law.

For example, in the New Testament we are told specifically that Mosaic law as a law of code has been done away with and we are to follow that teaching. If we didn't have that, we might think we were still under law. But, when our Lord died, the veil of the temple was rent in twain and the apostles go on to point out that we are not under the Mosaic code anymore. We're responsible to fulfill the righteousness of the law as we walk by the spirit, but that's the way it's to be done by the power of the Lord God. So

when we read, "The Lord shall be king over all the earth" I take that to be he is to be King over all the earth.

There will be some transformation of things upon the earth. That's evident by the fact that we have this tremendous geographical transformation that takes place. Exactly what will take place, of course, I don't know, and I'm just skeptical enough to believe that there are very few people, if any, who do know precisely what's going to happen. I won't be so arrogant as to say there's no one who knows. You cannot prove a negative statement like that, but let's read on,

"All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses. And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited (people are going to live in Jerusalem). And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. (We have anticipations of that, of course, in the histories of men. We had one at Texas Stadium two weeks ago when rooters for the New Orleans Saints in over-time saw the game slip away from them and as you looked at them, you got an impression of flesh consuming away while they were standing upon their feet and their eyes consuming away in their holes, and their tongue consuming away in their mouth. Some of you, I think, are looking at me like I was, "He's really serious. I wonder what he's talking about."

[Laughter] Well, one of these days, I'm gonna go off my rocker and I hope you're all there [Laughter] and I hope you'll just lead me out with a hand and say, "Well, it was nice to have heard Dr. Johnson until today." [Laughter] But, it comes to all of us.) And it shall come to pass in that day (verse 13), that a great tumult from the LORD shall be among

them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the nations round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. (I wonder where Zechariah got this that the wealth of the nations was going to pour into the city of Jerusalem. Well, if you've read the Book of Isaiah and if you read the Book of Haggai, you know that these are things that are stated several times in those books.) And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague. And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. (In other words, there's gonna be a great destruction of people, but some of the nations will believe. In fact, we know from other passages in the word of God that there will be many people, and some from every tribe, kindred, tongue, and nation that shall come to faith in the Lord Jesus as the result of the salvation of Israel, as Paul puts it in Romans 11.) And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles."

And I've read the last two verses, for the sake of time; I won't read them again except to say this that what is represented here is a kind of ritual observance of the feast of tabernacles throughout that kingdom time.

Now you'll notice that he is not saying they're going back to serve and keep the Mosaic law. The feast of tabernacles was one of the feasts, but this is something voluntarily done. For remember, as the Apostle Paul's actions in the Book of Acts make

very plain, a believer in the present age may keep the law if he wishes. He's just not required to keep the law. The Apostle Paul may submit himself to the law for particular purpose. He said, "For those who are under law, he came to be under law: to those who were not under law as not under law" but that was for the purpose of winning them. The celebration of the feast of tabernacles is not the celebration of the feast of tabernacles because it is part of the Mosaic code. Nothing is said about circumcision, nothing is said about keeping the law here in this chapter, but the feast of tabernacles was the last of the seven feasts of Jehovah and it was designed to represent in festival form the kingdom age when the Messiah would be here. And the goal of the calling of Israel is holiness in life: public, private, domestic, and only the Messiah can bring that holiness.

Let me conclude by reminding you this, Zechariah name means "The Lord remembers." That is what this chapter sets forth. He remembers his promises. He will bring them to pass and we can be sure that when we believe the promises of the word of God, we shall see the fulfillment of them. If you're here tonight and you have never believed in our Lord Jesus Christ there is a wonderful promise for you, "For God so loved the world" not simply Jews. Not simply the narrow idea that the revelation of God is only for the nation Israel, "For God so loved the world (Jews and Gentiles) that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." And as God the Holy Spirit brings you to a trust in the Lord Jesus, you know the experience of eternal life. I'm not ever, I don't think, I do not ever believe that it is not a good thing in Believers Chapel to give the gospel in all of our meetings.

I received a letter from Canada just the other day and in Alberta, a church that I had spoken in about fifteen years ago with a series of meetings, asked me to come back for another series of meetings next year. And they said, "We want you to come back. We want you to preach the word of God and we want you to be sure at the end of your messages like you did fifteen years ago or whenever it was, give an appeal to respond to the gospel." So I appeal to you, if you're here tonight and you have never believed in our

Lord, salvation is in Christ and what he has done. And he's the Messianic King who is going to stand one day with his feet upon the mount of Olives again, overthrow the enemies of the kingdom of God, establish his kingdom upon the earth, save Israel and the Gentiles, and in the process, glorify the triune God. I hope you're ready for that day. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are thankful for these marvelous words. We know, Lord, there are things here and there in the Scriptures that are difficult for us, but the main lines of Scripture are plain and clear. Oh give us the faith to believe them and to live by them. We pray for each one present here tonight, minister to them in a personal way. May they know the presence of the Lord and may they also know the hope of his future coming again and his kingdom. And then, Lord, too, we would ask that Thou wilt guide this nation in these days of decision. May the decisions that are made next week be decisions that are pleasing to Thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.