



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Zechariah 14:1-21

“Jerusalem”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Today I hope, the Lord willing, to finish our series of studies in the prophecy of Zechariah. And next Sunday, hope to begin a series in which we study one of the outstanding Old Testament characters, the Prophet Elijah. But for the message today I want to read the entire chapter, Zechariah 14.

Now it's a little longer section than we usually read in this Scripture reading, but I think it will be profitable for us to consider this chapter in one Sunday. Beginning with the 1st verse and just for the sake of the context remember the prophet in the last six chapters of the Book of Zechariah is engaged in setting forth two burdens that were given him by God. One of the burdens covered chapters 9, 10 and 11. And the second burden, chapters 12, 13 and 14. And so we are at the conclusion of the last great message that he had. And since the message of this prophet, as the message of so many of the prophets, relates to the consummation of God's promises for Israel and through Israel the earth we have that kind of chapter here in chapter 14. We are looking at the consummation of the plans of God for this earth. Beginning with the 1st verse of the 14th chapter.

“Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of Thee. (That pronoun thy refers to Jerusalem). 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. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. (Most likely a reference to the fighting against Pharaoh and his hosts when God led them out of the land of Egypt). 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 by (Now I am inserting this word for the Hebrew text demands this preposition instead of the to). And ye shall flee by the valley of my mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal (That was a little village to the east of the city of Jerusalem): 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 Zechariah apparently looks up to God as he makes that statement. And that is why he changes the pronoun). And all the saints with Thee (that is Lord). And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: (If I may stop again for just a moment. It is most likely that that text should be rendered this way). And it shall come to pass in that day, that there shall not be light, the bright ones (that is their word for stars) the bright ones shall withdraw themselves. 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 it shall be in that day, that living waters shall forth (or go out) from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea (that is the Dead Sea), and half of them toward the hinder sea (That is, for the Jews, the Mediterranean. They looked eastward): 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. All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up (that is Jerusalem), 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. 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. And it shall come to pass in that day, 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 heathen (or nations) round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. 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. (Now it has sometimes been said that it would be impossible for every one to go up to Jerusalem to worship the king and to keep the feasts of tabernacles. And I think I would have to agree with that. This is a case, as we often have in Scripture, of representative mention of peoples. And the point of the text, almost all students believe, is that representatives from each of the nations shall go up. Now verse 17). 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 heathen 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. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, (this notation or this sign), 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 see the therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts."

[Message] May God bless this portion from his word. Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Our gracious God and heavenly Father, we thank Thee for this privilege of meeting together, of opening of word of God and considering again some of the great things that are contained within it. And we realize, Lord, as we look at the great utterances of the prophets that sometimes it is difficult for us to put ourselves in the position of those who receive these messages. But now as we look back upon the Old Testament Scriptures from the standpoint of the New Testament we rejoice in the way in which Thou hadst fulfilled the promises. And as we look toward the future, we thank Thee for the faithfulness which Thou hadst manifested in the past. For this assures us that Thou shall be faithful in the future.

And we ask, oh God, that as we meet and study together that the sense of all of that which Thou hadst done may remind us of what Thou art going to do in the future. And may, Lord, the hope that every Christian should have be burning brightly in the hearts of each one of us here. We thank Thee for each one present and for all that is represented in their lives. And we pray that through the ministry of the word our needs may be met.

Again, we ask Thy blessing upon this congregation. And we pray, oh God, that Thou wilt continue to lead and guide it in such a way that Thy will may be done. And we ask, oh God, that Thou wilt particularly guide with regard to the immediate future, the steps that we should take. We need Thy guidance. We cannot expect to succeed to do Thy will except Thou dost build a house. And so Lord, we look to Thee to undertake for

us and glorify thyself through us. Now Lord, we commit our meeting to Thee and we pray Thy blessing upon us as we listen to Thy voice through the word. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today, and our final message on the prophecy of Zechariah, is Jerusalem, Advent and Kingdom. The week that was, was the week of financial crisis, the devaluation of the pound. The nation that gave us the miniskirt has now given us the minipound. [Laughter] And I think the most humorous thing about the week is the fact that the poor Arabs lost again. As you know Nasser had quite a bit of money tied up in British pounds. And some of the Arab nations lost tremendous sums of money. Kuwait, according to an article that I read, lost two hundred sixty million dollars over the weekend. Nasser lost thirty-eight million dollars. The politicians especially lost. They lost a great deal of prestige. In fact, I think the only gainers are the boozers, who will discover perhaps that vat sixty-nine and Johnnie Walker may be fifty cents, a fifth cheaper than it was before unless the chicanery of commerce manages to swallow up that extra fourteen point three percent reduction in price.

The thing that interests me and the thing that I think that bears upon the message today is the wonderful way in which the statements of the politicians have made no sense. [Laughter] For example, Prime Minister Wilson said, "It is our unalterable determination to not devalue the pound." These statements were made all through the months. This one made as late as just this recent summer in New York City. And now L.B.J., of course, is saying that it is an unalterable commitment of the United States to be sure that the dollar remains the same. And so we are left again wondering just whether we can believe the men who govern our public life or not. And I think that most of us will probably agree with the judgement of many that in the final analysis it is the facts of the case that determines what happens and not the pronouncements of our politicians.

Now I know that some of you are wondering in the audience at why I am interested in pounds. Or why I have any information whatsoever about it. And I just want you to understand and know that I'm acquiring large holdings in pounds too, but of a different character [Laughter] than the financial ones.

Now what I'm saying is leading up to something that has to do particularly with Zechariah chapter 14. Some people find it very difficult to believe a chapter like Zechariah chapter 14. Here is a chapter in which we are presented with a gathering of nations from all over the world against the city of Jerusalem. The city of Jerusalem is about to be taken and we suddenly have from heaven the visit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Those who are in the city are delivered. The nations are defeated. And the chapter concludes with a glorious picture of the kingdom of God upon the earth. But at times the things that are said are so down to earth that we are even talking about pots and pans at the end of the chapter. Is it possible for us to believe something like this? Are not the pronouncements of the author of this prophecy the prophecy of Zechariah? Are they not pronouncements just like Harold Wilson's pronouncements? And Lyndon Baines Johnson's pronouncements? Or can we really believe the things that the prophets wrote?

Now, of course, they made great claims. They said that they were speaking in the name of the God who stretcheth forth the heavens and layeth the foundation of the earth and formeth the spirit of man within him? But when we look at Zechariah 14, is it really true that these things are going to transpire?

Now I think it is much safer for us to believe the word of God than it is to believe the word of our politicians or the Chancellors of the Exchequer, or the Secretary of the Treasury. And it is God who has stated that these things are going to come to pass. And he gave this burden to the Prophet Zechariah many hundreds of years ago. And this prophet looked into the future and he wrote of the final struggle over the city of

Jerusalem. He wrote of the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. And he wrote of the glorious consummation of the kingdom of God and the promises that God had given to Israel.

Now when we look at Zechariah 14, we notice that these three subjects are set forth very clearly. And so let's look first of all at the battle for Jerusalem as it is described by the prophet in the first two verses.

Now two weeks ago, or three weeks ago, when we were studying the 12th chapter, you will remember that we looked at the section in which the prophet gave us some of the details of this siege. He said for example in the 2nd verse of the 12th chapter, "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling (a goblet of staggering) unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem." And I said at that time apparently there is something in Jerusalem that the nations of the earth desire. And it is undoubtedly the riches that are to be found in that land, both materially and strategically, in the last days. And they want to possess the city of Jerusalem and the land of Judah and Palestine. And so the nations of the earth gather against that city because they hope to take the booty of strategy and also material investments.

And I said as we looked at this 12th chapter that when they take hold of the city of Jerusalem to drink her like you might pick up a cocktail to drink a cocktail, they're going to discover that Jerusalem is a Bloody Mary. That is, it is the kind of drink that does more damage to you than you expect. And, as a matter of fact, from the prophecy itself we discover that Jerusalem is going to be more than the nations of the earth can handle. He also spoke of the fact that Jerusalem was going to be a burdensome stone for all people. It's going to be the kind of stone that if you attempt to pick it up you will discover that you will do damage to yourself. And that you will not be able to handle it.

Now in the 14th chapter, as he begins this chapter, he points us to the fact that all the nations are going to be gathered against Jerusalem to battle.

Now this is a very difficult passage of Scripture to fathomize in spiritualizing exegesis. It is possible in certain sections of the Old Testament to understand the prophet to be speaking spiritually. But there are certain sections where it is impossible for us to take the text of Scripture in this way. And the spiritualizing or phantomizing method of exegesis is found no more wanting than it ever is right here. Because here it becomes absolutely impossible to understand this chapter if we do not understand it in the plain, simple, straightforward sense in which you ordinarily understand a writing of Scripture or a writing in general.

This week I was reading an exposition of Jeremiah chapter 32 by a well known Bible teacher. And he pointed out that the 42nd verse of the 32nd chapter of the prophecy of Jeremiah has often been read in a spiritual way.

Now this is the way the text reads. "For thus saith the LORD; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people (that is the Jews), so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them."

Now let me read it again. "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." And the exegete, or the interpreter, went on to say that he had just read an exposition of this passage in which it was taken in this way. "Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, the Jews, so will I bring upon them (that is the church of Jesus Christ) all the good that I have promised them."

Now I think that if we read that text honestly it's obvious that that cannot be the meaning of that text. In fact, he went on to say that he had just recently heard of a further explanation of that text, which went like this. "Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people (that is the Jews), so will I bring upon the Anglo-Saxons all the good that I have promised them."

When we come to Zechariah chapter 14 it is very, very important that we understand that this chapter is to be taken in the plain straightforward way in which the

prophet has written it. We are not to spiritualize the city of Jerusalem. We are not to spiritualize the people of Israel. We are not to spiritualize all nations. We are not to spiritualize the various other events of this chapter.

Now it is possible, of course, that amid the chapter we shall find figures of speech. And I think we surely shall. But there is a difference between finding figures of speech and human language. And so spiritualizing it or allegorizing it, whatever term is most appropriate, so that its ordinary straightforward sense is not given.

Now this chapter, I think, must be understood in a straightforward way. Amid the figures of speech the message is very plain. It has to do with the city of Jerusalem. It has to do with the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. It has to do with the kingdom of God upon the earth. And there are very good theological reasons why these things are things that the word of God sets forth plainly and straightforwardly and with great significance for us who are living today.

Some years ago the editor of one of our important Sunday school magazines, the Sunday School Times, Mr. Charles Trumbull was traveling in the land of Korea. And he was traveling there after the great revivals had swept that country in the earlier part of the century. And he was talking with some of the native leaders in the local churches and he himself was very much concerned about the second coming of Jesus Christ. And he asked one of the missionaries, “Do these Christians out here believe in the second coming of Jesus Christ?” And the missionary said, “Why, yes. They immediately, once they become Christians and begin to read their bibles, they immediately believe in the second coming of Jesus Christ.” It is only when the missionaries come out with new interpretations that they begin to doubt the plain sense of the passages of Scripture. So let's look at the chapter in a straightforward way.

Now there are some things that we must presuppose as we look at the scene in Zechariah 14. Some of you haven't been with us Sunday after Sunday.

Now you may count that a blessing, but we think you've lost something as a result of it. So I must, just briefly, remind you of the things that we must presuppose as we look at chapter 14. "And the nations gathered against the city of Jerusalem." We must remember that the Scripture set forth the fact that Israel shall be gathered into the land again in unbelief. That is the plain statement of the Old Testament Scriptures.

By the way, when Ben-Gurion announced the establishment of the state of Israel on May 14, 1948, over the radio, he first of all, before he made his announcement read Ezekiel chapter 37. And if you'll remember in Ezekiel chapter 37 we have the great prophecy of the dry bones, which Ezekiel sees in his prophetic vision coming to life. But there are stages in the coming of life. After he sees the bones filled with sinew, the text of Scripture states in about the 8th verse of Ezekiel 37, "But there is no breath in them." And then later on God gives them a new spirit. So it would appear from that chapter that there is a twofold stage in the return of Israel to the blessings promised to them. First, they shall return in unbelief to the land. And then ultimately they shall come to a personal faith in Jesus Christ.

Now we have looked at that in chapter 12, "When they look upon him whom they have pierced." But we must presuppose that Israel is back in the land.

Now today you cannot imagine how we used to expound this Scripture only twenty-five years ago when we looked at it and we said according to the word of God there will be a nation Israel in the land of Palestine. And now we can look back after almost twenty years and say we have had a nation in the land of Palestine for twenty years. The next thing that we must presuppose is the rise of a world ruler.

Now there are many passages in the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation, and also in Paul's writings such as 2 Thessalonians, which set forth the fact that a world ruler shall arise who shall succeed in uniting the nations of the earth spiritually under his own false religion and in other ways as well. We must also presuppose that this antichrist, this leader of the world, shall make a covenant with the Jews; he shall make a

covenant whereby there is restored in the land of Palestine the ancient worship, in measure at least. The temple is rebuilt and the worship is restored. Apparently, he desires certain, perhaps financial or again strategic gains from his covenant with the Jews. We also must presuppose that in the midst of the period known as the tribulation period that the covenant with the Jews is broken by this ruler. And he begins to persecute them. He wants to take by force the thing that lies before him as a gain, a booty.

Then there comes The Great Tribulation. It is the time of Jacob's trouble. Jeremiah says there has never been a day like it. As our text here, we read of a time when there's never been a day like it. Jeremiah says, "It's the time of Jacob's trouble, yet he shall be saved out from it." We must presuppose, as we look at all of the Old Testament Scriptures, that the kings of the earth struggle for power, that there are campaigns that involve this city and this land. It is, in fact, apparently these strategic locale of the time of the future.

But at one point the antichrist shall succeed in uniting the kings of the earth and they shall come in their final great expression of their antipathy to God to surround the city of Jerusalem to take it. There shall be a great collision of powers about that city. And furthermore, the text of Scriptures states that they're going to war against that city and surprisingly they are going to war against the Lamb of God. In the Book of Revelation, the 17th chapter in the 12th through the 14th verses, John writes of this particular time. And in chapter 17 verse 12 through verse 14 this is what we read.

"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. (Now the beast is the term for this antichrist). These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. (If there is one way in which we can unite the foes of our Lord Jesus it is by uniting them in their common antipathy to the Lord Jesus. And that is what happens

here). These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them."

Now what a tremendous picture that is. And what a vivid picture it is as you read it. Here is the Lamb of God; mind you he is a lamb. That is the figure of speech used to describe our Lord Jesus. The reason why is obvious. He is the sacrifice for sins. He is also the gentle person. He is the person who is known for his humility and his loneliness. And so the lonely animal of sacrifice is a vivid picture of our Lord Jesus.

Now over against the Lord Jesus there is the great wild beast which has the horns described in the 13th and 17th chapters of the prophecy of Revelation. Who is going to win a battle like that? Great wild beast against a lamb. Why, it's obvious that the beast should win a battle like that, but yet the text states, "And the Lamb shall overcome them." Why, the reason of course that the lamb shall overcome them is because the lamb is the Lamb of God. He is God himself. He is the son of God. And it is a foregone conclusion that the Lamb of God shall overcome all of the foes of God. Because he is God. And yet the surprising thing is that man shall actually make an attempt to overthrow God.

Now that is one of the most startling things in all of the word of God to me. If we ever have any evidence in the word of God that man is totally and utterly depraved. Not that there is no good in man. But that man is totally depraved in all of his motivations that everything that he does is finally touched by sin. We have it there. For in the final analysis he shall raise his hand up against God himself and seek to wrest the throne of the universe from him.

There was a man who was an Anglican minister who died just a few years ago. His name was D.R. Davies. He has written some very significant books. And they are very significant because Mr. Davies was an intellectual communist, a socialist for a longtime, a man of great intelligence. But as a result of the study of the facts of human life and conditions in his own land, he came finally to a faith in Jesus Christ and to a

conviction of the essential wrongness of the socialist cause. And he has written some books about the transformation that took place in his life.

Now he did not become a fundamentalist, such as some of you in the audience. But he became a believer in the essential truthfulness of the word of God and the picture that it presents of man, of history and of redemption. In one of his books he says, “I have heard more than one churchman say that the one thing he wouldn’t accept in the general confession (that is of the Anglican church) was its affirmation that there is no health in us. As the reader will see that is the part which I believe with the utmost conviction. I am all for clouding the secularized mind hard. The general confession is a magnificent sledgehammer. There is no health in us.” And I thoroughly believe that. I believe that when we look at the word of God and see the facts of holy Scripture it becomes very evident that the Bible has a true picture of human nature.

Professor Schlesinger wrote a few years ago, “There seems no inherent obstacle to the gradual advance of socialism in the United States through a series of New Deals.” “Official liberalism was the product of the enlightenment, cross-fertilized with such things as science, bourgeois complacency, and a belief in progress. It dispensed with the absurd Christian myth of sin and damnation and believed that what shortcomings man might have were to be redeemed, not by Jesus on the cross, but by the benevolent unfolding of history. Tolerance, free inquiry, and technology, operating in the framework of human perfectibility, (shades of [unintelligible]), would in the end create a heaven on earth, a goal accounted much more sensible and wholesome than a heaven in heaven.” Someone has commented we’ve had a series of new deals, fair deals, fast deals and raw deals. And we surely are moving into socialism as Arthur Schlesinger predicted. But we have not and will not be able to dispense with what he calls “the absurd Christian myths of sin and damnation.” Neither shall we ever be cleansed and forgiven of our sins and mistakes by “the benevolent unfolding of history.” The facts of Scripture and the facts of human history lead us to believe that a gathering of the nations against the city of Jerusalem is

imminently believable. In fact, it almost seems as if we can see the beginnings of these things before our eyes today.

Now Zechariah describes this time. He describes the time when the nations gather and they are gathered against that city to take it. And he says in the 2nd verse of his prophecy,

"And the houses shall be rifled, and the women ravished (or to put it in the term in which we see in our newspapers so frequently today, the women shall be raped); and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city."

In other words, apparently as the nations gather against the city of Jerusalem and they attack that city, they are well on their way to taking that city. They come into the city as armies do typically and they plunder the material things, the city. And its houses, its property. And then they attack the helpless. And, of course, the helpless are the women. I might say, men, they are helpless only in war. But they are helpless during times of war. And so they are singled out. This, by the way, is one of the little features of this narrative that gives you the sense of reality. The prophet is seeing something that surely is true to human nature. And so as the invaders come into the city about half of the city is taken and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. And so at this juncture it appears as if the situation is utterly hopeless.

And Zechariah, writing against the background of the Old Testament, writes of the day when God took the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt and he brought them right out to the Red Sea. And you'll remember that when they reach the Red Sea by that time Pharaoh had discovered what had happened and he had said, "We're going to pursue those Israelites." And so the six hundred chariots plus all of the chariots of war began to raise out after the children of Israel. And when they reach the Red Sea, you'll

remember the children of Israel looked back and they saw the Egyptians coming. And what do you think they said to Moses? They said Moses, "We're so glad to have you as a leader. We know you'll take care of the situation. We'll sit down and have a picnic here." No, they did just as human beings do. They said, "It's better to be red than dead. Moses, why did you take us out from Egypt? We should have stayed there all along. It's much better to be in Egypt than it is to be right here." And you'll remember that when the Egyptians finally arrived God kept the Egyptians from the Israelites and then he opened up the Red Sea and the children of Israel were able to go through it by the miraculous hand of God because God spoke to Moses and said to Moses, "Moses, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." And those waters parted and the children of Israel went down between the walls of the waters and escaped to the other side. And when Pharaoh and his chariots attempted to follow, they discovered that it was very difficult to make way against the water that was over their head. And all were submerged in the waters of that sea, just as the Aggies shall be when the Crimson Tide engulfs them on January 1, 1968. [Laughter]

Now this was, I say, a hopeless situation. And it was so hopeless that the only way that they could – I said that by the way because there are half a dozen Aggies in the audience and I don't know of any rooters for the Crimson Tide except one standing right here. [Laughter]

Now it was absolutely hopeless. And so now in the next few verses Zechariah recounts and describes the blessed event, the Advent of the Lord Jesus which shall mean the ultimate victory of those who are the believers in him.

Now you know sometime ago I was reading in the Book of Acts and preparing a message on the first chapter. And you'll remember I read this to you when I was getting the series of the great events in the life of Christ. And I took down from my library The Interpreter's Bible.

Now *The Interpreter's Bible* I do not recommend entirely. In fact, there are many parts of it that to my mind are poisonous. Then there are some parts of it that are quite good. Well, in this chapter I took down *The Interpreter's Bible* to read what the commentator had to say on the promise in Acts chapter 1 in which the text of Scripture says that, "Behold, this same Jesus who was taken up from you from the Mount of Olives, shall return in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." And this is what my amazed eyes read. 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 quiet. 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.

Now this is very sweet. And I think there's a lot of truth to this. Those therefore who have watched the sky for Jesus have been disappointed. And so will they always be. He will never come 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 help. He will come in the closed rooms of our secret lives to quiet our hurried 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.

Now this was the reverend Theodore Ferris, director of Trinity Church, Copley Square in Boston, a Protestant Episcopal church. He said, "They will never, Jesus will never come back in the way in which he has gone." And yet the plain statement of holy Scripture is, "This same Jesus who was taken up from you shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." In other words, as you have seen him go up bodily, he shall come bodily. As you have seen him – that is he has gone into heaven visibly –

so he shall come again visibly. As he, himself, personally the Lamb of God has ascended into heaven, so will he come personally again.

Now here we have that picture. We have the picture of the Lamb of God coming again. And furthermore, he comes to the Mount of Olives. He comes personally. He comes visibly. And he comes bodily. So we read in the 3rd verse, “Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations.” I think that probably at the destruction of the Egyptians in the sea we have the supreme illustration in all of the word of God in which there can be no possible human insolence in claiming glory from God. I do not think that when the children of Israel reached the other side there was a single man who said, “We got here because of what we are.” I think that every one of them, as they sang that great hymn of deliverance in the 15th chapter and spoke about the Lord as a man of war who has delivered them from the Egyptians, they all glorified God. There was no possibility of human insolence, human braggadocio, human pride entering. For it was clearly seen to be a work of God. And so in this day when there is no hope for the inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem the Lord shall go forth and fight against those nations as when he fought in the day of battle against Pharaoh. And no one will be taking the glory from God.

I think of the Psalmist who said, “Put them in fear Lord. Put them in fear: that they may know that they are but men.” And that is what’s going to happen. They’re going to discover that they are just men. And even though they may be mighty men in the eyes of the world, they are just men. And God is going to make his point. And there is not going to be one of the Israelites coming forward and saying, “We did it.” Because they’re all going to be saying, “God did it.” And they shall know it too. And then the 4th verse says, “And he shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives.” Yes, “This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem.”

Did you know that geologists have pointed out that the great geological structure of the east is characterized by a tremendous fissure that begins up in Asia Minor and goes

all the way down to Africa, four thousand miles long? Do you know where the greatest or where the deepest part of that fissure is? Well, the deepest part is right by Jerusalem in the Dead Sea.

Aviators, as they flew over the Dead Sea, as they got down there they used to announce through the public address system, "Ladies and gentleman, you'll be interested in knowing that we're now flying one thousand feet below sea level." Then they went on to explain the Dead Sea is thirteen hundred feet below sea level. That is, well geologists call it, the Great Rift Valley. It is there in that acrid witch's brew, as someone has said, the Dead Sea. We have the hold, the bottom of the hole, in this great fault.

Now it's very easy to see then how an earthquake may occur at the city of Jerusalem and great topographical changes take place in the land. It's scientific. Just look it up for yourself. God has prepared for this. And so, "When the Lord Jesus Christ stands upon the mount of Olives, the mount of Olives which is to the east of Jerusalem, is going to cleave in its midst. Part of it is going to move north and part south. And a valley is going to be opened up from the east to the west." And those who are beleaguered in the city are going to race into that valley created by God to escape the enemies. And as they escape to the east, escaping the enemies, their startled eyes look up to the top of the Mount of Olives and there they see the Lord whom they have pierced. And at that day, as Zechariah stated in the 12th chapter, "They shall begin to mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son." You see, "The Lord, my God, shall come," Zechariah says, "And all the saints with thee." And so amidst the battle and the tumult and amidst the desire to flee through the escape that God has given, they discover that the Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God whom they have slain, has now set his feet upon the Mount of Olives. And furthermore, that all of the saints are with him.

You know it's going to be a wonderful day. As far as I can tell from Scripture, I'm going to set my feet on the Mount of Olives one day too, with the Lord. And not only that, but all there whom have put their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus. For as I

understand this passage, "And all the saints or all the holy ones." It is not a reference only to the angelic hosts that are referenced also to the believers for the Apostle Paul seems to argue from this passage in one of his epistles that, "We shall be magnified when the Lord is magnified before the earth." And so I fully anticipate standing up on the Mount of Olives. And I'm going to look around. And there are going to be some of the wonderful friends I have known. I know that when I reach that mountain one of the first things I'm going to do is to walk up to Donald Grey Barnhouse and say, "Thank you, Donald, for leading me to the Lord Jesus." And I think there is going to be a lot of rejoicing among Christians.

Last week I read the story of John Broadus, one of the great southern baptist scholars. He grew up in just a little town. And he had a friend. His friend's name was Sandy Jones. And Mr. Broadus was converted when he was just a child in a Baptist church. And immediately after his conversion he went up to Sandy and he asked Sandy if he wouldn't put his trust in Christ. Well, Sandy did ultimately put his trust in Christ just a few days later. And when he did he was just a big awkward red haired boy. He walked over to John Broadus and he said as he held out his hand, "Thank you, John. Thank you, John." And Mr. Broadus used to say that every time he went back to his home community he would go over to the church and now this man was a farmer and red haired and awkward he would come up to John he would say, "Howdy, John. Thank you, John. Thank you, John. I never forget, John." And Mr. Broadus, when he lay dying said that one of the things he wanted to do when he got to heaven first, after he had greeted the Lord Jesus, was to see Sandy Jones because he said he knew that when he saw him that he was going to come up to him and say again, "Thank you, John. Thank you, John." And it's going to be a wonderful day when we come from heaven and we stand upon the Mount of Olives with the Lord Jesus and we see for our own eyes the conversion, the national conversion, in which a nation is born again in a day.

Now Zechariah writes of that. He speaks about the fact that there shall be this great valley. And finally in the 6th verse he states, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark or that there shall not be light, the bright ones, the stars shall withdraw themselves." I think the reason for this is that when the Lord Jesus Christ comes and this earthquake takes place, as we read elsewhere in the word of God, he himself becomes the light. And even the stars of heaven in which there has been some great changes they're recede because the light of the Lamb of God is the light of that city and of that time.

And now lets move on. And just in the final few moments I want to say a few words about this great picture of the kingdom. Since we've talked a lot about the kingdom, I don't think it's necessary to go into great detail. Let's just notice one or two things as we close. The 8th verse says, "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."

Now the living waters apparently are also designed to be symbolic too of the great redemption that has come through the water of the word of God. And so as the waters go forth from the city of Jerusalem to the Dead Sea and also out to the Mediterranean, Jerusalem having become by this great climatic change something of a seaport, we're going to see a beautiful picture of purification because these living waters shall purify the acrid waters of the Dead Sea. And the purity of them is a token of the fact that it is through God that we have the purification that means our eternal salvation.

We also read in the 9th verse, "And the LORD shall be king over all the earth." All the Old Testament promises are fulfilled in the rule of the one who is greater than David. The Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come," finds its answer right here. Congregations have recited this down through the centuries often not really understanding what it meant. But this is the time of the fulfillment of that great petition, "Thy kingdom come." And the text says, "In that day there shall be one Lord and his name one." The gods of Buddhism are

gone. The gods of Taoism are gone. The gods of Muhammadanism and Unitarianism, they're all gone. There is just one God and that one God is the father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In the remainder of the chapter, against the background of the feast of tabernacles, Zechariah tells us that of the nations who too respond to the gospel with the Jews there shall be a great celebration at the end of the year of the feast of tabernacles every year.

Now the feast of tabernacles was a most interesting feast. It was in this feast that some of the great features of Israel's history were celebrated. For example, if I may just take a couple of minutes to describe the feast because it's the background of the remainder of this section. On the great day of the feast of tabernacles, which was the last of Israel's feasts and designed to represent their happiness over the gathering in of the harvest, there were several ceremonies that were very meaningful. One of them was this. Every day during the seven days of the feast, the priest would take a group of people with golden goblets, or goblet or pitcher, and he would lead a procession down to the Pool of Siloam, he would take the pitcher and he would dip the pitcher in the water and he would bring it back to the temple area and he would pour it out into one of the tubes by the side of the alter.

Now the feast of tabernacles celebrated God's care for Israel during the wilderness and how he brought them into the land alternate. But it also looked forward to the consummation of the promises of the kingdom. And so it had a backward, or a retrospective view. And it had also a prospective view.

Now the pouring out of the water was designed to represent the blessings that God had given Israel during their time in the wilderness journey.

Now it was at this moment that the Lord Jesus stood up in the feast, in John chapter 7. And as they poured out the water in token of the fact of what God gave Israel in the past, and also as a token of the fact that in the future he would bring them into their kingdom promises and give them the Holy Spirit. Jesus stood up in the 7th of John,

the account is given, and he said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."
And in the 38th verse, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" And so you can sense the drama of the situation as the priests come back with the singing and the praise and the great gathering of the people in the temple area and the pitcher, the golden pitcher, is poured out and the Israelites are rejoicing over what God has done in the past and what he shall do in the future, the Lord Jesus stands up and he cries out, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. I am the one of whom this ceremony speaks. I am the one who possess the living water." It was a tremendous claim to be the God who led Israel through the land of the wilderness and also the God who brought them into the promised land and who would ultimately bring them into the possession of all of the promises that make Israel the head of the nations again; the Messianic kingdom of our Lord. But not only that. Also, at the feast of tabernacles, it was customary at night to light four huge candelabra.

Now these four candelabra were also lighted amidst a great deal of singing and dancing. The candelabra were designed to represent the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire, whereby God had led Israel through the wilderness. And it was apparently at that time that Jesus stood up in the 8th of John and said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." In other words, finally Zechariah says,

"The fulfillment of the feast of tabernacles shall take place. All of the Messianic promises shall be fulfilled in the Messiah himself. And he shall be the light of the world. Arise, oh Israel or the nations, for the light of Israel has shown upon Thee. And through the Messiah Israel shall be the light of the earth."

The chapter concludes with holiness unto the Lord. This is the goal of the calling of the nation Israel. Holiness in life: public, private, domestic. Only the Messiah can bring this holiness in. It is God's great aim in human history.

As we conclude Zechariah, let me remind you of this. The prophet's name means "the Lord remembers." That, I think, is really the theme of the book. For the whole point of the prophecy of Zechariah is this. The Lord remembers the promises that he has made to Israel. "Can a mother forget her sucking child that she has nourished up? Yea, they can forget, but I will not forget Thee," Jehovah has said.

And may I remind you too in this audience today that this God who does not forget his promises, who will not announce as Prime Minister Wilson, "We will by no means devalue the pound." And then a few months later say, "We're now attacking our problems at their roots. We're going to devalue the pound." He is not like a politician. When he speaks it is done. And he has said to us, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And the God who has given us the promises in the word of God shall fulfill all of them. And if you put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ who died for you, you can be sure that you have everlasting life. And you can look forward to the consummation of all of the promises of the word of God because he is faithful to the promises that he makes. And it's so wonderful to know this in our daily life too because we need the promises day by day, as well as for the beginning of our life. And so may God speak to us today through the faithfulness of the promises of God. Help us to remember that the Lord remembers. He never forgets. And therefore we can commit ourselves to him with confidence, with assurance and also with thanksgiving. May we stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for the wonderful promises of the prophecy of Zechariah. We look forward, Lord, to the consummation of them. We pray

that we may read the word in straightforward fashion and make it a part of our lives and come to know Thee, as Thou hadst revealed thyself. We thank Thee for the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. We thank Thee for the Lord who shall be king over all the earth one day. And now may grace, mercy and peace be in abide with all who know him in sincerity. For Jesus' sake. Amen.