

THE MESSIAH'S VICTORY
ZECHARIAH 14:10-15

One husband was complaining to his wife about their children, wondering if they would ever grow up. Saying, "Just a moment," his wife pulled out a worn box that contained a frayed, yellowing diary — her diary from the year 1945. She read this entry from a particularly bad day:

May 7 — Terrible time in school, flunked the math quiz. Nancy bragged about her new bike. Why can't I have one? I am bored, bored, BORED. Nothing important ever happens. Oh yes, P.S. Today is V-E Day. The war is over in Europe.

At times it is hard to accurately evaluate a circumstance. In war, the loss of a particular battle tempts one to think the war is lost; in culture wars, the loss of a moral skirmish tempts us to think all morality is gone; and in the absence of Christ's return, it is tempting to believe that He may never return.

Those thoughts aren't new. The Israelites also experienced those thoughts. Though the nation had returned from the Babylonian captivity, even about 100 years later, the city of Jerusalem was still not properly populated (Neh. 7:4), and people were "drafted" by lot to move to the capital (Neh. 11:1-2). And though the Temple was reconstructed, there was still opposition from the Gentile nations and the temple itself was far less impressive than Solomon's temple — it seemed "like nothing in comparison" (Hag. 2:3).

In that context, Zechariah was given a prophecy from God to encourage the Israelites to faithfulness and hopefulness. The culmination of that prophecy is chapter 14 and the return of Christ as the Messianic King. Over the last two weeks we have seen His return and the establishment of His Kingdom. Today, in vv. 10-15, we observe the returning Messianic King in another role —

CHRIST THE KING WILL COME AS VICTOR.

Every King is a "victor" in some sense; but every king also eventually loses an election, is deposed from his throne, or dies. But not *this King*. This King is a conquering and victorious King and always will be so. These verses reaffirm some realities of Christ's conquest that we have already seen, but with even more graphic language. How will Christ be the victor? This text points to **two aspects of Christ's victory**.

1. Be Confident in Christ's RESTORATIVE Victory (vv. 10-11)

- ✓ Israel's LAND will be restored (v. 10)
- ✓ Israel's PEOPLE will be restored (v. 11a)
- ✓ Israel's "SECURITY" will be restored (v. 11b)

2. Be Confident in Christ's RETRIBUTIVE Victory (vv. 12-15)

- ✓ God will judge all SINNERS (vv. 12-13, 15)
- ✓ God will restore PLUNDER (v. 14)

1. Be Confident in Christ's **RESTORATIVE** Victory (vv. 10-11)

• Israel's **LAND** will be restored (v. 10)

- ✓ **All the land will be changed into a plain...** = Not all of Israel, but the area described.
 - **Geba** was a Levitical city in the tribe of Benjamin, about six miles north of Jerusalem.
 - **Rimmon** was an area in the far south of the tribe of Judah.
 - So this is God's declaration that all the tribe of Judah will become a **plain**.
 - The word **plain** is "Arabah" which is a valley that runs from far north along the Jordan, south past the Dead Sea, to the tip of the Red Sea. It is arid and flat. And **all Israel** will become like **the Arabah** (PhotoGuide).
- ✓ The Lord is describing a literal transformation of the mountainous region to flat valley (**Is. 40:3-4**). Zechariah has also alluded to this transformation (**4:7**).
- ✓ And not only will Judah be made flat, but Jerusalem, the capital of Judah **will rise and remain**.
 - **When Zechariah says Rise and remain** he is talking about a literal elevation of the city (which was already inferred in **vv. 4, 8**). **Isaiah 2:2** and Micah 4:1-5 affirm the same reality.
 - **Benjamin's Gate** was apparently in the north of the city (we don't know the exact location).
 - We don't know the location of the **First Gate**; several theories, but we just can't be sure.
 - The **Corner Gate** was on Jerusalem's western wall, close to the NW corner (2 Kgs. 14:13).
 - The **Tower of Hananel** was in the northern-most portion of the wall (Neh. 3:1).
 - The **royal winepresses** were on the southern side of the city (Neh. 3:15).
 - Overall, dimensions are given from North to South and west to (likely) east. All these locations are given so that we understand that the entire city is raised up above all the other regions of Judah — it is elevated physically to denote its spiritual importance; *the King resides here*.
- ✓ All these dimensions also reinforce that God is speaking about a literal geographic transformation. Cf. **Jer. 31:38-40**. This is the final "resting place" of Jerusalem — she will be inhabited forever in this exalted position — this is a permanent change that **remains** ("dwells," cf. Joel 3:20).
- ✓ The point of this explanation is that when Christ returns and takes His throne, the city will retake all the land it was supposed to possess — Jerusalem in the MK will have all the land it lost in various occupations. And not only that, but it will be the prominent (elevated) place in Israel (and the world).
- ✓ It's also worth noting that historically and currently the mountains serve as a natural protection for Israel (Ps. 125:2). But on that Day, YHWH of hosts will be Jerusalem's protection, so the mountains can be "put down" and laid low. She will no longer be vulnerable because YHWH will be on guard.



- Israel's PEOPLE will be restored (v. 11a)

- ✓ When Zechariah says ***the people will live in it***, the word “live” is the same word as “remain” in v. 10. It is a word of permanence. The people, who have gone into captivity and suffered from invaders repeatedly, won't be moved. They are fixed, permanent, and safe (8:4-5).
- ✓ And Zechariah doesn't just mean that there will be people in Jerusalem, but that the population will be dense — there will be *many* people in the city (2:4).
- ✓ Even after the return from exile in Babylonia, the city was sparsely populated (Neh. 7:4). People had to be compelled to go to Jerusalem (Neh. 11:1-2). But not on that day. In the MK, the King will be on His throne and His people will flock to the city (and the nations will also, 8:22-23).
- ✓

- Israel's “SECURITY” will be restored (v. 11b)

- ✓ Even more, Zechariah notes that ***there will no longer be a curse***.
- ✓ The word ***curse*** is a word that refers to something under a ban (e.g., Josh. 6:17-18; 7:12-13). Particularly when Israel went back to the land of Israel after the 400 year exile in Egypt, they were prohibited from keeping things from the nations; they were not to take any of the “plunder.”
 - Why? Many of the valuable possessions of the nations were identified with idolatry, so they were prohibited from taking those items to stay away from idol worship.
 - Additionally, taking those items might have enticed Israel to think it was self-reliant and not dependant on the Lord for their provision. So the wealth of the nations was “banned.”
 - But in *that day*, there will no longer be idolatry or false prophets (13:2ff). There will only be one Lord to worship (14:9) and the idols of the nations won't be a temptation, so there will be no ban.
 - While it is not clear in this verse, John seems to be alluding to this verse in Rev. 22:3, where he uses it to refer to the curse of sin and death.
 - ... Not only are “banned” items removed, but sin and death are eternally removed.
 - ... Everything will be restored to an Edenic condition when all things are acceptable for God's people to enjoy (as an expression of love for God).
- ✓ Note this also: ***Jerusalem will dwell in safety***.
 - If you remember back to earlier parts of this section of the book, Zechariah had warned about future times of distress for the nation (like 2/3 that are cut off, 13:8) and the nations pillaging Israel during the Tribulation (11:16; 14:1-2).
 - But when the King returns, the nation will be finally and fully safe from all predators.
 - This is a consistent theme in the OT — 3:10; Is. 32:18; 33:20; Jer. 23:6.
 - It is a good reminder that while this world is not safe, God *does* protect and God *will* protect. Even when we suffer, we are not experiencing anything beyond the scope of God's power.
- ✓ “When God makes a promise, his word is sure, and complete security results from his mighty presence.” [Klein]

- Notice the three works of God's restoration of the nation — land, people, "security"
 - ✓ Land — a physical place for the nation to inhabit
 - ✓ People — a "seed" of God to populate the land
 - ✓ "Security" — not just physical safety, but spiritual safety and the removal of sin and death that will be a blessing not just to the people of Israel, but also to the nations.
 - ✓ What we have in these verses is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham (**Gen. 12:1-3**).
 - ✓ There have been signs of fulfillment and the initiation of some aspects of the fulfillment, but virtually everything Israel has received has also been lost (largely through disobedience). But on that day all the loss will be restored and the great promise of God to Israel will be fulfilled.
 - ✓ This was designed to give confidence to Israel, and it should likewise make us confident. The world is a mess — but God is not finished; He will restore all loss (Rev. 21-22). Soon, He will be finished.

2. Be Confident in Christ's **RETRIBUTIVE** Victory (vv. 12-15)

- Verses 12-15 are a "flashback" to something that has already happened — after prophesying the second coming of Christ (vv. 3-11), these go back to the battle of Armageddon to explain just how Christ will win that battle. That He wins has already been said (14:3). And something of how He wins has already been said (12:2ff); this is more explicit detail (for those with squeamish stomachs it almost is too much).

• God will judge all **SINNERS** (vv. 12-13, 15)

- ✓ There **will be the plague** is how Christ becomes Victor over the nations.
 - These plagues are for **all** those who are **at war** with **Jerusalem** (invading armies of 14:1-2).
 - The word **plague** is the same as in Ex. 9:14 and the things that happen in this passage are reminiscent of those events. God's miracles strike the nations with terrifying judgment.
 - **Flesh will rot while they stand...** While they are standing, their skin will begin to decay and decompose — what takes years in the grave will happen instantly (while they are standing). [While "the peoples" is plural, this pronoun is singular, indicating *each person* — no escapees.]
 - **Eyes will rot in their sockets** refers to the death of their eyesight; but it also refers to their loss of mental and spiritual perception; to "have eyes" is to see discerningly and have ability to perceive and act (9:1; 12:4). They will lose that ability instantly.
 - **Tongue will rot in their mouth** refers to the death of the tongue; the organism that was used to proudly proclaim their ability will be immediately rendered useless.
 - Summary: the bodies with which they attack Jerusalem and the eyes that greedily coveted Jerusalem's bounty, and the tongues which blasphemed God will all rot away while they stand. They will be unable to fight to save themselves, look for help, or call for help.
 - And it will all happen in an instant (**Rev. 19:14-15, 17-19**).
 - The picture is revolting. It is said these plagues "will be a living death." [Feinberg]

- These are also what God promised would happen to the Israelites in the Mosaic Covenant if they did not obey Him (Dt. 28:15-22). Now that warning and plague is turned against the nations.
- ✓ There will also be **a great panic** (v. 13). On **that day** (Day of the Lord, Armageddon), they will panic (as they are dying from the plague) and they will seize one another — blinded, they won't know who to fight so they will turn against themselves (12:4).
 - This is mutual self-destruction — in their madness they will lash out and destroy each other.
 - This is not unlike the plague experienced by the Philistines when they received the Ark of the Covenant (1 Sam. 5:6, 9).
 - Note that this judgment is **from the Lord**; it is not just “accidental” — it is wrath from God. He is correcting the wrongs of the nations against Israel before His final wrath at Great White Throne.
- ✓ This plague is against the people, but also against **the horse...mule...camel...donkey...cattle** (v. 15).
 - Don't think, “these are just animals.” They were important possessions. Ezra 2:66-67 recounts all the animals that returned to the land from Babylon.
 - Why that detail? Because the animals were a source of income and the means of distributing wealth (their supply chain to move goods).
 - Even more, these were a source of strength: this was their military power. Horses and “military might” are an inadequate source of strength (Ps. 20:7; 33:17). God will destroy it all.
- ✓ Everything the nations depended on and believed to be their strength will be destroyed.
- ✓ God's judgment on that day is a reminder of at least two realities:
 - God is jealous to protect His chosen people and He will preserve them with severity (2:8).
 - This judgment is a reminder of God's hatred of and hostility against sin. We really can rest in the fact that God will take vengeance against and repay all sin (Rom. 12:19). His silence is His provision of an opportunity for repentance; it does not mean He won't act.
- ✓ If you are not a believer in Christ, God takes your sin seriously. He will not overlook it. He will be wrathful against it. But there is hope for you: repent (turn away from sin) and believe (trust Christ to take away your sin and liberate you so you can live for Him; 12:10).

• God will restore **PLUNDER** (v. 14)

- ✓ This passage is very clear that *God* is acting against the nations (cf. also 14:3; 12:2-4, 7; 9:10).
- ✓ But here and elsewhere He also says that He will use Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem as His instruments of justice (cf. 9:13; 10:6-7; 12:6).
- ✓ The emphasis in this verse is not what Judah will do in fighting against the nations, but what Judah will do in taking from the nations — **wealth...will be gathered**.
- ✓ They will gather (confiscate) and take as plunder the most valuable possessions of the nations — **gold, silver, and garments**. Gold and silver are obvious treasures, but clothing? Yes, apparel was a common way to demonstrate wealth and status — they are stripped of possessions and position.

- ✓ They won't just take "some" plunder, but "great quantities." The conquest is over. The nations will have nothing to resist or fight back — their lives and possessions will all be taken.
- ✓ Notably, God isn't just removing wealth; He is putting it back in its rightful place (**Hag. 2:7-8**).
- Whenever we hear of an unjust legal decision, or there is unjust suffering, or someone sins against us and we suffer great harm (financially or relationally), we wonder "will there be justice?"
 - ✓ There will. God is not silent about sin now, and He will not be silent at the end.
 - ✓ His wrath against sinners on the Day of the Lord will pale in comparison to how He will unrelentingly pour out His justice against sin in Hell —
 - Immense suffering — darkness, weeping, and gnashing of teeth (Mt. 8:12; 13:42ff).
 - Eternal agony and endless pain (Lk. 16:24ff)
 - Total solitude and loneliness (2 Pt. 2:4)
 - Eternal restlessness — no peace or contentment (Rev. 14:11)
 - No accomplishment (no work to do)
 - Eternal separation from God in fellowship (2 Thess. 1)
 - Eternally in the presence of God, under His wrath (Rev. 14:10)
 - ✓ Hell is ugly, disgusting, and repulsive. It was meant that way [and God is just in all that harshness]. And as harsh as the Day of the Lord will be, it is infinitely less harsh than the ultimate end of Hell for sinners. The Day of the Lord is only the distasteful appetizer for the full meal of Hell.
- These verses affirm that God will put everything back in the rightful places.
 - ✓ The redeemed will be back in fellowship with God (and in His presence).
 - ✓ All things that belong to God and His people will be possessed by Him (and them).
 - ✓ All unrighteousness will be put down and punished.
 - ✓ Christ will be King and Christ will be victor.

CONCLUSION: Christ the King is coming and He will be fully victorious. But we don't need to wait for the second advent to see His victory. Even in His first advent He demonstrated His victorious power.

- ✓ He was victor when He bested Satan in the wilderness of temptation.
- ✓ He was victor when He bound Satan and His power (Mt. 12:29)
- ✓ He was victor every time He cast demons out of individuals He was victor when
- ✓ He was victor when He prevented Satan from carrying out his plan until Christ was ready
- ✓ He was victor when He died of His own accord without having His life taken from Him

Christ is King and victor. He always has been. And He will be on that day again (still).

Benediction (Greg): Jude 24-25