

Lesson 21

Chapter 14

Perhaps we should begin our study of Chapter 14 the same way that Martin Luther began his commentary on this chapter: “In this chapter I surrender, for I am not certain of what the prophet treats.” But we don’t need to surrender if we proceed carefully, keep the time frame in mind, keep the context in mind, and apply our interpretative guidelines! Let’s look now at what some say is the single most difficult chapter in the entire Bible — Zechariah 14! (I personally would hand that award to Daniel 9, but Zechariah 14 is certainly in the running!)

1 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. 2 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. 3 Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

Our first two questions are *what* and *when*? *What* is the Jerusalem under consideration here (physical or spiritual or perhaps both), and *when* would these events occur (first century, the end of the world, or some other time)?

As for which Jerusalem this is, we are immediately faced with a problem in these first three verses. If we just looked at verse 2, we would think we were looking at *physical* Jerusalem — “For I will gather all nations **against Jerusalem** to battle.” But if we just looked at verse 3, we would think we were looking at *spiritual* Jerusalem — “Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight **against those nations**.”

Why is God gathering nations in verse 2 and then fighting against those same nations in verse 3? It’s questions like that that cause Chapter 14 to be considered so difficult.

But is this question really all that difficult? Haven’t we already seen and studied in this book the very thing that is being described here? Didn’t God gather Rome (which, at that time, represented and included many of the nations of this world) to come in judgment against Jerusalem? And didn’t God later fight against Rome, both as punishment for what Rome had done to Jerusalem and for what Rome was doing to the church?

I think the first three verses of Chapter 14 are simply a summary of what we have already seen in the prior chapters.

But we will see an important difference as we continue. These verses will describe these events from the perspective of God’s *faithful* people rather than from the perspective of the *unfaithful* people. The people in Chapter 14 will see God fighting *for* them rather than *against* them. They will see a way of *escape* rather than a way of *death*. They will see what things will be like for them *after* the city is destroyed.

If that is all true, then it answers our question about the time frame. We are still in the all-important first century, where we have been for quite some time in this book.

Everything we have seen in these closing chapters has been focused on the first century. That was when the Messiah came. That was when the eternal kingdom was established.

That was when the Messiah was rejected by many he came to save, and that was when those who rejected Christ were judged as their city and their temple were destroyed by the Romans. That was also when Rome sought to destroy the church, but failed.

And how did Chapter 13 end? Chapter 13 ended with a trial by fire experienced by God's people, which occurred in the first century. We should not be surprised if Chapter 14 expands on the theme we saw in the closing verses of Chapter 13.

But most commentaries say that Chapter 14 is describing the end of the world. Are they wrong? Yes, I think they are wrong. And here is the main reason I think they are wrong — they all say that Chapter 14 is describing the great battle that will occur at the end of the world. But do you know what? **There will be no great battle at the end of the world.**

We are **not** heading toward some cataclysmic battle between good and evil as so many proclaim today. There is nothing in the New Testament to support that notion. And remember one of our guidelines for these difficult chapters — if we think we see in these chapters something that is not more fully revealed in the New Testament, then our view of these chapters is almost certainly wrong.

What does the New Testament say about the end of the world?

- The trumpet shall sound at an unexpected time determined by God. (1 Corinthians 15:52, Mark 13:32, Matthew 24:44, 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3)
- Jesus will descend from heaven with a shout. (1 Thessalonians 4:16)
- Jesus will bring the spirits of the faithful dead with him. (1 Thessalonians 3:13, 4:14)
- The bodies of the dead will be raised, with the dead in Christ rising first. (John 5:28-29, Acts 24:15, 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 1 Corinthians 15:52)
- All will stand before the judgment seat of Christ to bow their knee and be judged, with some receiving eternal life and the others receiving indignation and wrath. (2 Corinthians 5:10, Romans 2:6-8, Hebrews 9:27)
- Those righteous who are alive will not sleep but will be changed and will meet Christ in the air to join those righteous who were raised, and so shall we ever be with Jesus. (1 Corinthians 15:51, 1 Thessalonians 4:17)
- The kingdom will be delivered to God. (1 Corinthians 15:24)
- The earth will be destroyed. (2 Peter 3:10)

Where in that list is a great cataclysmic battle between good and evil? Where in that list do we find the innumerable forces of the Anti-Christ marching into Palestine? Where in that list do we see atomic bombs dropped on the Holy Land? Where in that list do we see an earthly kingdom located in Jerusalem led by Christ for 1000 years? **Nowhere! None of that is in the Bible.**

Why do so many today teach otherwise? Because they don't know the word of God. Because they haven't taken the time to rightly divide and understand the word of God. Because they have seen "The Omen" more times than they have read the book of Revelation. Because they read books written by authors more interested in having a bestseller than in accurately teaching the word of God. Because they listen to peddlers who sell

their false prophecies to a gullible public on the Internet and late night TV. (2 Corinthians 2:17)

The Bible tells us what will happen at the end of the world, and “giant cataclysmic battle between good and evil” is not on the list! All that evil people will do on that last great day is rise from their graves, bend their knees to Christ, receive indignation and wrath at their judgment, and then watch as their world is burned up by fire. They will not have an opportunity to wage war against God. The battle was won at the cross! That is what the Bible teaches about the end of the world.

So, with that in mind, let’s back up and look more closely at the first three verses.

Verse 1: Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

“Thy spoil” — whose spoil? The end of Chapter 13 was describing the people of God — is it *their* spoil? I don’t think so. The word “Behold” here starts a new section, and the word “thy” is explained in verse 2, which begins with the word “for,” suggesting that verse 2 is there to explain verse 1. This spoil is the spoil of those in Jerusalem, which will be divided in the midst of them. Verse 1 says that this day is coming, and it did come in AD 70 when Jerusalem was besieged and destroyed by Rome.

Verse 2: 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.

Verse 2 is describing the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. Here is how Jesus described those same events.

***Matthew 24:21** — For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

That was the day of the Lord in verse 1 that was coming. Many people were killed, and many others were led away as captives to take part in the triumphal procession in Rome celebrating the destruction of their city.

What does that last phrase mean? “The residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.” It is a difficult phrase, but I think it is best explained by the verses that follow. The word “residue” could be translated as “remnant,” a word we have seen before. This group of people not cut off from the city is the group of people that escaped the destruction of the city. They are the ones who heeded the warnings of Christ in Matthew 24 and who escaped the doomed city in time.

If half are taken captive and a remnant escapes, what about the others? They are killed. Although their deaths are not mentioned explicitly here, their deaths are *implied* by the phrase “the city shall be taken.” To take a city almost always involved the deaths of large numbers of its inhabitants, so that part would have been understood. The verse then explains that not all were killed — some were taken captive and some escaped.

Verse 3: Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

What happens after the city was destroyed? We already know the answer to that. Jesus came in judgment against Rome, and the book of Revelation describes that conflict. Does Revelation show Jesus going forth to fight Rome? I’ll say!

Revelation 19:11-16 — *And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*

That is what verse 3 is describing.

4 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. 5 And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: 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.

Verses 4 and 5 describe the faithful people of God who heeded the warnings of Christ in Matthew 24 and escaped Jerusalem before the city was destroyed. Before we look at the text of these two verses, let's review what Jesus said about that escape and review what happened when that escape actually occurred.

First, what did Jesus say about that escape?

Matthew 24:15-22 — *When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: 21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*

The parallel passage in Luke 21 provides some additional details.

Luke 21:20-21 — *And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.*

So what warning signs did Jesus tell his followers to look for? Two things: (1) The abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, and (2) Jerusalem surrounded by armies.

To what historical events do these two warning signs apply? We have already talked about the second one — Jerusalem compassed with armies — so let's start with that one first.

Jerusalem was encompassed by Roman armies twice in this time period — first by Cestius Gallus in AD 66, and then a few years later by Vespasian and Titus. If Jesus' followers had waited for the second Roman army, they would have waited too long. There was no window of escape open at that time. But, as we said earlier, Cestius Gallus surrounded Jerusalem but then inexplicably ordered a retreat. I think Gallus' army was the sign that Jesus told his followers to watch for, and the time period after Gallus' retreat was their window of escape.

But does that present a problem with the other sign — the abomination of desolation? Yes, but it's a problem we can solve.

First, what is the abomination of desolation? It is a horrible desecration of the temple. We studied that phrase in our study of Daniel, and we saw that Daniel included two different prophecies about an abomination of desolation.

First, Daniel foretold an abomination of desolation that occurred during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, during the Greek rule of Palestine between the Testaments. That desecration was followed by a restoration and purification of the temple, which gave rise to the celebration of Hanukkah still observed today.

Second, Daniel foretold another abomination of desolation that would occur in the first century. It is that second desecration foretold by Daniel that we are seeing here, and it is that second desecration that Jesus was describing in Matthew 24:15, where he referred to Daniel by name. The big difference is that this second desecration of the temple would *not* be followed by restoration or a purification as was the first desecration. Instead, this second desecration would be final.

So what is the problem? The problem is that the abomination of desolation is usually identified with the destruction of the temple in AD 70. But if the people had waited for that sign, it would have been too late for them to escape.

The solution to that problem is to recognize that the abomination of desolation was more of a *process* than a singular event. The destruction of AD 70 marked the *end* of that process.

So what marked the *beginning* of the abomination of desolation? Remember the historical review we had earlier about the Jewish civil wars. What was the focus of their fighting? **The temple.** One group of zealots occupied the inner court, and another group of zealots occupied the outer courts — and those two groups did not start working together until Titus was breathing down their necks.

Some might think that the zealots would never desecrate the temple, but that view is wrong. The zealots were not zealous for the law; they were zealous in their hatred of Rome. Here is how Josephus described the Zealots at this time:

As for the dead bodies of the people, their relatives carried them out to their own houses; but when any of the zealots were wounded, he went up into the

temple, and **defiled that sacred floor** with his blood, insomuch that one may say it was their blood alone that **polluted our sanctuary**. [War of the Jews, IV.iii.1]

These men [the Zealots], therefore, trampled upon all the laws of men, and **laughed at the laws of God**; and for the oracles of the prophets, they ridiculed them as the tricks of jugglers; yet did these prophets foretell many things concerning the rewards of virtue, and punishments of vice, which when these zealots violated, they occasioned the fulfilling of those very prophecies belonging to their own country; for there was a certain ancient oracle of those men, that the city should then be taken and the sanctuary burnt, by right of war, when a sedition should invade the Jews, **and their own hand should pollute the temple of God**. Now while these zealots did not quite disbelieve these predictions, they made themselves the instruments of their accomplishment. [War of the Jews, IV.vi.3]

Josephus tells us that the zealots polluted the temple. The occupation of the temple by the Zealots was the *beginning* of the abomination of desolation; the destruction of the temple by the Romans in AD 70 was the *end*. If the people were going to use that abomination of desolation as a warning sign, they would need to look for its *beginning*, not for its *end*.

Does the timing work? Yes. Cestius Gallus arrived in AD 66, and the fighting among the zealots in the temple began the very next year, in AD 67. Those two events were the warning signs that Jesus told his followers to look for — Jerusalem encompassed by an army, and a public desecration of the temple. When Gallus retreated, the window of escape was open.

What were Jesus' followers supposed to do when they saw those things? In a word, **run!** They were to flee the city.

But that command to flee raises another potential problem. Why were they commanded to leave so quickly? It took another year or more before the Romans returned and once again encircled the city. Couldn't they take their time in escaping?

Two answers. First, they were to quickly flee because Jesus had told them to quickly flee (and do we really need another reason when that is the first reason?). Second, they were to quickly flee because of the horrors they would face if they stayed.

Here is how Josephus describes what happened to those who stayed behind in the city:

"Then did the famine widen its progress, and devoured the people by whole houses and families; the upper rooms were full of women and children that were dying of famine; and the lanes of the city were full of the dead bodies of the aged; the children also and the young men wandered about the market places like shadows, all swelled with famine, and fell down dead wheresoever their misery seized them. . . . Nor was there any lamentation made under these calamities, nor were heard any mournful complaints; but the famine confounded all natural passions; for those who were just going to die looked upon those who were gone to their rest before them with dry eyes and open mouths. A deep silence, also, and a kind of deadly night had seized upon the city. . . . And every one of them died with their eyes fixed upon the Temple." [Josephus, The Jewish Wars, 5:12:3]

“When the Romans were come to the houses to plunder them, they found in them entire families of dead men, and the upper rooms full of dead corpses . . . They then stood on a horror of this sight, and went out without touching anything.” [6:8:5]

Josephus tells us that 97,000 were taken captive and enslaved, and 1,100,000 died. That is why Jesus told his followers to drop everything and run when they saw the warning signs. And Jesus opened a door of escape for them by removing the Roman forces for a short time.

That is what Jesus said in Matthew 24:22 — “And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” The Roman siege was shortened from what it might have otherwise been when Gallus Cestius retreated. It was during that time that the elect were able to escape.

Now, let’s go back to the text of verses 4 and 5 to see how Zechariah describes these same events.

Verse 4: 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.

Verse 4 uses vivid apocalyptic language to describe the great escape route created by Jesus to allow his people to escape the doomed city. Jesus splits a mountain in half to create a valley through which his people can flee.

Did Jesus really split a great mountain in half to create a valley of escape? Absolutely! He split the Romans forces between the armies of Gallus and the armies of Vespasian, and in between his people were given an opportunity to flee the city.

How do we know this language is apocalyptic and not literal? For starters, there is no statement anywhere in the New Testament saying that Jesus will ever set foot on this earth again, and in fact there is an opposite indication in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. If Jesus were going to come back to this earth and walk around, I don’t think that Zechariah 14 is the only place we would be reading about it in the Bible. There is nothing in the New Testament about the end of the world that describes Jesus splitting mountains in half.

Second, any time you see mountains being split in half you should be on the lookout for apocalyptic language. Mountains frequently appear in such figurative images. Mountains are mentioned, for example, seven times in Revelation, five times in Daniel, and 43 times in Ezekiel. We even see them in Jesus’ warning instructions — “Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.” (Matthew 24:16)

In fact, that particular warning from Jesus is almost identical to the beginning of verse 5, which is confirmation that we are on the right track here.

Verse 5: And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: 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.

Verse 5 looks like it was lifted straight out of Matthew 24, which tells us that Jesus almost certainly was referring back to this prophecy from Zechariah when he gave his prophecy in Matthew 24.

Verse 5 says that the people will flee to the valley of the mountains. Matthew 24:16 says, "Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains."

Verse 5 says that the people will flee quickly, as they fled from before an earthquake. Matthew 24:17-20 says, "Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes."

Verse 5 says that the Lord shall come, and all the saints with thee. Matthew 24:30-31 says, "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

But that's the end of the world, right? Wrong! We have already talked about that. Matthew 24:34 firmly places the fulfillment of those prophecies in the first century: "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." And they were fulfilled when the Romans marched on Jerusalem and the people inside the city turned against each other.

Verses 4 and 5 are describing the same events as Matthew 24:4-34, and they are doing so using the same vivid apocalyptic language that Jesus used in Matthew 24.

That vivid description continues in verses 6 and 7.

6 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: 7 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.

"In that day." The time frame has not changed; we are still in the first century. (That time frame will be confirmed yet again with verse 8, which we will discuss next.)

So whatever is being discussed here in verses 6 and 7, it is **not** God turning off the sun at the end of time. Instead, it is exactly the same thing that Jesus was talking about in Matthew 24:29 — "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." And Matthew 24:34 tells us that Matthew 24:29 occurred in the first century.

Matthew 24:29 and Zechariah 14:6-7 are using vivid language to describe the same thing — a complete upheaval! They are both describing a situation in which everything is turned upside down. It is as if everything had been put in a box and shaken up. Light is not light anymore. At evening time, it is light. The sun and moon are darkened. The stars fall from heaven. It seems that nothing is as it should be.

What does this mean? Let's let Haggai and the author of Hebrews answer that question.

In Haggai 2:6-7, we read:

For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.

And then turn to Hebrews 12:26-29 –

Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. 27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: 29 For our God is a consuming fire.

What is this “shaking” in Haggai 2 and Hebrews 12 describing? Turn back to Matthew 24:29 once again:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

The great **shaking** in Matthew 24:29, in Haggai 2:6-7, in Hebrews 12:26-29, and in Zechariah 14:6-7 are all describing the same great event — the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem in AD 70.

And what replaced that destroyed temple? Hebrews 12:28 just told us – “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved.” Hebrews 12:27 tells us that the church cannot be shaken. That immovable unshakable kingdom of Hebrews 12 is the indestructible kingdom of Daniel 2:44 –

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

We studied the rebuilding of the temple when we studied the book of Ezra. That rebuilt temple in Ezra was never intended to be permanent, but rather Haggai prophesied that it would one day be replaced by something that was permanent and indestructible and immovable – the church of Christ. There is no other way to read Hebrews 12.

The church was established in Acts 2, and the Jewish temple was destroyed about 40 years later in AD 70, just as Jesus had described in Matthews 24.

One more question about verses 6-7: what is meant in verse 7 by the phrase, “But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night”? It is a difficult phrase, but in context I think it is simply saying that God would determine the timing of these events, and when they occurred it would figuratively be as if the sun and moon were no longer shining — meaning that one could not tell whether it was day or night. That is exactly how Jesus described this same event in Matthew 24:29.

8 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.

“In that day.” First century or end of the world? Well, when did living waters go out from Jerusalem?

John 4:10 — *Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and **he would have given thee living water.***

Luke 24:47 — *And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, **beginning at Jerusalem.***

Isaiah 2:3 — *And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, **and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.***

John 7:38-39 — *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.)*

Living waters went out from Jerusalem in the first century, whether we view this Jerusalem as physical Jerusalem or we view it as spiritual Jerusalem, the church. Verse 8 confirms that we are on the right track with regard to the first century time frame.

What does the rest of verse 8 mean? “half of them [half of the living waters] toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.”

When the faithful people of God fled the city of Jerusalem, what did they do? Where did they go? They went everywhere proclaiming the word of God and preaching the gospel. Verse 8 says that they would preach everywhere and they would preach at all times.

And the result of their proclamation of the gospel?

9 And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

Jesus is king over all creation, but verse 9 is talking specifically about Jesus’ reign over the church, the eternal kingdom of Daniel 2 — what we sometimes call the kingdom within a kingdom. As the gospel spreads everywhere in verse 8, it follows that the eternal kingdom spreads to all corners of the earth in verse 9.

That view is reinforced by the emphasis upon the oneness of the Lord and the oneness of his name in verse 9.

John 10:16 — *“and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.”*

Ephesians 4:4-6 — *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

The mountain of Rome was split, and the people inside the city of Jerusalem were split. But not so with the kingdom of Christ. They have *one* Lord, and they are themselves *one* body, with Christ as their *one* king. Once again we are reminded of something we have

seen over and over in this book — there is one church. Christ's kingdom is one unified people (both Jew and Gentile) led by one Shepherd.

10 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. 11 And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

Once again, as we saw between Chapters 11 and 12, there is a transition here (and possibly even earlier in verse 8) between *physical* Jerusalem and *spiritual* Jerusalem. How do we know that?

We know that from the description in these verses. Verse 11 says that "Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited." That could not be said about physical Jerusalem after the destruction of AD 70. In fact, Jesus had told his followers to flee the city because Jerusalem could *not* be safely inhabited!

What do the descriptions in verses 10-11 mean? These two verses tell us three things about the spiritual Jerusalem, the church.

First, verse 10 tells us that spiritual Jerusalem would be accessible. "All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up." The Jordan valley is 1388 feet below sea level, making it the deepest depression on the face of the earth. The idea expressed here is that those valleys around Jerusalem would be lifted up and flattened, making the city easily accessible. That is true of the church — entry is available to all who will obey the gospel of Christ. They don't have to climb mountains. Instead, God has done all of the hard work for them already. All they must do is obey the gospel. That's the same point that Paul made in Romans 10.

***Romans 10:6-9** But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

We don't have to travel to Heaven to bring Christ down to save us — God has already done that. We don't have to descend into the deep to raise Christ from the dead — God has already done that. All we must do is obey the gospel. God has made the eternal kingdom accessible to all, and that is something Zechariah prophesied would happen here in verse 10.

Second, verse 10 tells us that spiritual Jerusalem would be an inhabited city. In fact, we are told that the city would once again occupy her ancient limits, which are given here by five geographical landmarks:

- The "Benjamin gate" was in the northern wall.
- The "first gate" was in the eastern wall.

- The “corner gate” was west of the Benjamin gate.
- “The tower of Hananeel” was the northeast corner of the wall.
- The “winepresses of the king” were probably near “the king’s garden” at the southeast corner of the city.

Physical Jerusalem was in shambles, but not so with spiritual Jerusalem — it is inhabited, it is well-ordered, and it has enough space to hold everyone who would enter. That is all certainly true of the church. It has enough room for all who would obey the gospel, despite what the Calvinists and the premillennialists say.

Third, spiritual Jerusalem would not just be inhabited, but it would be *safely* inhabited. “And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.” In the days of Zechariah, the population in Jerusalem was sparse, and those few who lived in the city did not live there in safety. In the first century, the city was destroyed, and no one lived there in safety.

But the church is very different. It is *safely* inhabited. There is no judgment of “utter destruction” for sin because those in the church have been cleansed of their sin by the blood of Christ. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1) And, unlike *physical* Jerusalem, *spiritual* Jerusalem will never be destroyed! (Daniel 2:44)

Verses 10-11 are a beautiful description of the church!