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Zechariah Overview (Part 2)



Bible Book Overviews - Steve Gregg

In this overview of the book of Zechariah, Steve Gregg delves into the prophet's messages regarding the Maccabean period and the Messianic age. He discusses the symbolism of the active parables, such as the creation of an elaborate crown set on the head of Joshua, the high priest, as a symbol of the Messiah. Gregg also draws connections between Zechariah's prophecies and various events in the New Testament, such as the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem on a donkey, and Peter's quote about the time prophesied by Zechariah.

Transcript

Alright, thank you for gathering so quickly. We talked about the eight visions at the beginning of Zechariah. The latter part of chapter 6, as I point out, is an active parable.

And I'll just quickly say what it is, because I want to get to the last section of the book as quickly as I can, so these early parts I'm just going to be very summary fashion. In this parable, God tells Zechariah to go to a group of men who have apparently returned from Babylon, not necessarily to move to Jerusalem, but they're on a visit, and they brought some gifts from the exiles. The exiles are sending some gifts back home to Jerusalem, maybe for the temple or whatever.

And there's gold and there's silver among them, and God tells Zechariah to go and take some of that gold and silver and make a crown, and to ceremonially set it on the head of Joshua, the high priest. So this is what it says in verse 11 of chapter 6, take the silver and the gold, make an elaborate crown, and set it on the head of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Then speak to him, saying, thus says the Lord of hosts, saying, behold the man whose name is the branch.

Okay, so suddenly Joshua here is again a type of the Messiah, the branch. It says, from his place he shall branch out, and he shall build the temple of the Lord. Now the branch, Jesus will build the temple of the Lord.

You know what the promise God made to David in 2 Samuel chapter 7, is it? Verse 12, is that God would raise up a seed of David, who would sit on his throne after him and would

build a house to the name of the Lord. That's called the Davidic covenant. That's called the covenant God made with David, that one of his offspring would sit on his throne and would build the house of the Lord.

Now that happened, Solomon did that. Solomon, his son, sat on his throne and built the temple. But all Jews, at least all Orthodox Jews, have understood that that prophecy is about the Messiah.

Solomon is, in a sense, a type of the Messiah. He sat on David's throne, he was the son of David, he built a temple, but so does Jesus. Jesus is David's son.

He also builds a temple. That is the temple called the church. Jesus said in Matthew 16, upon this rock I will build my church.

And Paul spoke to the church, for example, in 1 Corinthians 3.16, do you not know that you are the temple of God and that God dwells in you? He said it again to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 6.16, do you not know that you're the temple of God? Peter said in 1 Peter 1.5 that we are living stones built into a spiritual house, a holy temple. In Ephesians 2, Paul says that we are built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building grows together into a holy temple and a habitation of God through the Spirit. The church is the temple that Jesus builds.

I will build my church, Jesus said, and he has built it out of living stones. So the branch, here Joshua and Zerubbabel in this story were building a temple, just like Solomon had done some 500 years earlier. But the branch, the Messiah, is going to build another temple.

He's the antitype, or he's the fulfillment of the type, which is Joshua. And it says he'll build the temple of the Lord. Yes, he shall build the temple of the Lord.

He shall bear the glory. And he shall sit and rule on his throne, and he shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. Now, this is an important, this is the important thing about putting a crown on the high priest.

The priests don't wear crowns. Priests are Levites. In the Jewish system, only the sons of David wear crowns.

The dynasty of Judah is David's sons, who are the tribe of Judah. A Levite could not be the king. A Levite, a priest, would not wear a crown.

You don't have a man in Israel who is both king and priest, because the king had to be of the line of David of the tribe of Judah. The priest had to be of the line of Levi, a different tribe. That's why it says in Hebrews chapter 7, when it says that Jesus is a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, it says, you know, if he were a priest on earth, he

couldn't be.

He couldn't be a priest, because we have priests of the line of Levi who do that, the writer of Hebrews said. Jesus was of the tribe of Judah. The writer of Hebrews makes that point.

But here we have a prophecy that the priest and the crown will be united. The two shall, the council of peace will be between the two offices of king and priest. Now there are some translations that say there will be a priest by the throne, like there's a king and then there's a priest standing by him.

In this translation, there's a priest on the throne. And since the crowning of the priest with a crown is the imagery, it seems like it's the same man. The one who is the priest is also the one who wears the crown.

And that is true of the Messiah. He's the king and the priest. In Israel's law, which allowed only Levites to be priests, Jesus would not qualify as a priest, though he is king.

But in the new order of the Messiah, he is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, not of Levi, and he's the king, the son of David, seated at the right hand of God. So this is a messianic prophecy acted out by putting a crown on the priest's head, saying he's king and priest, the branches, not you Joshua, but the branch we're talking about here, of which you are a type. Now chapters 7 and 8 make up the remainder of the first part of the book, and it's one continuous section in four messages.

Each one of them begins with the words, the word of the Lord of hosts came to me. Chapter 7 verse 4, the word of the Lord of hosts came to me. Then verse 8, chapter 7 verse 8, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah.

Chapter 8 verse 1, again the word of the Lord of hosts came, saying. And then finally in verse 18, it says, then the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying. Now we have four prophecies therefore, and a very unequal length.

The first prophecy comes when the people come to him and ask, are we supposed to still be doing these fasts? Now fasting was a form of mourning. I don't know if that's clear to us. We, when we know people who fast, a lot of times they're fasting for health or something like that, or because they're trying to apply a little leverage to their prayers and hope to put a little pressure on God by going on a hunger strike or something like that.

But actually fasting is mourning. When Jesus was asked in Matthew 12, why do you disciples don't fast when the disciples of John and of the Pharisees, they fast, how come you disciples don't fast? Jesus said, can the children of the bride chamber mourn while the bridegroom is with them? But he'll be taken from them, then they'll fast. Fasting was a form of mourning.

When David's baby died, he stopped fasting, and it surprised him. He was fasting while the baby was sick. The baby, when he heard the baby was out, he stopped fasting.

And they said, what? Usually you fast after the death, not before. In other words, we associate mourning and fasting as the same thing. When you lose a love, then you fast.

And probably it began to be a custom because people, when they're in deep grief, often lose their appetite, and they probably fast almost involuntarily. I remember when my family broke up in 2001. I didn't know I was not eating much, but within, let's see, what was it, like two months, I lost 20 pounds.

I found that out on Thanksgiving when I weighed myself. And wow, I'm 20 pounds lighter than I was two months ago. I wasn't fasting on purpose, but I was in grief, and you just lose your appetite.

Almost everyone who goes through a divorce, they say that they lost a ton of weight in the first months afterwards. It's because grief and appetite don't really go together very well. And so I think probably the idea of fasting as a form of mourning was kind of a natural thing in the earliest times, and it became associated with that.

Then people began to fast to simulate mourning. And anyway, the Jews had certain fasts that they had appointed for themselves. God had not.

There's only one fast that the Torah required of Israel, and that was on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Once a year, they were to fast, or as it says in the figure, speech of the Hebrews, afflict their souls. That's what fasting was.

But the Jews had appointed for themselves some additional fasts. One was on the fourth month of the year, which was the anniversary of when the walls of Jerusalem were breached by the Babylonians. Another was on the fifth month of the year, which was the month when the temple was burned, considerably after the breach, or a little bit after the breach.

The seventh month was the anniversary of a much earlier event, the murder of Galilea, the governor that Babylon had appointed when he had conquered Jerusalem, and the Jews murdered Galilea, which brought the wrath of Babylon on them and caused the city to be destroyed. So they mourned the death of Galilea because of the grief that it brought to them, afterwards. And then the tenth month, they had one also, which is the month the siege had begun, when Babylon first besieged Jerusalem.

So they were commemorating these tragedies each year, four times with these ceremonial fasts. And that's why they say, ask the priests who were in the house of the Lord of hosts, verse 3, and the prophets, saying, should I weep in the fifth month and fast as I've done these many years? And he says in verse 5, say to the people of the land and to the priests, when you fasted and mourned in the fifth and the seventh months,

and then later on, he's going to mention all in chapter 8, verse 19, which is part of the same answer, thus says the Lord, the fast of the fourth month, the fast of the fifth month, the fast of the seventh month, and the fast of the tenth shall be joy and gladness. So he talks about these fasts.

What they're saying is, we've been mourning the destruction of Jerusalem because, frankly, it's the biggest disaster our ancestors ever lived through. But now, that's kind of been undone. We're back.

You know, God, we're free people. We can go back to Jerusalem. We're building the temple.

It's all good. Should we kind of give up these mournful, ritualistic fasting? That's the question. Now, there's four answers in these four prophecies.

The first answer he gives in chapter 7, verses 4 through 7, is basically saying, well, what were you fasting for? Were you fasting for me, says the Lord, or for yourself? In other words, did you do this just to feel sorry for yourself? Were you concerned about my feelings? After all, I'm the one who brought these disasters on you. And you're licking your wounds and feeling sorry for yourself? You deserved all of this. Have you learned your lesson or not? Should you be fasting? I never told you to fast.

That was your idea, not mine. You're just fasting to complain about what happened to you. Are you thinking about your interests or mine? Is basically what God says in that particular prophecy.

And then the second prophecy, he basically summarizes and said that God had told their ancestors to obey the former prophets, and they had not done so. And therefore, they deserved what they got. That's basically what this prophecy, chapter 7, verses 8 through 14, is saying.

They deserved what they got. What are you mourning about? And he says, I'm the one who brought these disasters on them, essentially, is what he's saying. If you look at, for example, verses 13 and 14, therefore it happened that just as he, that is, God, proclaimed they would not hear, so they called out, and I would not listen to them, says the Lord.

But I scattered them with a whirlwind among the nations, which they had not known, and so forth. I'm the one who did this. You're mourning about what I did? I did the right thing.

And you're just feeling sorry for yourself because you suffered for your own crimes. That's basically the meaning of that particular prophecy. The next one is in chapter 8, verses 1 through 17, and this one talks about God restoring peaceful times to them.

He's going to gather people from the east and the west, he says, he's going to return the

exiles from the north, they're going to be my people, I'll be their God, and so forth. So this is basically supportive. He said, okay, yeah, I did scatter you, I did punish you, you deserved it, you've paid your time, you've done your time in prison in Babylon, now let's start over.

I'm going to bless you, I'm going to gather you back again, and, you know, let's just pretend like that didn't happen and start fresh. Sort of like a couple that's gone through a bad patch in their marriage, maybe even separated, maybe even divorced, because their marriage was intolerable, but then they say, hey, let's try to get it over, let's just forget about that, let's say our vows again, let's get married again, let's start fresh as if we didn't have all that ugliness before and see if we can give it another chance. That's kind of what God's communicating here.

And then, verses 18 through 23, the last of it says, the word of the Lord of hosts came to me saying, thus says the Lord of hosts, the fast of the fourth month, the fast of the fifth, the fastest of the fastest of the tenths, shall be joy and gladness and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah. Therefore, love, truth, and peace. Thus says the Lord of hosts, peoples shall yet come, inhabitants of many cities, the inhabitants of one city shall go to another city.

Let's continue to go and pray before Yahweh and seek Yahweh of hosts, and I myself will go also. Yes, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and pray before the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts, in those days ten men from every language of the nation shall grasp the sleeve of the Jewish man saying, let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.

Now, what's it saying? It's saying, okay, let's forget about the sorrow from the past, let's replace those fastings and mornings with rejoicing times, let's have celebrations. It's a little like what Jesus was saying, can the children of the bride chamber mourn when the bridegroom is with them? They're at the wedding feast, let's celebrate. The coming of Christ was a celebration.

It was the salvation that God had promised. It was the erasing and the removal of the filthy garments that they had worn. It was taking away the iniquity of the land in one day.

This was something to celebrate. Let's forget about the fasts and all the gloominess of the past. Let's rejoice in the arrival of the Savior and the Messiah and the bridegroom.

Let's dance, let's rejoice, let's not mourn and fast. That's basically what he's saying. And the nations are going to join in this too.

He says, the inhabitants of many nations and strong nations, they're going to come to this Jerusalem. Again, I believe this to be the spiritual Jerusalem, the church of the

firstborn, the right of Hebrew speakers. Into the church come people of all nations, not just Jews.

And it says, there's going to be like ten Gentiles for every Jew in this thing. It's like ten men of every nation are going to grab a Jew and say, I'll go with you. I want to worship your God too.

Which is simply a way of saying, the Gentiles are going to outnumber you guys in my kingdom. You guys, some of you will be there. The remnant of Israel will be there, but boy, ten times as many Gentiles are going to be in this thing.

And ten isn't a statistic. It's basically an impressionistic idea. You're going to be way outnumbered.

Ten Gentiles grabbing one Jew saying, let's go. Let's go worship your God. This is not talking about literally, in my opinion, going to Jerusalem, because I don't believe that Jerusalem is a place that will ever be the center of worship of God again.

Because Jesus said to the woman at the well, the time is coming, and now is, when those who worship God will not worship in Jerusalem or in this mountain, but those who worship God will worship in spirit and in truth, which means not geographically, but spiritually. It doesn't matter where you are to worship God. Jesus said centralized worship, it won't be in Gerizim, it won't be in Jerusalem, it's going to be wherever people are worshipping God in spirit and in truth.

I don't think God's going to reverse that. I don't think that God's going to change when he says, yeah, I'm done with the spirit and truth thing. Let's go back to Jerusalem again.

Let's go back to those animal sacrifices again. Those were pretty cool. I really loved all that bloodshed, except the Bible says he didn't.

David said, sacrifice and offerings you didn't desire. You don't take any pleasure in those things. David said that.

And in Psalm 40, he said, in Psalm 51, God didn't really love animal sacrifices. That was a teaching device until the Messiah would come and be the final sacrifice. No reason to go back to that.

The book of Hebrews makes it very clear, there's no more sacrifices of that kind. Jesus did it once and for all. Anyone who says you're going to have animal sacrifices again to worship God in Jerusalem, I think they're living in the wrong testament.

Because the Jerusalem in which all the nations come and worship God is this heavenly Jerusalem, the spiritual Mount Zion, the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is, of course, God's eternal purpose, according to Ephesians chapter 1. So there

we have this prediction about, I believe, the age in which we live, where there's at least 10 times as many Gentiles as Jews who are worshiping the Jewish God. It's a wonderful thing. It'd be great if more Jews were, and more Jews do all the time.

There are plenty of Jews who've come to Christ, and probably some get converted every day. But there's a lot more Gentiles. And it's always going to be, apparently, more Gentiles than Jews, because there's more Gentiles than Jews in the world.

And God wants every nation to bow down every time to confess that Jesus is Christ's Lord. So if everyone does, it's going to be a lot more Gentiles than Jews, just because there's more Gentiles than Jews. Okay, now we come to the really interesting part of the book, which I would love to spend a great deal of time on, but I can't.

But again, we have lectures, hours and hours of lectures on Zechariah at the website. You can hear for free if you want more information. This is the section, the last six chapters, where we no longer have any interest in the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem.

In fact, the destruction of that temple seems to be one of the features of this prophecy. I believe this prophecy takes us from the time of Zechariah, where the temple was rebuilt, Zerubbabel's temple, to the time of 70 AD, when that temple was destroyed. Just as Solomon's temple had been destroyed in the Babylonian exile, and now the Jews are given another chance, they can build the temple again, start the city up again, let's see if we can get it right this time.

But eventually, we know very well, they didn't. Messiah came, they killed him, and the temple is destroyed again, forever, as near as we can tell. I don't know of any prediction in the Bible that says it's going to be built again.

And without such a prediction, 2,000 years of laying in rubble are not existing, is a pretty good indicator that it's kind of a permanent thing. Now, I realize that the Jews, some of them want to build the temple again, maybe they will. I don't say they won't.

I have no idea. I just say it's not predicted in Scripture that they will. They can do it, whether it's predicted or not, but the destruction of God's temple, the destruction of the temple where God dwelt, was in AD 70.

And he's never going to dwell in temples made with hands, again, because he has an eternal habitation made of living stones. Why should he go back to something made of minerals, and where animals are slaughtered? When the blood of Jesus has been shed once and for all for the sins of all time, and all people, why would he go back to killing animals, which he never enjoyed in the first place, he said. Why would God, when he settles everything and makes it how he wants it, reinstitute a system he never really said he liked? It doesn't make a lot of sense to me.

It once made some sense, but not very much. Okay, now, let's talk about this. We're now away from the rebuilding of the temple in Zerubbabel and Joshua's day, and he's now looking ahead.

How far ahead? Well, we can say this. Chapter 9 through 11, I'm going to say this, takes us from the conquest of Alexander the Great to the coming of Jesus the first time. Okay? That's my belief.

I believe, and this is the intertestamental period. The intertestamental period is a period of history that's not recorded in the Bible, because the historical record of the Bible ends with Nehemiah, which is still a good 400-and-something years before Christ. The next historical information we have is in Matthew 1.1, with the birth of Jesus.

There's a 400-year gap between the last historical record in the Old Testament and the first historical record of the New. We call that the intertestamental period. During that time, apparently God didn't send any prophets whose writings were worth keeping.

I don't doubt that God from time to time spoke through people during that time. I mean, after all, Simeon in the temple, when Jesus was born, God had told him he won't die until he sees the Messiah. Zechariah, John the Baptist's father, prophesied, and John prophesied.

But the point is, there weren't any writing prophets. There were no more people adding to the scriptures or to the Old Covenant record for 400 years during that time. Now, during that time, a lot of things happened, and we know about them, not because the Bible records them, but the Bible does predict a lot of them.

And we know that history records them. Josephus, for one, the historian, recorded them in his Antiquities of the Jews, and we have secular records of some of it, too. And even some bas-reliefs of some things that happened there, too.

So we know what happened, but this predicts things in that time. One of the most important things that happened after Zechariah's time was that the Persian Empire, under which the temple was allowed to be rebuilt by Cyrus the Persian conqueror of Babylon, that empire eventually fell. It fell to Alexander the Great and the Grecian Empire.

And chapter 9 begins with that and takes us up to the time of the Messiah. Now, in the first six verses, I'm sorry, the first eight verses of chapter 9, we have the advance of Alexander the Great toward Jerusalem. Now, we don't have any problem identifying this by a number of features.

One, the cities that are mentioned that come under judgment, and this happens against Hamath and against Tyre and against Ashkelon and against Ekron, and these are prophecies against them, these are the cities that, in that order, were conquered by

Alexander the Great as he approached Jerusalem to conquer it, too. However, it says in verse 8, God says, I will camp around my house, meaning the temple that had been built in Zechariah's day, I will camp around my house because of the army, that is because of the advancing invaders, because of him who passes by and him who returns, no more shall an oppressor pass through them, for now I have seen with my eyes. Now, what happened here is that Alexander the Great came toward Jerusalem, conquering the cities in the order they're listed in the first verses there, and he was going to do the same thing to Jerusalem.

Now, I won't read you, I have an extensive passage from Josephus in here, which takes a long time to read, I'll just tell you what he said. Alexander the Great was kind of unhappy with the high priest in Jerusalem because the high priest had disobeyed him earlier, and when the high priest heard that Alexander and his troops were advancing against Jerusalem, he was terrified. And so he called on the people of Jerusalem to pray and to fast and seek God's favor and offer sacrifices and so forth, and God spoke to the high priest in a dream and said, don't worry, you will not be defeated, but I want you to go out and meet Alexander, you and all the priests in white garments, in a procession, go out to meet him, and I will spare you.

And so when Alexander got near to Jerusalem, the priests in white garments went out, and Alexander got off his horse to see what this was about, he came and he met with the priest, and there was another king that Alexander had conquered, I think it was the king of Syria, who said to him, why are you being good to this priest, why are you honoring this priest, and Alexander said, I'm not honoring this priest, I'm honoring the God that he serves, because I saw in a dream last night these men in white robes, coming out. God predicted that I would see them like this, and Alexander went into the temple with the high priest, and the priest, whose name was Jagua, showed Alexander the scroll of Daniel, chapter 8, which predicted that a Grecian would conquer the Persian Empire, which Alexander was in the process of doing at that time. Alexander was so impressed, of course he didn't destroy the temple or the city, God camped around it so that it was protected from him, though he had intended to do so.

Instead, he gave the priest's request, he basically requested that the Jews would be allowed to keep their Sabbaths and keep their laws and so forth, and be unmolested by the Greeks, and he favored them. I read somewhere, not in Josephus, I read somewhere else that he made them like governors of his provinces, I'm not sure I can document that, but I heard that from somewhere once, but I did read Josephus, the rest of these details. So God protected the city, and he said he camped about it.

But then suddenly we're in another time zone. In verse 9, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you! He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. Well that sounds familiar, yeah, and that's because of course we know what it's about.

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, and we are told in Matthew that that was fulfilling this very prophecy. Now how'd that happen? How come we're not talking about Jesus? We were talking about Alexander the Great and his conquests, and God delivered his people from that oppression. Now we suddenly jump to the Messiah, the Savior, the King coming.

He's not like Alexander on a royal white steed, a war horse, he's riding on a donkey, humbly. But he's bringing salvation. Now this illustrates something that I've pointed out many times before when we're going through the prophets.

The prophets, whenever God has them predict something that has to do with God saving his people, they cannot seem to resist the temptation to leap forward to what the Messiah will do in saving his people. Because every salvation of God's people in history is a type and a shadow of his ultimate salvation through Christ on the cross. So the Exodus, for example, when God saved them out of Egypt, is continually referred to, both in the prophets and the New Testament, as a type and a shadow of the salvation that the Messiah would bring.

It was through Moses that they were delivered from Egypt, but he's a type of Christ, and the Exodus is a type of Christ's salvation. That's why Moses and Elijah met with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration in Luke chapter 9. It says they were talking to Jesus about the Exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem. Here's Moses, the leader of the Exodus, talking to Jesus about the Exodus that Jesus was going to accomplish.

Why? Because the Old Testament prophets in more than one place, Isaiah 11 comes to mind, some others, I think Micah chapter 7, no, no, no, might be Amos 9, but I'm not sure. There's some other places in the Old Testament where the Exodus is a type of the Messiah's salvation. So is the return of the exiles from Babylon.

Another time God saved them from their captivity. He brought them from Babylon. And the prophets morph into a prediction of the Messiah.

Ezekiel does this all the time. He's talking about the end of the Babylonian exile with the dry bones and so forth, and bringing them back. And then the Spirit is poured out at Pentecost on them.

And so we have the deliverance from Babylon becomes a type of a shadow and a first phase of salvation that would come ultimately through the Messiah. In Isaiah, he's talking about how God would save Jerusalem from, or the exiles from Assyria. And he says in Isaiah chapter 10, the remnant shall return.

It says, though the children of Israel be like the sand of the sea, a remnant shall return. Paul quotes that from the Septuagint saying, this is saying a remnant shall be saved. And he's talking about the Jews in his own day, only a remnant of them had come to

Christ.

The rescue of people from Assyria, from Egypt, from Babylon, it becomes a type of the Messiah. Here, delivering Jerusalem from Alexander the Great's aggression. God supernaturally seemingly stops it, and then suddenly it's about Jesus again.

This is what happens in the prophets continually. They talk about deliverance, but every deliverance in Old Testament history is seen as a foreshadowing of God's ultimate salvation that he'll bring about through the Messiah. So, he talks about how God saves Jerusalem from Alexander, then suddenly we're looking at Jesus, just briefly, because we're going to get back to the time of Alexander, or shortly afterwards.

So we see Jesus coming in on a donkey. Verse 10 and 10 through 12, I think, are all about this, but it's in figurative language, of course. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem, the battle bow shall be cut off, he shall speak peace to the nations, yeah, Jesus does that, we're the nations, we're the Gentiles.

He came and brought peace to us, peace in him. His dominion shall be from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth. As for you also, because of the blood of your covenant, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

Jesus didn't quote this verse, but he quoted a similar verse in Isaiah 61, where he says, the spirit of the Lord is upon me because he's anointed me to set at liberty the captives, to open the doors for the prisoners. He's talking about spiritual deliverance, and Jesus said, this prophecy has been fulfilled in your hearing. So, this time about the first coming of Christ, coming to set the captives free, like you and me, slaves of sin.

His name shall be called Jesus, because he'll save his people from their sins, the angel told Joseph. The bondage of sin is what salvation is from, and Jesus is the deliverer of captives, and so it is spoken of here. Even today I declare that I will restore you, double to you.

Now, in verse 13, close parenthesis, back to the story, back to our story. Meanwhile, back in the intertestamental period, after Alexander the Great comes the Maccabean deliverance. A few hundred years after Alexander, there was another oppressor of Israel, who also threatened the temple, defiled it, certainly.

His name was Antiochus Epiphanes. He was a Greco-Syrian ruler who was a tyrant who tried to stomp out Judaism and destroy the temple. He certainly defiled the temple, sacrificing a pig in it, on an altar to Zeus that he had set up there, and the Jews would not use the temple after that because it was defiled for three years.

But then there was a war, a war between, as it says here, the sons of Greece and the sons of Zion. There's only been one war where the people of Israel fought a war against Greece, and it was when the Maccabean Jews revolted against the Grecian-Syrian empire

and routed Antiochus Epiphanes and his troops and liberated the nation and the temple. Again, I rededicated the temple on the first Hanukkah.

This talks about that battle, and I won't read it all because it's very detailed, and we don't have time. So we see he talks about delivering them from Alexander, then of course it's all about Jesus, then it's back delivering them through the Maccabean period from the oppressors they had at that time. Now, I have to say, chapter 10, verses 1 through 12, I am myself undecided about if this is continuing because the chapter divisions are artificial.

Zechariah didn't divide into chapters, he just kept going. And I don't know, but that chapter 10, verses 1 through 12, might still be about the Maccabean war and God saving his people through it. Or it might now have morphed to the Messiah again and his salvation.

There's a sense in which I can see these verses both ways, which means I can't decide. And maybe I'm not supposed to. Maybe again the deliverance of the Jews in the Maccabean period is a type and a shadow of the Messianic salvation so that these verses talk about both.

I won't go into detail because I'm looking at the clock, but just so you know, I consider chapter 10 to be possibly a continuation of the Maccabean period, which is how chapter 9 ended. Or it may be that, seen as a type of Messianic salvation, but I can't be sure about that either. It's salvation, to be sure.

It could be one or both of those two. And then chapter 11, which brings us to the end of this segment, begins, Open your doors, O Lebanon. I think most commentators agree, and I think they're correct, that Lebanon here is a reference to the temple.

Why? Because it was made of cedars from Lebanon. It's almost like it was a forest of Lebanon cedars itself. There were so many cedars in it.

And that this is talking about the doors of the temple being opened, figuratively called Lebanon because it was made of the cedars of Lebanon. And wail, O Cyprus, for the cedar has fallen, because the mighty trees are ruined. Wail, O oaks of Bashan, for thick forest has come down.

There is sound of wailing shepherds, for the glory is in ruins. Now the shepherds, I believe, are the leaders of Israel. There's many prophets like Ezekiel and Isaiah and Jeremiah, frankly, and also Zechariah, who refer to the leaders of Israel, the corrupt ones, as corrupt shepherds.

And now their glory, the temple, is going down. This is the destruction of the temple, in my opinion. After the Messiah comes and brings salvation, the old system is kaput.

It's obsolete. It's going down. It's going to suffer judgment, which it came to deserve again, just as it had in 586 BC, deserved to go down.

It deserved it in 70 AD, because of the, frankly, because of their murdering their Messiah, and also general murdering the Christians too, like Stephen and so forth. It says in the law that a city that sheds innocent blood cannot be atoned for, except by the death of the one who shed it. And so the city of Jerusalem, Jesus said, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and the messengers who were sent to you, he said, all the blood of all the martyrs, from Abel to Zechariah, is going to come on you in this generation, he said.

And it did. The fall of Jerusalem was that judgment. But Christ came and brought salvation first, which continued beyond that point.

But here we see again, remember Zechariah is concerned with the temple. He's one of the guys who made the temple get built again. Now he's being shown it's going to have its last days as well.

It says, there shall be the sound of wailing shepherds, for their glory is in ruins. There is the sound of roaring lions, for the pride of the Jordan is in ruins. Now, lions usually refer to the invading armies.

In Jeremiah, for example, Jeremiah spoke of, in Jeremiah 4, 7, a lion coming out of the thicket, meaning Nebuchadnezzar coming to destroy Jerusalem. Israel is usually compared with God's sheep, sometimes goats, sometimes calves, not very often calves, Malachi 4 compares them with calves. But usually it's God's domestic livestock, they're cared for, they're domesticated, they're God's possession, like domestic animals.

Lions, wolves, bears, leopards, they were the things that attacked sheep. In Ezekiel 34, God speaks of the wild beasts. You're talking about God taking out the bad shepherds, he's going to shepherd his people, and the wild beasts will be banished from the lands, the nations who formerly had persecuted him.

The Gentiles are the wild beasts. Daniel saw four Gentile empires, a lion, a bear, a leopard, a beast with ten horns. These were Gentile nations.

The domestic, clean animals represent Israel. The unclean, predatory, dangerous animals represent the Gentiles in this kind of imagery in this thing. So we've got, this would have to be the Romans.

After Antiochus Epiphanes, the next real threat they had was from the Romans in AD 70, and that's when the temple was destroyed. Now, we have a very famous passage here at the end, which is strange, because this is where the 30 pieces of silver for which Jesus was betrayed comes in. And yet, how so? How does this mean that? Well, verse 4, Thus says the Lord, my God, feed the flock of slaughter, whose owners slaughter them and

feel no guilt.

They've got bad shepherds, bad leaders of Israel, abusing the people. Those who sell them say, Blessed be the Lord. So these are Jewish leaders.

Blessed be Yahweh, they're saying, while they're destroying and killing this flock that they're supposed to be caring for. They say, Blessed be Yahweh, for I am rich, and their shepherds do not pity them. For I will no longer pity the inhabitants of the land, says the Lord.

Indeed, I will give everyone to his neighbor's hand and into the hand of his king. They shall attack the land, and I will not deliver them from their hand. This is the destruction of Jerusalem, because of the wickedness of the leaders, and the people under them had become wicked.

So God's bringing the Romans in to bring trouble. Why? Well, he gives us the reason why. I fed the flock for slaughter, in particular the poor of the flock.

I took for myself two stabs, one I called beauty, and the other bonds, or bands. And I fed the flock. Now, he's got two... I don't think Zechariah really did this physically.

I think this probably happened in a dream or vision, and he's describing it. Because some of the things, the reaction of the people, I don't see how he could get them to play along with this. I think this is like a prophetic dream or vision that he had, but he was a shepherd.

And he had two stabs. One was called beauty, or many translations would say grace, or favor. The first one's favor.

And the second one is called bonds, or union, unity. They represent God's favor on Israel, and the unity of the people of Israel, as we'll see. We'll see that's what it means.

I have these two. I dismissed the three shepherds in one month. My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me.

I don't know who these three are. I've heard there's 40 different interpretations of this. I'm willing to make it the scribes, or the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Sanhedrin.

But I don't know who they are. They certainly all got dismissed when they were destroyed. Then I said, I will not feed you.

Let what is dying die, and what is perishing perish. Let those that are left eat each other's flesh, which the Jews did when they were under siege. According to Josephus, the people in the siege, they ate each other.

They were so starving. And I took my stab, beauty, which means grace or favor, and I cut

it in two that I might break the covenant, which I had made with all the peoples. So he broke his covenant of grace and favor with the peoples.

So it was broken on that day. Thus the poor of the flock who were watching me knew that it was the word of the Lord. The poor of the flock are those who follow Jesus typically.

Jesus, blessed are you poor. Yours is the kingdom of God. It's the poor people, more than others, who tended to receive Christ.

They understood what was going on. Then I said to them, if it is agreeable with you, give me my wages. And if not, refrain.

So they weighed out my wages, 30 pieces of silver. This is where you get the 30 pieces of silver related to Judas. How does this relate to Judas? I'll tell you in a moment.

I asked for my wage. I'm quitting. I'm done here.

I'm not going to feed you people anymore. Just give me my severance pay. Whatever you think I'm worth, just give it to me and I'll go.

And they gave 30 pieces of silver, which is not very much money. Essentially, it's like 30 days wages. It's the price that you'd have to pay someone if you actually killed their slave.

It's the price of a slave, they say. So it's, you know, Jesus is worth a lot more than that. And he kind of complains.

He says, he says, the Lord says to me, throw it to the potter, that princely price that they set on me. This is what they value me at? 30 pieces of silver? Is that all? Throw it away. It's not even worth anything.

So I took the 30 pieces of silver and threw them in the house of the Lord for the potter, that's in the temple. And I cut into my other staff, bonds, which is union, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. Okay, they're going to be no longer happy with each other.

And the Lord said to me, next take for yourself the implements of a foolish shepherd. Okay, you're going to play another role now. For indeed I will raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for those that are cut off, nor seek the young, nor heal those that are broken, nor feed those that still stand.

But he will eat the flesh and the fat and tear their hooves in pieces. Woe to the worthless shepherd who leaves the flock. The sword shall be against his arm and against his right eye.

His arm shall completely wither and his right eye shall be totally blinded. What's this about? The prophet plays the role of a shepherd. A leader.

And in the course of that, both of his staffs get broken. First is the covenant of favor he had with the people, God's favor toward Israel. Their rejection of Christ.

Jesus left the temple and said, your house is left to you desolate. It's not my father's house anymore. Earlier in his ministry, he said, my father's house is not supposed to be a house of worship.

At the end of his ministry, your house, it's yours. You can have it. God's moving out.

It's desolate. No one lives here. God abandoned Jerusalem as his habitation.

He abandoned those who rejected his son, although the remnant of them didn't reject him. The whole early church was all Jews from Jerusalem initially. There were lots of Jews that God did not abandon because they didn't abandon him.

But the rest, break that staff. No more favor. No more Mr. Nice Guy.

My covenant with you is done. There's a new covenant now with my remnant. Forget that old covenant.

Forget it. It's done. Favor is gone.

Then he says, just pay me what you think I'm worth. They give him 30 pieces of silver. Now what's this got to do with Judas? Nothing directly.

What this is essentially saying is, the leaders of Israel, when asked what they value him at, respond with 30 pieces of silver. Well, when the leaders of Israel wanted to buy Jesus from Judas, basically, when they had him betray him, they gave him that amount. That's what they valued Jesus at.

They were willing to part with 30 pieces of silver to get him, to kill him. And that's what they gave to Judas. Now there's no person like Judas in this particular story.

It's not making the point that Judas betrayed him for that. It's basically saying, this is how they valued him? This princely price? 30 pieces of silver, that's what they think he's worth? Okay, well I'm going to break this other bond then. I'm going to break the bonds of brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

That is, the people of Israel are going to become at each other's throats. And during the siege of Jerusalem, read Josephus, they broke up into three warring camps inside the walls of the city, killing each other randomly and wholesale, while the Romans were outside, waiting to get in and kill the rest of them. It's like they went crazy.

They went berserk. The unity of the nation was totally dissolved. Even before the siege, Josephus says, every village in Israel during the Jewish war was like divided into two warring camps.

The citizens of these Jewish cities were killing each other day and night, he says. It was just total mayhem for three and a half years until finally the thing fell. That unity between the Jews was broken, just as their covenant with God was broken when the first thing was broken.

Now what do they get? They get another shepherd. Now they don't want God's shepherd, they'll get a shepherd who won't treat them well. He'll treat them harshly.

And that would be probably the Romans. You know, like the Romans came and it wasn't pretty. They didn't want Jesus as their shepherd, and it wasn't pretty what they got.

But they got what they deserved, is what he's saying. And thus it ends. So, in my opinion, this section, 9, 10, and 11, began with God delivering them from Alexander the Great, flash forward to Jesus coming as Savior, back to God delivering them through the Maccabean threat.

Then, because of their ultimate rebellion and wickedness, the destruction of the temple. Why? Well, this little bit about the shepherd tells you why. He came, he offered himself, they didn't like it, they devalued him.

So he said, okay, we're done. Let's break these staffs, I'm not shepherd anymore here. I'll give you to a shepherd that will not care about you at all.

I'm done with you. That's what it is. That's why the temple was destroyed.

That's why the Jews were scattered throughout the world. That's why Israel came to an end as a nation, and as a religious people. Now, chapter 12 begins with the same words, almost, as chapter 9. The burden of the word of the Lord, that's the same.

But this time it's against Israel. Now, in chapter 9 it was against Hadrach and Hamath, that is against the Gentiles. God delivering Israel from the Gentiles, that's what chapter 9 was about.

This is now about God judging Israel. I'm going to suggest that these verses, or these chapters I should say, are ultimately about the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. I believe chapter 12 verses 1 through 9 return to the time of the Maccabean period and God delivers them from Antiochus Bithynes and the Syrians.

And then, in chapter 12 verse 10, I believe that through chapter 13 is the Messianic salvation. Again, the chapter begins with God saving them from an oppressor through the Maccabean revolt and flashes to the salvation through the Messiah. And I believe

that salvation through the Messiah is in verse 10, I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication.

Then they will look on me whom they have pierced. They will mourn for him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for him as one grieves for a firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadad-Remen and the plain of Megiddo, which the plain of Megiddo is where Josiah was killed in battle, it was a great mourning for him.

And the land shall mourn every family by itself, the family of the house of David by itself and the wives by themselves, the family of the house of Nathan by itself and their wives by themselves, the family of the house of Levi by itself and their wives by themselves, the family of Shimei by itself and their wives by themselves, all the families that remain, every family by itself and their wives by themselves. Now, what is this talking about? God pours out the Spirit on the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Did that ever happen in history that you can recall? Oh yeah, it did, didn't it? Like ten days after Jesus ascended, God poured out his Spirit on the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

We call it Pentecost. So in chapter 12, verse 10, we have come to the Messianic age again. Pentecost.

He pours out his Spirit and the people look on him whom they have pierced. Now, when Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, he said, you people, God sent them aside to you, but you killed him by the hands of lawless people. And their hearts were pricked at this information.

And they said, what must we do? And he said, you've got to repent and be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit. So 3,000 of them did. God poured his Spirit out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

They looked on him whom they had pierced, as it were. And they, the remnant at least, repented. Now, what's this business about the house of David and the house of Nathan, the house of Levi and the house of Shimei? It's not clear.

I'll tell you what commentators usually say, and I don't see any reason to disagree. The house of David and the house of Levi are major families in Israel's history. The house of David, obviously the Leroy family.

The house of Levi, the Priestly family. The house of Nathan is a lesser son of David. Not Solomon, who is the king after David.

It's Nathan, one of David's other sons, but of lesser status. Actually, the one that Mary came through, if I understand three properly. The house of Shimei is one of the lesser tribal, lesser priestly clans.

So commentators say this is talking about the great families of David and Levi, but also the lesser families of Nathan and Shimei, which are the less prestigious. That this is going to be, what shall we say, trans-caste. You know, there's going to be people of the ruling caste and people of the lower caste.

All of them involved in this outpouring of the spirit. As Joel said, I'll pour my spirit on all flesh, your sons and your daughters, your maidservants and your maidservants. They're all going to receive the spirit and they'll prophesy.

Which, again, Peter said happened on the day of Pentecost. So we have here, after this nine verses, I think, which have resumed the Maccabean salvation, once again it jumps forward to the Messianic salvation. And we have the outpouring of the spirit as a main feature.

And we have in chapter 13, verse 1, In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness. Oh, what would that fountain be? Can you think of any fountain that cleanses sin and uncleanness? This is not the future, folks. This happened.

This happened on the cross. That's when the fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins was opened for sin and uncleanness. This is not talking about the second coming of Christ.

This is talking about the first coming of Christ. The outpouring of the spirit of Pentecost. The outpouring of the blood of Christ for sin and for uncleanness.

Calvary. And it says in verse 2, and this is a difficult passage, It shall be in that day, says the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. I also shall cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land.

Now this speaks against prophets, but it's talking about false prophets. It doesn't say false prophets, and the Old Testament never does. The expression false prophet is never found in the Old Testament.

It's only a New Testament term. True prophets and false prophets in the Old Testament are always called prophets. The context here is very clear.

The way it says prophets, he's talking about the false prophets that Israel had endured previously. I'm going to cut off the prophets and the unclean spirit that spoke through them to depart from the land. It shall come to pass that if anyone prophesies, then his mother and father who begot him shall say to him, You shall not live, because you have spoken lies in the name of Yahweh.

And the father and mother who begot him shall thrust him through when he prophesies.

Now in Deuteronomy chapter 13, there's a law that says if anyone prophesies falsely or says let's go worship other gods, which is what the false prophets were doing, you can't pity him. Even if it's your son or your daughter, you have to be the first to stone him to death.

That's kind of the idea here. Fathers and mothers, they won't even tolerate false prophecy, even from their own children. That's the idea.

That's their passion for God, for truth. And it shall be in that day that every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies and will not wear a robe of coarse hair to deceive. Obviously these are false prophets.

He will say, I am no prophet, I'm a farmer. For a man taught me to keep cattle for my youth. And someone will say to him, well what are these wounds in your hands? Then he will answer, those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.

This particular passage, this last verse, Christians can hardly resist making that be about Jesus. What are these wounds in your hands? Oh, I received these in the house of my friends. Oh man, that's so right.

That's so perfect for Jesus. But it's not about Jesus. Interestingly, the New Testament writers never quoted this verse about Jesus, which is strange because they love verses that are very graphically talking about Jesus, especially his crucifixion.

But they don't, because in the context, this is a person who is desperately seeking to deny that he was ever a false prophet. This whole passage is about how intolerant Israel will be in this age of false prophets, unlike their entire Old Testament career where they loved the false prophets. Remember God said, the prophets tell them to do these horrible things and so forth, and my people love to have it so, he says.

They love these false prophets. They kill the good prophets, they love the false prophets. Even Jesus said that, woe unto you when all men speak well of you, because your fathers did that of the false prophets.

But not anymore, not in the New Covenant, not when the Spirit of God has come, not when people have repented, not when people have a changed heart, and God's law is written in their heart. They're not going to tolerate that anymore. No more false prophets.

The idea that a mother and father will actually kill their son if he's a false prophet, this is hyperbole, but the idea is it's getting across the sink. It's going to be so unpopular to be a false prophet that if you ever were one, you don't want anyone to know it. The one who used to be a false prophet would say, oh I've been a farmer, I've never done anything for, me, a prophet? No, I'm just a guy who tended sheep, I tend cattle, I'm just a farmer.

I'm not a prophet. What do you mean? And they say, well what are these wounds on you? Now, our translation, mine says, these wounds in your hands. The body part that is here mentioned in Hebrew is very unclear.

Different translations render it differently. For example, the New American Standard says, these wounds between your arms. That's not your hands.

Or my English Greek interletter says, these wounds between your hands. The RSV and the ESV say, these wounds on your back. The new RSV says, these wounds on your chest.

The NIV says, these wounds on your body. The Young's literal translation says, wounds in your hands. So the New King James follows the Young's literal translation more.

But a lot of these translations, including the NASV, which is a pretty literal translation, and many other, they say, wounds on your chest, between your arms, between your hands, on your back. In other words, it's not real clear where these wounds are. But in all likelihood, it's not talking about crucifixion wounds in the hands.

It's probably talking about self-inflicted wounds that the prophets did, like the prophets of Baal who whipped themselves and cut themselves to try to get Baal to respond to them. The false prophets did this kind of self-mutilation, self-wounding. And now it's saying, oh, it's no longer popular? What are we going to say about these wounds? You know, people are going to say, no, I'm not a prophet, I'm just a farmer.

What about these wounds on you? Where'd they come from? If you weren't a false prophet, where'd those come from? Oh, I just received those, and, you know, I was having a good time with my friends. The booze got passed around, you know how it gets. You know, kind of a brawl.

I received these in the house of my friends. Now, it might sound like that's not what this is saying, but believe it or not, that's what most commentators believe this is saying. And I think they're probably right, because the context doesn't have anything to do with Jesus.

This is a person who's denying that he was a false prophet and making lame excuses for the wounds that he inflicted upon himself and so forth. It's because of the general, total antipathy that the people of God in the New Covenant have for false prophets and for idolatry which they, false prophets, promoted. That's at least what most commentators say, and I think they're probably correct.

Now, verse 7, Verse 7, Now, some people make this about the end times. I don't know why. Verse 7, He's talking about his disciples abandoning him in the Garden of Gethsemane.

So, we have like an inspired interpretation of this verse and the time frame. This is not talking about the end times. This is talking about the beginning times, when the Spirit was poured out, when the fountain was opened for sin and for uncleanness.

This is the same era, the first coming of Christ, which included him being stricken and his disciples scattering. And, it's interesting because the same sentence goes on, after he scattered, that the sheep, the little ones, God will turn his hand against them. And, it says, Now, you may know dispensationalists believe this is not what the Antichrist is going to do in the future.

There's going to be just another pogrom or holocaust. Brought about by the Antichrist and he's going to wipe out two-thirds of the Jewish population. You may have heard this mentioned in connection with critics of dispensationalists like myself, who say, and you want us to pay to move these Jews from Russia and Poland and pay their airfare back to Jerusalem? There's dispensational organizations raising money for this, to get those Jews out of Europe and get them back to Jerusalem.

So, as they believe, the Antichrist can kill two-thirds of them. That sounds real generous. That sounds kind of anti-Semitic to me.

They actually believe that the Jews are all going to come back to Jerusalem and then the Antichrist is going to kill two-thirds of them there, in Jerusalem. So, sign me up, oh yeah, I'll pay for a lot of those guys to fly back there. Not me, thanks.

I'm not anti-Semitic. You may be. I don't want people to die innocently.

Even Jews or Gentiles, it doesn't matter. But this is not about that. There's no Antichrist in this picture.

No Antichrist in Zechariah or in most of the books of the Bible. The Bible is not about Antichrist. It's about Christ.

The two-thirds that are cut off are the majority. By the way, a third is symbolic for a significant minority. It's the largest whole fraction under half.

So it's significant large, but it's not quite a half, so it's a significant minority. The third is the remnant who are saved. The two-thirds are those who are wiped out in A.D. 70.

That's what happened in the first century. The Messiah was stricken, and then God brought judgment on the city for it. And the majority of the Jews suffered in that judgment.

A third, which simply means a significant minority, which is the Jewish Christians, escaped. Now, I know someone says, but it says one-third shall not, they shall be left in it. But remember what it is.

It is Jerusalem, the people of God. The remnant of the Jews who survived are that remnant who are left in Jerusalem, the Jerusalem that continues. Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D., but a Jerusalem continued in the people of God, the spiritual Jerusalem.

And these people were not cut off from it. These people remained part of the true Jerusalem, the faithful remnant, when the unfaithful Jerusalem went down. Now, I know this because Jesus has given us the time frame for this fulfillment.

The strike in the shepherd took place in the Garden of Gethsemane. We have Jesus' authority for that. We're not talking about the 21st century.

We're talking about the first century. We're talking about Christ's blood being shed. We're talking about the Holy Spirit being poured out.

We're not talking about Christ being betrayed. We're talking about God bringing judgment on the majority of the Jewish people in Jerusalem because of what they did. Now, verse 9, I will bring one-third, that is the remnant, through the fire.

I will refine them as silver is refined and test them as gold is tested. Peter essentially quotes this about Christians, doesn't he? He says that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perishes might be found under praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Peter thinks he's in this period of time.

Peter thinks he and his readers belong to this time when this is going on. That's in, of course, 1 Peter 1, verse 7. Then they'll call on my name. I'll answer them.

I will say, this is my people. Well, he's already said back in chapter 2, multitudes of nations are going to come into this and they'll be called his people. Not just Jews.

Jews and Gentiles are God's people now. Used to be Jews only. But, well, not only because there are some Gentiles who could be in proselytes.

But for the most part, it was the Jews as a race that were the people of God, not so much anymore. It's now, many nations are now part of this, my people. Now, verse, chapter 14, as quickly as I can.

This is hard. Jerusalem, in this chapter, is now, I believe, the new Jerusalem. The old Jerusalem is destroyed and the true Jerusalem continues in the remnant of the inhabitants of the old Jerusalem.

The faithful remnant who came to Christ, the church in Jerusalem, continue as the new Jerusalem. And I believe that we have much reason to believe that what is said of Jerusalem in chapter 14 is about the church. Now, we do have the destruction of Jerusalem at the beginning.

That's still going on because, again, there's no chapter divisions. We got the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD at the end of chapter 13. It continues, Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst.

For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem. All the nations, of course, that were part of the Roman Empire, which was all the nations of that region. The city will be taken.

Okay? Jerusalem is destroyed. Taken by the invaders. The house is rifled.

The women will be ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity. The remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

That is, the true remnant are still part of Jerusalem. Even though the city is gone, they are still part of the Zion of God's people. Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations as he fights in the day of battle.

Yeah, the Romans came under their problems, too, in due time. God settles all the scores. He uses one nation to judge his people, then he judges them in due time.

The Roman Empire has fallen through some very horrible experiences, through various barbarian invasions. Not immediately after this, but that was logically the next thing. Verse 4, And in that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east.

And the Mount of Olives shall split into... This is, of course, the physical Jerusalem, because the Mount of Olives is outside of it, clearly. The Mount of Olives shall split into, from east to west, making a very large valley. Half of the mountain shall move toward the north, half toward the south.

And you shall flee through my mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as when you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah. Thus the Lord, our God, will come and all the saints with you.

Now, is this the second coming? Everybody seems to think so. How many of you have heard someone say, when Jesus comes back, he will set his foot on the Mount of Olives, and it will split in two? Anyone ever heard that? Of course we have. Is that what this is talking about? Have we now jumped ahead from 70 AD to the end of the world? Well, I'm not saying the prophet couldn't do that if he wanted to, but do we have any evidence that it is so? Let me point out this.

The idea that Jesus will set foot on the Mount of Olives when he comes back is based on two things. One is that he left from the Mount of Olives. The angel said he will come back in the same way as he left.

He didn't say to the same place specifically, but he will come back the same way. And so some say, well, that would be to the Mount of Olives. But mostly it's this verse.

There is no place else in the Bible that says Jesus will come to the Mount of Olives, and this one doesn't either. It doesn't even mention Jesus. The he, the antecedent to he is Yahweh.

Now, yeah, you and I know that Jesus is Yahweh in the flesh, but the Old Testament prophets don't talk that way, generally speaking. Even the disciples didn't know Jesus was Yahweh until after Pentecost and so forth. Yahweh is the one doing the judging here.

Yahweh is the one, you know, destroying the nations. Yahweh is the subject of the sentence, and he will stand on the Mount of Olives. Why? This is not the first time Yahweh is seen standing on the Mount of Olives in the Old Testament.

The first time was just before he destroyed the temple at the hands of the Babylonians. Ezekiel chapter 11. In Ezekiel chapters 8 through 11 we have a prophecy about all the abominations done in Jerusalem, and that God was leaving the temple.

Ezekiel sees the glory of the Lord taking steps. He leaves the holy, he leaves the temple, he leaves the city, and at the very end of chapter 11 of Ezekiel, the last verses, it says, and he will stand on the Mount of Olives, you know, on the east of Jerusalem. Well, why? Because he's no longer in the city.

When God's in the city, he can take care of his own interests against all invaders, but he is done with the city. He's left the city. He's moved out, and he's on the mountain watching as the enemies come and destroy it.

That's what Ezekiel is saying. That's what Zechariah is saying. You see, Ezekiel said this about the first destruction of the temple, 586 B.C. God left the city.

He's not there anymore. Jesus said, your house is left to you desolate. The second destruction of Zerubbabel's temple took place in 70 A.D., and the prophet who was the witness of the building of the temple is also one who was given the prophecy about its destruction.

The same thing happened to Ezekiel's temple. That is, the temple that Ezekiel worshipped in is now going to happen to the temple that Zechariah worshipped in. God leaves.

He's on the outside of the city. That means the city is abandoned to its enemies, and it's going down. That's what it meant in Ezekiel 11.

That's what it means here. There's no mention of Christ here, no second coming. Now, what about the mountain splitting and making a great valley east to west? Well, that's so

that they could flee through it.

You will flee through the valley. This is simply saying that God is making a way of escape for his faithful remnant. When Jerusalem falls to the Romans, his remnant will flee to the east.

Mountains are usually considered to be obstructions. Earlier in chapter 4, talking to Zerubbabel, he said, Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel, you will become a plain. Well, not literally, certainly.

Mountains don't become plains, and they don't split in two either. But the idea is a mountain is an obstruction, certainly an obstruction to travel in those days. And so God says, I want my people to have a beeline out of this place.

I'm going to remove the obstruction. I'll just split them out and make a path for them right through there. Not literally, any more than the mountain became a plain for Zerubbabel.

Both images are found in Zechariah. The idea here is that God has abandoned Jerusalem. The enemies are coming.

They're going to destroy it, and God's going to make a way of escape. The churches will flee to the east, across the river, and to a town that's called Pella. That's what happened.

Now, it goes on, and very importantly, I'm not going to talk about everything here, but look at verse 8. In that day, it shall be that living water shall flow from Jerusalem, the sea, half of them, toward the western sea, both in summer and winter, shall occur. Now, what's this talking about? Joel talks about this, too, in Joel chapter 3, in verse 18. And Ezekiel does, in Ezekiel 47, verses 1 through 12.

They talk about this river of water coming out of, below the threshold of the temple, out to water the desert lands, and so forth. What's that about? Is that like literal, or what? Well, this is the only passage that speaks of that river as a river of living water. In that day, living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, and it will water these areas.

Jesus alluded to this. If you look at John chapter 7, John chapter 7, verse 37 through 39. On that last day of the great feast of tabernacles, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

He that believes in me, as the scripture has said, he must be in the Old Testament, because there were no New Testament scriptures where he said this. So, as the Old Testament scriptures have said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. But this he spoke concerning the Holy Spirit, for those believing in him that they receive, for he was not yet given.

Jesus was not yet glorified. Jesus said, the scriptures have predicted that out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water. Where in the Old Testament do you read anything about a river of living water? Living water, that's just here, nowhere else.

He's alluding to this river of living water flowing out of what? Out of Jerusalem. What's that? The believers. Out of the believers.

He that believes in me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water, as the scripture has said. He's referring to this verse. He's talking about the Holy Spirit being dispersed throughout the world from Jerusalem, which is where the church began, out to all the Gentile nations, so that the spiritual revival, the kingdom of God, can reach every people, nation, tribe, and tongue.

That's what this is describing here in Joel 30, 18, and in Ezekiel 47, in my opinion. And so, again, we're looking at the New Testament era, the present era. That's what's going on.

Since the Spirit was poured out on me in heaven, it's Jerusalem, chapter 12, verse 10. Since the fountain was opened for sin and uncleanness, chapter 13, verse 1. Since the shepherd was smitten, his sheep were scattered, chapter 13, verse 7. Since Jerusalem was destroyed, the end of chapter 13 through the beginning of chapter 14. Those are all first century things.

By the way, if someone thinks that chapter 14 is talking about a destruction of another Jerusalem someday in the future, then, okay, there's a problem with that, I think. Because if you look in this chapter, at verse 11, it says, the people shall dwell in it. No longer shall there be utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

Now, I take that to be the spiritual Jerusalem, but think about it. If we're talking about the physical Jerusalem, we've got Zerubbabel's temple is destroyed in 70 AD. And then some people think that chapters 12 through 14 is about another temple in the future.

And it's destroyed in chapter 14, verse 1 and 2. But then the people of God are living safely in Jerusalem. Again, I thought, now, third temple is destroyed. I don't believe the Bible even talks about a third temple, but most dispensationalists do.

And that must be the one that's destroyed in chapter 14, verse 1, if this is the last days. And yet, we read people living safely in Jerusalem undisturbed. That's the spiritual Jerusalem.

That's the heavenly Jerusalem. That's us in the Zion, the kingdom of God. Now, it does talk in some pretty amazing terms about people's flesh dissolving while they stand on their feet, eyes dissolving in their sockets.

Dispensationalists like that to be about nuclear war or something like that, radiation

causes all this to happen. All of these things, I think, are as symbolic as chapter 11, 17 is, where it talks about the bad shepherd. His arm shall completely wither, his right eye shall be totally blinded.

The shepherd's arm is to protect his sheep. His eye is to watch over the sheep. He hasn't been doing it, so he's going to go blind and powerless.

But not literally. His eye is not going to go blind. This is figuratively.

The bad shepherds, they're not doing their job, so you might as well take away their capacity to do it. They're supposed to use their arms and their eyes to watch over and protect the sheep. They're not doing it.

Might as well take their eyes out. Might as well take their arms off. And here also, this is all just a grotesque picture, I believe.

Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet. Well, it does actually say, at the end of the church age, in 2 Thessalonians, chapter 1 and verse 8, that Jesus will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel. Maybe that's when their flesh melts, or maybe it's just apocalyptic language.

Their eyes dissolve in their sockets and their tongues dissolve in their mouths. I think this is more likely to talk about how they go spiritually blind and they're rendered speechless, but I don't want to be dogmatic about this. This is very apocalyptic imagery.

The main thing I want to point out, though, is that in verses 16 through 21, it talks about people coming to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles. And it talks about, they'll have to come, and any nation that doesn't come to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, then there's going to be no rain on their land. And it says in verse 20, In that day holiness to the Lord shall be engraven on the bells of the horses, the pots of the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar.

Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the Lord of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. In that day there shall be no longer a canine, or some translation would say a trader, a trader, like someone who trades a merchant, in the house of the Lord of hosts.

Now I can't get into this like I'd like to, but a lot of people think this means that in a future millennium, there's going to be observation of the Feast of Tabernacles. And that if any Gentiles don't come for it, God will dry them out with no rain. This is difficult, because keeping the feasts in the New Testament has a totally different meaning.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 5, verse 7, Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast, meaning the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

There's this spiritual keeping of the feast, not a literal keeping of it.

We don't literally keep the seven days of unleavened bread. Our life is a keeping of the feast of unleavened bread. We leave out the leaven of malice and wickedness out of our lives, and we live a life of sincerity and truth.

That's the unleavened bread. There's a spiritual sense in which these feasts are fulfilled, just like there's a spiritual sense in which the Sabbath is observed in Hebrews chapter 4. So, what was the Feast of Tabernacles? It was a commemoration of the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, dwelling in tents. Now, Paul speaks about our life in this world as Christians as in a tent.

If this tent, this tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We're living in a tent right now. In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul says that when the Israelites came out of Israel and they ate the spiritual food, they drank the water from the rock, they did these things, he says that's a type of us.

The journey of Israel through the wilderness, living in tents, is a type of the Christian life. We're in this tent also. We live in a feast, this is a spiritual feast of tabernacles we're celebrating in Christ that we've been delivered from Egypt.

We still look forward to a certain promised land ahead of us, but we're living in the interim here, and anyone who doesn't participate in this is not included, is not a Christian, in other words. And I think the keeping of the feast of tabernacles here is to be understood spiritually. Otherwise, we have to believe that the festivals of Israel are not fulfilled in Christ, as I think the Bible suggests they are, that not every jot and tittle of the law has been fulfilled as Jesus said it would be, and therefore not one jot or tittle of the law has passed.

So we need those animal sacrifices, we need to circumcise, we need to do all those things because the law hasn't been fulfilled yet. But Jesus said it would be, he said he came to fulfill it, and I believe he did. I don't think he failed.

But this last two verses talk about everything is going to say holiness to the Lord. Now holiness to the Lord is the inscription on the golden plate on the forehead of the high priest, according to Exodus. High priests wore a turban and a gold plaque that said holiness to the Lord.

He was the holiest man, not in his behavior necessarily, though he should have been, but he was the only one who was set apart to go into the holy of holies like no one else could, the holiest of all places. He was the most set apart man, separate from God. There were other holy things, the tabernacle itself was holy, the animals or whatever touched the altar was holy, all the Levites were holy, but he was the holiest of all.

The holiest to the Lord is the high priest's identity. However, it says in this day, the bells

on the horses are going to have that engraved on them. What could be more spiritual? What could be more mundane? What could be more non-spiritual than the jingling bells on the harness of the horses? What he's saying is the day is coming when the distinction that Israel made under the law between the sacred and the secular is abolished, everything's sacred.

To the believer, everything is sacred. We don't have one day we keep holy, we keep every day holy. We don't give God 10%, we give him 100%.

We are every day separated to God. We are saints, holy ones. And therefore, what this is saying is, in this era, you're not going to have a few holy days and holy places, a few holy priests here and holy things on a calendar.

No, everything's holy to the Lord. Like the high priest was, the bells on the horses are. Every pot and vessel in Jerusalem is going to be like the holy pots and the holy to bring sacrifices.

In other words, he's saying the new covenant era in which we live is an era in which this distinction, there's a holy place and some not so holy places. There's a holy man and some not so holy men. Those things are no longer.

God's not making those distinctions. Everything in the kingdom of God, for those who participate in it, is devoted to God. We have no category of our life that we are entitled to not have consecrated fully to God as if it was a sacrifice on the altar.

Our very bodies are to be presented as a sacrifice holy and acceptable to God. Everything is. Our money is.

When the Philippians sent Paul money in jail, he said, I've received that. It's a holy sacrifice, a pleasing to God that you've offered there. So the New Testament doesn't have rituals for a holy service.

Your whole life is to be holy service. Everything, your shoestrings, the bells on your horses, everything is the Lord's. You don't have any category of your life that you keep for yourself when you surrender to Jesus Christ because he's the king over all, all authority in heaven and earth belongs to him.

So obedience to him is the only thing that is a concern for a Christian in all areas of life. That's what I think is being said there about the new era. The old covenant ends.

The old Jerusalem goes down. There's a new Jerusalem now. Those in it have peace.

Those in it worship God. Those in that Jerusalem, everything is holy to them. That's what I believe is what that last chapter is about.

I go into more detail on these things in my longer lectures. I'm done. I've gone.

I'm done.