

# On What Basis Shall We Interpret Zechariah 12-14?

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## Introduction

In the present paper I examine Zech 12-14 from the viewpoint of what Zechariah was saying to his first readers, then from how he was interpreted by New Testament writers, and finally in terms of the impact his prophecies should have on us now that will improve our understanding of other parts of Scripture.

As a point of method it is necessary not only to consider each of the above items but to consider them in the order stated. If we start with number 3 in a present day application and either skip over points 1 and 2 or treat them as having little importance, the resulting exegesis will be flawed. When each of the above steps has been considered in turn, however, the results are sound in themselves and an answer presents itself to the dispensationalist view that the Jews as a group will be led to accept Christ just before His second coming.

My remarks on the literary structure of Zech 12-14 are not by any means intended to be a complete statement on the subject. The most thorough treatment of these chapters so far is that of Paul LaMarche in his 1961 book entitled, *Zacharie IX-XIV: structure littéraire et messianisme*.<sup>1</sup> What I concentrate on is the timeframe of final application, viewing the text through the lense of the New Testament. A similar study needs to be done on Zech 9-11. The results of both studies, taken together, would go a long way toward refining LaMarche's model. The elegant chiasmic analysis he proposes for the last six chapters of Zechariah is one that anyone must be aware of who wishes to study that part of the prophecy in detail. But for all the care he has lavished on his topic, the results are not fully satisfying. Some of the proposed structures appear forced. They do not spring from the text in a natural and convincing manner. Nor does LaMarche take the New Testament evidence sufficiently well into account.<sup>2</sup> As a result some parts of his model need to be reworked.<sup>3</sup> Doing so, however, would require a separate paper.

## Zechariah's Message to His Contemporaries

Zechariah's message to his contemporaries was simple and straightforward. The temple had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar some sixty-six years before the dateline of Zech 1:1 (sixty-eight years before that of 7:1) and after all that time it still lay in ruins.<sup>4</sup> The goal of both Haggai and Zechariah was to get the temple built again. What both men said and eventually wrote had the purpose of motivating their contemporaries to take up this important work and complete it without further delay.

Haggai and Zechariah differ widely in style. While the one confines himself for the most part to the situation at hand,<sup>5</sup> and meticulously documents each thing he says, the other

indulges in bold flights of apocalyptic imagery and frequently speaks of the distant future.<sup>6</sup> But both had a task to do. It was the same task and they cooperated to ensure that it was done.

### The nature of Zechariah's argument

It is instructive to consider the basis on which Zechariah appealed to his contemporaries for action. The work on the temple was worthwhile and should be done in part because the results of doing it would last. In spite of all appearances to the contrary the temple would yet have a glorious future. Here the role of the future in Zechariah's argument is the point to emphasize.

Jeremiah speaks similarly about an eventual return from Babylon. Israel would be gone ""a long time"" (Jer 29:28), but not indefinitely. God was not finished with His people. He was not turning His back on them.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jer 29:11)

God was disciplining Israel by sending them away from their homes, but was not rejecting them outright (Isa 10:5-6). For someone living at the time these events occurred it was an important distinction to keep in mind. If God was not giving up on His people, then His people should not give up on Him. Judea would again be theirs. In the meantime, however, the stark reality of their situation would help them realize that the covenant was a two-way agreement and that its blessings were not inalienable.

Those who had "the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises" (Rom 9:4) had to learn that the significance of their rich religious heritage infinitely transcended nationalism. The favor they enjoyed did not reside in themselves or in their role as an independent people living in Palestine. By separating His people from their covenant blessings for a time God captured their attention as the only means of regaining those blessings. They would not just return from exile; God would bring them back, just as He had brought them into their land initially. The exile gave Israel a hope and a future--as opposed to a present--and thus became one of the most important learning experiences in their history. For Jeremiah during the exile and Zechariah afterward, future blessings are held out as a basis for present faith and action.<sup>7</sup>

### The results of Zechariah's ministry

Zechariah's ministry had a very practical agenda, as stated above, and this is what he was remembered for by those living in the generation immediately after him. There are two references to Zechariah in the book of Ezra (5:1; 6:14)<sup>8</sup> and in both cases his name is linked, not with an apocalyptic interest in the distant future, but with the immediate task of rebuilding the temple. The passages referred to are quoted below.

Now Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the prophet, a descendant of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them. (2) Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jozadak set to work to rebuild the house of God in Jerusalem. And the prophets of God were with them, helping them. (Ezra 5:1-2)

So the elders of the Jews continued to build and prosper under the preaching of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah, a descendant of Iddo. They finished building the temple according to the command of the God of Israel and the decrees of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes, kings of Persia. (Ezra 6:14)

If one truly believes that a given project must fail, he will be unlikely to pursue it. Here is the point where faith and works--belief and activity--converge.<sup>9</sup> So when God wanted His people to work on the temple immediately, He gave them a basis for faith about how things would be in the future and the result is a matter of public record. The temple was rebuilt as God designed that it should be. Zechariah's ministry was a success. He might have appeared to be talking past his contemporaries, but in fact he was meeting their needs in a direct and useful way. Always the prophet's broader purpose for saying what he does must be considered as we evaluate his message.<sup>10</sup>

## Zechariah's Message as Interpreted in the New Testament

Jerome once spoke of the book of Zechariah as "that most obscure book of the prophet Zechariah, and of the Twelve the longest . . ."<sup>11</sup> It is true that Zechariah contains difficult material. For this reason we should bear in mind that a number of passages in the New Testament quote, allude to, or otherwise remind us of something in Zechariah (see Appendix).<sup>12</sup> In making such comparisons we need not confine ourselves to examples of direct word for word quotation, as LaMarche proposes doing.<sup>13</sup> The Holy Spirit gave later inspired writers insight into which Old Testament passages bore a special relation to Christ,<sup>14</sup> which ones deserved emphasis, and when the events referred to would occur. It is unreasonable to ignore what He says in the New Testament so as to understand what He meant in the Old.

The chiastic arrangement  
of chaps. 12-14

Motifs from Zech 12-14 are applied in the New Testament to two different and widely separately periods of time. One group of references has to do with the time of Christ's first advent (parallels drawn from chap. 13), another with the time of His second advent and beyond (parallels drawn from chaps. 12 and 14).<sup>15</sup> That Zech 12-14 is chiastic in form has been established by others and need not be asserted here.<sup>16</sup> What I point out below is merely that the timeframe of final application is one of the things that makes it chiastic. Notice that there are ten references to Jerusalem in chap. 12, one reference in chap. 13, and ten again in chap. 14.<sup>17</sup> The lexical distribution of references to Jerusalem provides yet another example of chiasmus. But by far the single most important structural feature of Zech 12-14 is the pattern formed by applying its chapters to different eras.

New Testament allusions  
to Zech 12

*Gathering the nations.* The gathering of the nations is an eschatological concept. The nations are gathered in the end time at Armageddon. Their purpose is to fight against God in the person of His saints (Zech 12:3, 9; Rev 16:16; 19:19).

For a number of different reasons the gathering of nations is linked to the second coming of Christ. As regards the saints, on the one hand, the second advent is a rescue mission. What Christ rescues them from is the attack of the gathered nations. When He comes to save them from imminent destruction, He comes and that event is the second advent. As regards the nations, on the other hand, it is a time of confrontation. Christ takes the field against them personally--leading all the angel armies of heaven--and when He does this the result is Scripture's great final eschatological battle (Rev 19:11-14). Conditions on earth might be chaotic at this time, but even if there were outright nuclear war that would not measure up to the biblical Armageddon.

Those who have persistently regarded Christ with hostility before see Him now as an enemy against whom there can be no defense (Zech 12:10-14; Mal 3:2; Rev 6:15-17), while those who have loved Him and looked forward to seeing Him find in Christ the same source of protection that they have always been able to rely on in smaller crises. Only one event is depicted here but there are two different attitudes toward it--but not three (Rev 22:11). A person is either willing to be led or is not (Matt 25:31-46) and in earth's final hour this distinction, which has always existed, is simply made clear (Mal 3:18).

### Zechariah

On that day, when all the **nations** [*gôyê*] of the earth are **gathered** [*w<sup>e</sup>ne<sup>e</sup>s<sup>e</sup>pû*] against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. (Zech 12:3)

On that day I will set out to destroy all the **nations** [*haggôyîm*] that attack Jerusalem. (Zech 12:9)

### New Testament

"At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the **nations** [*hai phulai*] of the earth will mourn. They will set the Son of Man coming in clouds of the sky, with power and great glory." (Matt 24:30)

Then they **gathered** [*sunēgagen*] the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon. (Rev 16:16)

Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies **gathered** together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. (Rev 19:19)

*Looking on the One they have pierced.* The clause, "They will look on me, the one they have pierced [*dāqârû*], . . ." <sup>18</sup> (Zech 12:10) is a reference to Christ's death on the cross (John 19:34). But what happens in the Zech 12:10 is looking, not piercing. The piercing has taken place already. In the gospel of John and again in the book of Revelation the above passage is applied to the time of Christ's second coming. <sup>19</sup>

### Zechariah

"They will look on me, the one they have **pierced** [*dāqârû*], and mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son." (Zech 12:10)

## New Testament

and, as another Scripture says, "They will look on the one they have **pierced** [*exekentēsan*]." (John 19:37)

look, he is coming with the clouds,  
and every eye will see him,  
even those who **pierced** [*exekentēsan*] him;  
and all the peoples of the earth will mourn  
because of him.

So shall it be! Amen. (Rev 1:7)

*Mourning.* When those who crucified Christ see Him coming in the clouds, they mourn for Him bitterly. It would be convenient now to push Him out of mind as they had always tried to do before but they cannot; He is standing before them in person surrounded by all the angels of heaven in dazzling glory. Before Christ can confront His enemies in this way, He must arrive. When He does so, that is the second coming. Thus, the mourning of Zech 12 is associated, not with a time before the second coming, but with the event itself.

In three different ways Zechariah tries to emphasize just how intense the people's remorse will be when they see Christ come. First, their feelings are compared with those of a parent who mourns "for an only child" (vs. 10b)--i.e., for the loss of an only child--and second, with the way one would mourn "for a firstborn son" (vs. 10c). The third comparison is with a historical event that was well enough known to Zechariah's first readers that he needed to mention little more than the place where it occurred in order to be understood. The place in question was the plain of Megiddo.

The reference to Megiddo is again reminiscent of Armageddon, but the context is unusual. Instead of fighting, we find weeping: "On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be great, like the weeping of Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo" (Zech 12:11). The historical occasion for the weeping Zechariah refers to so cryptically was the death of Josiah (2 Kgs 23:29-30; 2 Chr 35:20-25). Josiah had been one of Judah's finest kings and his loss was keenly felt.

Jeremiah composed laments for Josiah, and to this day all the men and women singers commemorate Josiah in the laments. These became a tradition in Israel and are written in the Laments. (2 Chr 35:25)

If we take Zechariah's three comparisons seriously, what he describes is not an occasion for repentance. Repentance is a special case of change and all of the examples given are forceful precisely because they describe situations that are beyond change. Why is the death of an only child especially tragic? An individual life comes to an end, which would be bad enough, but an entire family line is also terminated. In the death of a firstborn son, there might be other children but there can never be another firstborn. In both cases the point of the illustration is that the loss is complete and irreversible.

As regards Josiah, the level of tragedy is not reduced by the fact that only one mother could claim him as her son. The implications of Josiah's death shook the entire nation. When Josiah's coffin was sealed, so was Judah's doom. His sons were not only evil but incompetent

(2 Kgs 23:31-24:20; 2 Chr 36:2-14; Jer 38:4-5, 19). Within twenty-eight years of his death--less than a single generation--the temple lay in ruins and Judah as an independent nation had ceased to exist.

Thus, one must conclude that the mourning of Zech 12:10-14 does not provide for change, as in the rethinking a position, but instead reflects a dawning awareness of irretrievable loss. The only thing that changes is the level of awareness.<sup>20</sup> What makes the people's mourning so bitter on this occasion is a full and final realization that their situation is beyond all hope. Let me add here that the above condition does not yet apply. Christ can be approached and accepted by anyone at all who comes to Him in simple faith. But now is the time to do this. The decision is a real one and the opportunity to make it will eventually pass.

### Zechariah

"They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and **mourn** [*w<sup>h</sup>āmēr*] for him as one **mourns** [*k<sup>h</sup>āmēr*] for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. (11) On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be great, like the weeping of Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. (12) The land will **mourn** [*w<sup>e</sup>sāp<sup>e</sup>dā*], each clan by itself, with their wives by themselves: . . ." (Zech 12:10-12)

### New Testament

"At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will **mourn** [*kopsontai*]. They will see the Son of Man coming in clouds of the sky, with power and great glory." (Matt 24:30)

*Megiddo and Armageddon.* Armageddon as an event is the second coming of Christ from the perspective of those who have no reason to welcome it.<sup>21</sup> "Armageddon" as a word has a Hebrew origin: "Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon [*harmagedōn*]" (Rev 16:16). Linguistically John's term *harmagedōn* is entirely transparent. It has two parts: (1) *har* "mountain" and (2) *agedōn* "Megiddo." Determining the etymological meaning of the word is not a problem. It means "Mount Megiddo" or the "hill of Megiddo."<sup>22</sup> Greek *agedōn* for Hebrew *m<sup>e</sup>giddō* was a common spelling, as for example in the Septuagint rendering of Josh 12:21; Judg 1:27, and 2 Chr 35:22.

Our difficulty with "Armageddon" is not linguistic but exegetical. It is one thing to determine that the word means "Mount Megiddo," but it is another to apply that information in a meaningful and responsible way. There is no mountain or hill in the Old Testament called "Mount Megiddo." Nor was the town of Megiddo built on a mountain. It was built on the side of a valley which runs westward toward the Mediterranean. There was a stream in the valley called Kishon, watered by Mount Tabor. Opposite the stream to the south was a range of hills. The highest point along that range--northwest from Megiddo--was Mount Carmel.<sup>23</sup> In my view William H. Shea has correctly identified Mount Carmel as the geographical feature referred to in the word "Armageddon."<sup>24</sup>

If this is the case, then we are not dealing with obscure matters at all in Rev 16:16 or in Zech 12:11. Instead what we have is a very helpful indication of where to start looking for biblical insight into an important future event--one which God must surely want us to understand. When the physical location of Megiddo is taken into account each of the following

terms is seen to be relevant as a source of potential background information: "Megiddo" (the city itself), "Carmel" (the mountain to the northwest of the city), "Jezreel" or "Esdraelon" (the plain below the city), and "Kishon" (the stream that ran through the plain). When the Old Testament references to the above terms have been looked up and carefully studied, one will have a basis for understanding what sorts of things are at issue in Armageddon.

It has been suggested that John's term *harmagedōn* refers more or less directly to Zech 12:11 because the Hebrew word is spelled with final nun nowhere else.<sup>25</sup> I favor the alternative view that John was simply using a standard Greek spelling of a common word, not an uncommon Hebrew spelling, and that he did not necessarily have Zech 12:11 in view as he wrote, but it is not possible to give a final answer. Fortunately those points that are most clear are also the ones that are most important, i.e., that the term "Armageddon" refers to Megiddo and that the reference to Megiddo in Zech 12:11 has eschatological and not merely local significance. Both Zechariah and John connect the gathering of all nations for battle (Zech 12:9; Rev 16:16a) with a reference to Megiddo (Zech 12:11; Rev 16:16b) and this makes a connection between the two passages unavoidable, whether or not John had Zechariah specifically in mind as he wrote.

### Zechariah

On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be great, like the weeping of Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo [*m<sup>e</sup>giddōn*]. (Zech 12:11)

### New Testament

Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon [*harmagedōn*]. (Rev 16:16)

### New Testament allusions to Zech 13

Zech 13:1 marks a transition from the motif of mourning to one of cleansing, just as Zech 12:10 marked a transition from the motif of fighting to one of mourning.

*A fountain for cleansing.* The "fountain [that] will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (Zech 13:1) cannot be a literal fountain because what it cleanses from is "sin and impurity." It addresses spiritual issues. The above fountain imagery refers to the work of the Holy Spirit in a person's heart, pointing him or her to Christ (John 7:37-39). It is difficult, however, to make a clear distinction between the work of the Spirit and that of the Son. Paul speaks of spiritual cleansing as something accomplished by Christ (Eph 5:25-27). But in any event the basis for it is the historical life, death, and resurrection of Christ (2 Tim 2:8-9). The point here is that the events under discussion relate to the time of the first coming rather than the second. Zech 13:1 is a prophecy that has already been abundantly fulfilled.<sup>26</sup>

### Zechariah

"On that day a fountain [*māqōr*] will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity." (Zech 13:1)

## New Testament

On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If a man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink." (38) Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, **streams of living water** [*potamoi . . . hudatos zōntos*] will flow from within him." (39) By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. (John 7:37-39)

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (26) to make her holy, cleansing her by **the washing with water through the word** [*tō loutrō tou hudatos en rēmāti*], (27) and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. (Eph 5:25-27)

*Striking and scattering.* The verses that follow do not drop the subject of cleansing but developed it further: "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, . . ." (Zech 13:7). Striking the Shepherd not only scatters the sheep (vs. 7) but causes blood to flow, which both cleanses (vs. 1) and refines (vs. 9), with the result that the sheep are ultimately gathered again (Zech 14:2; John 10:12, 14-18).

In both Matthew and Mark the clause, "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered," is quoted verbatim and Christ applies it to Himself. John mentions only the scattering of the sheep (John 16:32). His manner of application, however, is the same as that of Matthew and Mark. The Shepherd is Christ and the sheep scattered at His death are the eleven remaining disciples.

## Zechariah

"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd,  
against the man who is close to me!"  
declares the Lord Almighty.

"Strike the shepherd,  
and the sheep will be scattered [*ἰακ ᾧ-ἡρῶ-εἰ ἕτ' ἐπισηνᾶ ἡσσηὼν*],  
and I will turn my hand against the little ones."  
(Zech 13:7)

## New Testament

Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered [*pataxō ton poimena, kai diaskorpisthēsontai ta probata tēs moimnēs*]." (Matt 26:31; see also vs. 56)<sup>27</sup>

"You will all fall away," Jesus told them, "for it is written:  
'I will strike the shepherd,  
and the sheep will be scattered [*pataxō ton poimena, kai ta probata diaskorpisthēsontai*]." (Mark 14:27)



"But a time is coming, and has come, when **you will be scattered** [*skorpisthēte hekastos*], each to his own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. (John 16:32)

*A process of refining.* When the Shepherd is struck and the sheep are scattered, the period that follows is one of refining. During crucifixion week the remaining disciples went through a time of severe disillusionment and soul searching. A precedent for their experience was that of Jacob on his return home to Canaan after twenty years in Paddan Aram (Gen 31:41; 32:22-31). It is instructive to notice Jacob received the name "Israel" on this occasion (vs. 28).<sup>28</sup> A similar example at a later time is illustrated by John's eating of a bitter scroll in Rev 10:5-11 (cf. Ezek 3:1-3).<sup>29</sup> This same process operates on a smaller scale in every true example of conversion.

### Zechariah

"This third I will bring **into the fire** [*bā'ēš*];  
I will **refine them** [*ûṣ'ṛāptîm*] like silver  
and test them like gold." (Zech 13:9a)

### New Testament

These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though **refined by fire** [*dia puros de dokimozomenou*—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. (1 Pet 1:7)

*Covenant motif.* The covenant is a topic that has received a lot of scholarly attention.<sup>30</sup> Walther Eichrodt for example held that the covenant motif provides a unifying theme for the entire Old Testament.<sup>31</sup> And William H. Shea has suggested that the letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation are structured in terms of a covenant formulary.<sup>32</sup> The idea captured by means of covenant language, however, is quite simple.

"I will say, 'They are my people,' and they will say, 'The Lord is our God'" (Zech 13:9).

Here is the heart of the matter. The covenant is a mutual expression of commitment between the Lord and His people. Associated with God's part of that commitment is the promise that He will write His law on our hearts.

"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel  
after that time," declares the Lord.  
"I will put my law in their minds  
and write it on their hearts.  
I will be their God,  
and they will be my people." (Jer 31:33)

Along with the first promise is a second, that God will supply the fleshly heart His law is to be written on and that what makes it fleshly instead of stonelike is the presence of His own Spirit.

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. (27) And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. (28) You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God." (Ezek 36:26-28)

The above promises went first to national Israel ("you will live in the land I gave your forefathers," vs. 27), but in rejecting God's Son they rejected their covenant relationship with His Father. The promises intended for physical Israel were entrusted to others (Matt 22:8-9). Thus, in Heb 8:8-12 the covenant passage from Jeremiah (above) is quoted in its entirety and applied to the church (see also 2 Cor 6:14-16).

The point here is that the clause, "I will be their God, and they will be my people" (Heb 8:10) is parallel not only to Jeremiah and Ezekiel, but also to Zechariah. And the basis for the covenant relationship of Zech 13:9 is the same as that for the cleansing process of Zech 13:1 (see Matt 26:28). The scope of fulfillment for these and other new covenant promises is the entire Christian age, beginning at the cross.

### Zechariah

"They will call on my name  
and I will answer them;

I will say, 'They are my people,'

and they will say, 'The Lord is our God.' [ʔāmartî ʿammî hûʔ wʰûʔ yôʕmar YHWH ʾlôhāy]"  
(Zech 13:9b)

### New Testament

This is the covenant I will make with  
the house of Israel  
after that time, declares the Lord.

I will put my laws in their minds  
and write them on their hearts.

I will be their God,

and they will be my people [kai esomai autois eis theon, kai autoi essontai moi eis laon]. (Heb 8:8-10)

### New Testament allusions to Zech 14

In Zech 14 we return from the timeframe of the first coming and the pre-eschatological period of the church and return to that of the second coming. The alternation of eras associated with second coming, first coming, and second coming in Zech 12, 13, and 14 respectively provides the basic chiasmic framework on which any further discussion of this section's literary structure must be predicated.

*Gathering the nations.* The motif of a general gathering of the nations, seen first in chap. 12, is now repeated in chap. 14. And because the two passages from Zechariah (12:3;

14:2) correspond to each other they share the same New Testament parallels (Rev 16:16; 19:19).<sup>33</sup>

### Zechariah

I will gather [*w<sup>o</sup>āsáptî*] all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. (Zech 14:2)

### New Testament

Then they gathered [*sunēgagen*] the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon. (Rev 16:16)

Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered [*sunēgmena*] together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. (Rev 19:19)

*Coming with all His holy ones.* The kings of the earth are not the only ones who gather their forces in the end time. Together they represent only one side of the conflict. As in every other conflict, here also there are two sides. On the one hand we have "the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies" (Rev 19:19a), whose purpose is "to make war against the rider on the horse and his army" (Rev 19:19b). There may be some infighting; the kings of the earth may oppose each other in skirmishes, but however extensive these may be they are distractions. In and of themselves they are not the war. There can be no war until the second army arrives and that is led by the Rider "called Faithful and True" (Rev 19:11) who comes "with all his holy ones" (1 Thess 3:13), "with his powerful angels" (2 Thess 1:7), "with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones" (Jude 14), at the head of all the "armies of heaven" (Rev 19:14). Earth's final conflict is between all the kings of the earth on one side and Christ, whose authority they have despised, on the other.

### Zechariah

You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, **and all the holy ones with him** [*kol-q<sup>e</sup>dōšîm immāk*]. (Zech 14:5)

### New Testament

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, **and all the angels with him** [*kai pantes oi aggeloi met' autou*], he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory." (Matt 25:31)

May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes **with all his holy ones** [*meta pantōn tōn agiōn autou*] (1 Thess 3:13)

This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire **with his powerful angels** [*met' aggelōn dunameōs autou*]. (2 Thess 1:7)

Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming **with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones** [*en hagiais muriasin autou*]" (Jude 14)

The **armies of heaven** [*ta strateumata (ta) en tō ouranō*] were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. (Rev 19:14)

*No more night.* The idea of evening not giving way to darkness is introduced by Zechariah but, like so many other themes discussed in the present paper, the form in which it is most familiar is that given it by John in the book of Revelation.

### Zechariah

It will be a unique day, **without daytime or nighttime** [*lō-yôm w'lō-lāylā*] –a day known to the Lord. When evening comes, there will be light" (Zech 14:7).

### New Testament

On no day will its gates ever be shut, for **there will be no night there** [*nux gar ouk estai ekei*] (Rev 21:25).

**There will be no more night** [*kai nux ouk estai eti*]. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. (Rev 22:5)

*Knowing the time.* Zechariah says that the above day will be "known to the Lord" (vs. 7). If we take this as an assertion that God knows what will happen at the time in question, then all we have is a truism. Of course God knows what will happen then. But this is not the thrust of the statement. By saying that God does know, the prophet asserts that others do not. It is a day known only to the Lord. This motif is carried further by Christ in the gospel of Matthew. Notice, however, that the reference is to last events.

### Zechariah

It will be a unique day, without daytime or nighttime—a **day known to the Lord** []. When evening comes, there will be light" (Zech 14:7).

### New Testament

"**No one knows about that day or hour** [*peri de tēs hēmeras ekeinēs kai hōras oudeis oiden*], not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but **only the Father** [*ho Pater monos*]." (Matt 24:36)

*Living water.* In chap. 13 a "fountain" was opened whose purpose was to bring about spiritual cleansing (vs. 1). In chap. 14 we again find a reference to water, but there is no motif of cleansing associated with it. In the New Testament Zechariah's second example of water symbolism is applied to a time after "the Holy City, the new Jerusalem [comes] down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband" (Rev 21:2).<sup>34</sup> The "Holy City" does not descend from heaven at the second coming but later, after the millenium referred

to in the previous chapter (Rev 20:3). The water God provides at that time is life giving but does not cleanse anyone from sin. Those who are in heaven to see it have been cleansed before they get there (Heb 9:28; Rev 22:14).

### Zechariah

On that day **living water** [*máyim-háyym*] will flow out from Jerusalem, half to the eastern sea and half to the western sea, in summer and in winter. (Zech 14:8)

### New Testament

He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of **the water of life** [*tou hudatos tēs zōēs*]." (Rev 21:6)

Then the angel showed me the river of **the water of life** [*hudatos zōēs*], as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. (Rev 22:1)

*God's universal kingship.* God has always been King over His creation (Mal 1:14). Indeed His creatorship is the basis for His rule and the reason why worshiping Yahweh is appropriate while worshiping any other deity is not (Exod 20:11; Ps 95:3). And yet the kingship of God is denied in the lives of many who have the privilege of acknowledging it. So when Zechariah asserts that at some future time, "The Lord will be king over the whole earth" (14:9), it is not an empty statement. Unless everyone on earth has a change of heart, then we are talking about a time when those who do not are no longer present. Those who would otherwise challenge God's kingship at the time the above passage applies, have been destroyed "by the splendor of his coming" (2 Thes 2:8). Thus, universal acknowledgement of God's right to rule in Zech 14:9 must refer to a time after the second coming.

Consider also that when the judgment has ended in heaven and the assembled multitude say, "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns" (Rev 19:6), the thrust of their praise is that, with the great prostitute duly condemned, there is no one to deny God the rulership that is rightfully His. Judgment is also an eschatological concept.

### Zechariah

**The Lord will be king over the whole earth.** On that day there will be one Lord, and his name the only name. (Zech 14:9)

### New Testament

The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "**The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ**, and he will reign for ever and ever." (Rev 11:15)

Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

"Hallelujah!  
For our Lord God Almighty reigns." (Rev 19:6)

*Ultimate destiny of Jerusalem.* It was a major purpose of Zechariah's ministry to show that Jerusalem with its newly rebuilt temple would have a glorious future. But when the motif of Jerusalem's final triumph and security is carried over into the New Testament it takes on added meaning. In the book of Revelation the Jerusalem which ultimately triumphs is not the one sacked by the Romans thirty years before John wrote and which within another thirty years would have the name Aelia Capitolina and admit no Jews.<sup>35</sup> The city which would eventually rule the earth was a "new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven" (Rev 21:1). Old Jerusalem, being already here, is not the one that descends. And so it is not the one that rules.

This does not mean that the Bible's promises concerning Jerusalem are unreliable or that God has failed to keep His word (Rom 9:6). It simply means that God has more in mind when He speaks than we do when we listen. His thoughts are higher than ours (Isa 55:8-9). He does not always speak to us of earthly things (John 3:12). The security of Jerusalem in particular is an eschatological concept that has spiritual as well as physical interest.

#### Zechariah

It will be inhabited; never again will it be destroyed. **Jerusalem will be secure.** (Zech 14:11)

#### New Testament

I saw **the Holy City, the new Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. (Rev 21:2)

No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. (Rev 22:3)

*Merchandise motif.* The connection between Canaanites and merchandise is seen in such passages as Isa 23:1-18, where both Sidon (vs. 2) and Tyre (vs. 8) are described as commercial centers. In Neh 13:20 there is a question who the traders are that Nehemiah warns not to approach the city on the Sabbath, but they are probably Canaanites rather than Jews. Jesus' later act of ridding the temple of Jewish merchants should be mentioned here (Matt 21:12; John 2:16), but the point being made in Zech 14:21 is an eschatological one, just as so many others in this chapter have been. The best New Testament parallel is therefore not with the merchants that Jesus sends from the temple, but those who engage in commerce with great Babylon in the book of Revelation. Thus, to say that there would "no longer be a Canaanite [or merchant] in the house of the Lord" (vs. 21) has the same implications as the prophet's earlier statement that the Lord will be "king over the whole earth" (vs. 9). Commerce will not be made of spiritual things forever.<sup>36</sup> There will be an end to such abuses.

#### Zechariah

Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the Lord Almighty, and all who come to sacrifice will take some of the pots and cook in them. And on that day there will no longer be a **Canaanite** [margin: merchant] [Hebrew *k<sup>c</sup>na<sup>c</sup>nî*; Greek *Chananaïos*] in the house of the Lord Almighty (Zech 14:21)

## New Testament

"The merchants of the earth [*hoi emporoi tēs gēs*] will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes any more—(12) cargoes of gold, silver, precious stones and pearls; fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet cloth; every sort of citron wood, and articles of every kind made of ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron and marble; (13) cargoes of cinnamon and spice, of incense, myrrh and frankincense, of wine and olive oil, of fine flour and wheat; cattle and sheep; horses and carriages; and bodies and souls of men." (Rev 18:11-13)

## Discussion

All of Zech 12-14 deals with a time still future to the prophet, but not all of that material represents the same future time. It is absolutely necessary to have a sound concept of what applies when if we are to understand Zechariah's intent at the crucial transition between chaps. 12 and 13. Because the material is so difficult I appeal to Zechariah's New Testament interpreters for insight. It is of course possible that the timeframe of consistent New Testament application and the timeframe of original intent are different, but I accept this risk in order to avoid the larger one of being unable on my own resources to tell what Zechariah's original intent actually was.

*Chapter 12.* The gathering of the nations is one of earth's final events (Zech 12:3; Matt 24:30; Rev 16:16; Rev 19:19). Those who pierced Christ cannot look on Him again until He comes again and they are resurrected for the purpose of seeing Him (Zech 12:10; John 19:37), but those who were personally guilty of crucifying Christ are not the only ones who feel a sense of eternal loss when they see Him come: "all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him" (Rev 1:7). Zechariah's reference to Megiddo is reminiscent of Armageddon (Zech 12:11; Rev 16:16). The above motifs are all applied by New Testament writers at or near the second coming.

*Chapter 13.* Chapter 13 is not cast in the same timeframe as chap. 12, but deals with events that take place earlier. From the beginning the church has enjoyed the cleansing work of the Holy Spirit, made available by Christ's sacrificial death on the cross (Zech 13:1; Eph 5:25-26). The "good shepherd [who] lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11) has already done so. The sheep were scattered at the time of their Shepherd's death (Matt 26:31, 56; Mark 14:27; John 16:32) and a refining process has been at work in the church ever since (Zech 13:9; 1 Pet 1:7).<sup>37</sup> By the time Christ appears in the clouds His work of cleansing will already have been completed. He does not leave unfinished work behind when He leaves that place to come to this one in bodily form at His second coming.<sup>38</sup> The ways that New Testament writers apply their references to Zech 13 have to do either with events occurring at the time or with ones which have now been part of the church's experience for centuries. Zech 13, by contrast with Zech 12, does not deal with the end time except in the sense that Christ continues His work in heaven until just before He comes.<sup>39</sup>

*Chapter 14.* In chap. 14 the scene changes back to what it was in chap. 12 and we again find references to such things as the gathering of the nations (Zech 14:2; Rev 16:16; Rev 19:19) and the Lord coming in glory "and all the holy ones with him" (Zech 14:5; Matt 25:31; 1 Thess 1:7; 3:13; Jude 14).

Some passages of Zech 14 are applied in the New Testament to a time after the millennium. We can be sure of this because, for example, at His second coming Christ does not touch the earth: "we who are still alive and are left will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess 4:17), while in Zech 14:4, "his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, . . ." Also the references to "a unique day, without daytime or nighttime" (Zech 14:7; Rev 21:25; 22:5), "a day known to the Lord" (Zech 14:7; Matt 24:36), find their application after the millenium. Other examples are the reference to "living water [that] will flow out from Jerusalem" (Zech 14:8; Rev 21:6; 22:1) and the establishment of a new Jerusalem on a newly recreated earth (Zech 14:11; Rev 21:2; 22:3).

The merchandise motif, however, applies best to the time of the second coming (Zech 14:21; Rev 18:11-13). It may be that the two perspectives are combined and collapsed in certain cases, for example where the Lord goes out to "fight against those nations, as in the day of battle" (Zech 14:3).<sup>40</sup>

*Summary.* While some details remain unclear, there can be no doubt that those passages from Zech 12-14 which are referred to in the New Testament are applied to two widely different periods of time. Chapter 12 deals with last events and so does chap. 14, but chap. 13 does not. The implications that follow from this fact are highly significant, as we shall see.

## Problems for the Modern Exegete Studying Zech 12-14

Two points are made below that have to do with the relevance of Zech 12-14 for people living today. One is the relationship between mourning and cleansing at the transition between chaps. 12 and 13 (Zech 12:10-14; 13:1) and the other is Zechariah's use of city symbolism.

### Relationship between mourning and cleansing

*Massoretic paragraph breaks.* In *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS), which closely follows the famous Leningrad Codex, the verse numbers for Zech 12 and 13 are the same as we find in our English Bibles but the paragraphs are divided differently. In BHS the paragraph that includes Zech 12:10-14 begins with 12:9 (not 12:10) and extends to 13:1 (not 12:14). Thus, at beginning and end the paragraph is more inclusive in BHS than it is in English and in both cases the English arrangement conveys greater insight into the thematic structure of the passage.

Throughout Zech 12:1-9 God promises to defend Jerusalem from her enemies: "I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling" (vs. 2), "I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations" (vs. 3), "I will make the leaders of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile" (vs. 6), "On that day the Lord will shield those who live in Jerusalem" (vs. 8), "On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem" (vs. 9).



In response to such a defense one would expect joy, but the scene shifts and throughout Zech 12:10-14 we read instead of the most abject mourning: "They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and mourn for him as one mourns for an only child" (vs. 10), "On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be great" (vs. 11), "The land will mourn, each clan by itself, with their wives by themselves" (vs. 12), "the clan of the house of Levi and their wives, the clan of Shimei and their wives, and all the rest of the clans and their wives" (vss. 13-14). Clearly vs. 9 does not belong with vss. 10-14, but with the preceding section.

In Zech 13:1 a new motif of cleansing, purifying, and refining is introduced: "On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (Zech 13:1), "I will remove both the prophets and the spirit of impurity from the land" (vs. 2), and as a result no false prophet will "put on a garment of hair in order to deceive" (vs. 4). Verses 7-9 form a separate subsection within chap. 13, but even there we have a continuation of the cleansing-purifying-refining motif: "This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold" (vs. 9).

The main point to notice here is that the thematic content of Zech 13:1 does not belong in the same paragraph with 12:14. The motifs of defending (12:1-9), mourning (12:10-14), and cleansing (13:1-6) are both internally cohesive and distinct from each other. Entire sections rather than single verses are the unit of discourse that we must deal with here. Verses cannot be lifted out of sections to support even the most reasonable of conclusions--in this case to establish the probability that there should be a causal link between mourning and cleansing. The break is between 12:14 and 13:1, not between 13:1 and 13:2. Thus, if any part of Zech 13:1-6 is joined to 12:10-14, the whole section must be. The traditional paragraph division, preserved in the Leningrad Codex and in BHS, has been misplaced. The following position is therefore untenable:

In the preceding paragraph [Zech 12:10-14] the author brought his revelations to a point at which his people, by divine aid, realized and lamented their blindness and cruelty. The change makes it possible for Yahweh to introduce a better state of things. . . .<sup>41</sup>

When the New Testament evidence is considered we gain two additional and extremely important pieces of information on the relationship between Zech 12:10-14 and Zech 13:1-6. First, Zech 13:1-6 is not only distinct from 12:1-9 and 10-14 in a thematic sense, but refers to an entirely different timeframe. And second, not only are the respective timeframes for these passages different by a wide margin, but their sequence is reversed. Thus, the cleansing of Zech 13:1-6 must be applied centuries earlier than the defending of 12:1-9 and mourning of 10-14. It seems reasonable enough on intuitive grounds that people should be enabled by deep and heartfelt mourning to receive cleansing. But our intuitions must be informed by Scripture. No causal link between 12:10-14 and 13:1 exists. The cleansing of chap. 13 comes first and is followed at a much later time by the mourning of chap. 12.

*Spiritual nature of cleansing.* The cleansing of Zech 13:1 and the fountain that makes it possible must be interpreted in a spiritual manner because its purpose is "to cleanse them from sin and impurity" (Zech 13:1). This fountain is now open. Moreover its benefits are freely available to Jew and Gentile alike (Gal 3:28-29). In Christ there is no longer any useful distinction between the two (Eph 2:11-22; 3:4-6). Jews--such as Paul--can accept Christ and enjoy all the blessings of the gospel and so can any Gentile who accepts those blessings on the basis of simple faith. But let no one think he will have the privilege of changing his mind when Christ appears in the sky leading the armies of heaven to "fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle" (Zech 14:3; see 2 Cor 6:2; Heb 2:3).

While the thematic content of Zech 13 is different from that of Zech 12 and applies to an earlier time, the two sections are not unrelated. For centuries spiritual cleansing, available to Jew and Gentile alike, has been ignored or ridiculed. When the blessing is finally removed and people realize the enormity of the decisions that led up to this point, they are overwhelmed with grief (Zech 12:10). But it is the sorrow of Esau,

. . . who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. (17) Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears. (Heb 12:16-17)

If the mourning of Zech 12:10-14 were the occasion for a change of heart and ultimate salvation, why do we read nothing of their ensuing joy? But there is none. What makes the people's mourning so bitter is precisely the finality of their situation. They are irreversibly lost and the fact cannot be ignored. Thus, instead of mourning bringing about cleansing, we could say that a refusal to accept cleansing brings about mourning. There is a strong connection between the two sections, but it takes a form other than what we might expect on a first reading of the passage and the order in which the passages apply must be reversed. It is not until we read Zechariah in light of the New Testament that the above facts become clear.

The Old and New Testament accounts cannot both be right if they disagree. If they do agree, then in both cases the application of chap. 13 must precede that of chap. 12.

### Significance of the term "Jerusalem"

If the term "Jerusalem" is one that has special significance in the Old Testament, we must ask what it signifies. What set of facts make it meaningful? Hans K. LaRondelle has discussed the biblical significance of Israel in his excellent book, *The Israel of God in Prophecy*.<sup>42</sup> After reviewing his findings briefly in regard to Israel I take an approach similar to his in my discussion of Jerusalem. My purpose is not to discuss city symbolism exhaustively in its own right but to prepare the way for a later discussion of Dan 11:40-45.<sup>43</sup> In my view Daniel and Zechariah have similar eschatological concepts of Jerusalem and use the term in ways that are mutually instructive.

*Israel*. LaRondelle points out that the first time the name Israel appears in Scripture the context is one of inner struggle and spiritual soul searching.

About to enter the land of Canaan, the guilt-ridden patriarch Jacob, out of fear for his life, began to wrestle one night with an unknown "Man" who appeared to possess superhuman strength. Jacob persistently entreated this Man for his blessing. The reply was then given, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome" (Genesis 32:28; cf. 35:9-10).<sup>44</sup>

Throughout the Old and New Testaments the name "Israel" has a spiritual dimension. It denotes a people who are distinctive not only in relation to other peoples, but in relation to God. Thus, the true Israel of God are not, and really never have been, those who possess Jacob's blood and chromosomes alone. The term goes beyond this to include Jacob's faith.<sup>45</sup> Recall that "Israel" was not a name given at birth by the patriarch's physical parents. It was a name given by God at a later time to commemorate an unusually intense spiritual struggle (yišra'el "God strives").

In the book of Deuteronomy we find "Israel" used in contrast with "Israelites" (lit. "Sons of Israel"), where the one term refers primarily to a worshipping community and the other to a group with shared ethnic relationships.<sup>46</sup> The two are not wholly different, but neither are they wholly the same. Physical Israel was the group first called to become spiritual Israel, but the call could be ignored or rejected, and eventually it was.<sup>47</sup>

*Jerusalem.* The significance of Jerusalem in the Old Testament does not derive merely from its being inhabited by Jews. Instead it was "the place the Lord your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling" (Deut 12:5). Thus, it was to be a place inhabited by God--a place from which, more than any other, He could work to preserve an accurate knowledge of Himself in an idolatrous world.

After the cross neither the Jewish people nor the Jewish faith preserved an accurate knowledge of God in the way that they once had. For a time the city of Jerusalem was nothing more than a center of Jewish population. On crucifixion day the veil in the temple was torn by an unseen hand from top to bottom (Matt 27:51; Mark 15:38). Then in A.D. 70 the city was destroyed and the temple within it was ransacked. By this time in history both city and temple had already served their purpose.

As a mixed body of Jewish and Gentile worshipers spread all over the Mediterranean world and beyond, carrying the gospel of Jesus Christ with them wherever they went, the geographical dimension of Jerusalem's significance as a center of worship became blurred and lost. God could be truly worshiped elsewhere: "The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house" (1 Cor 16:19), "Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. Greet also the church that meets at their house" (Rom 16:3-5), "Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house" (Col 4:15). Collectively these small and scattered congregations assumed the functional significance that Jerusalem had once had.

Therefore if we ask what the modern counterpart of ancient Israel is, the Christian church satisfies the same conditions now after Christ that Israel did before. And if we ask where the modern counterpart of ancient Jerusalem is, the Christian church satisfies the same conditions now that Jerusalem with its magnificent temple did anciently. In both cases those who accept God's Son most accurately reflect His will and so bear the same relation to an unbelieving world that their prophetic counterparts did anciently.

In this connection we should reconsider Paul's well known allegory of Sarah and Hagar. There is more in it than two women and two covenants. There are also two cities.

These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. (25) Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. (26) But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. (Gal 4:24-26)

In the last three chapters of Zechariah the distribution of references to Jerusalem is interesting. There are ten such references in chap. 12 (vss. 2, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11), one in chap. 13 (vs. 1), and ten again in chap. 14 (vss. 2, 4, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 21). Thus, there is a strong positive relationship between the prophet's having an eschatological timeframe and

the frequency with which he refers to Jerusalem. From this I draw that Zechariah's interest in Jerusalem in chaps. 12-14 is primarily of the sort I have described and that it contains the seeds of the New Testament's later point of view.

In both Zechariah and Daniel "Jerusalem" can refer to old Jerusalem but also to the heavenly new Jerusalem, or to those people who identify their interests with Jerusalem spiritually (see Heb 11:10). It may be that occasionally the above distinctions are less clear than we would wish. But the data cannot be arbitrarily simplified.

### Implications of city symbolism for other passages

I have argued above that when the Old Testament speaks prophetically of Jerusalem the reference is not necessarily to the physical city in Palestine, although it can be. Such a view has important implications for other passages as well as Zech 12-14. Two cases are examined below.

*Isaiah 22.* I submit that calls to repentance such as that in Isa 22:1-14 apply to the church, not on the basis of homiletical license, but on the basis of sound exegesis. The church has no Palace of the Forest, no Lower Pool, no surrounding walls or gates. But it does have people with the same attitudes that the prophet was dealing with in the verses quoted below:

And you looked in that day  
to the weapons in the Palace of the Forest;  
(9) you saw that the City of David  
had many breaches in its defenses;  
you stored up water  
in the Lower Pool.  
(10) You counted the buildings in Jerusalem  
and tore down houses to strengthen the wall.  
(11) You built a reservoir between the two walls  
for the water of the Old Pool,  
but you did not look to the One who made it,  
or have regard for the One who planned it long ago.  
(12) The Lord, the Lord Almighty,  
called you on that day  
to weep and to wail,  
to tear out your hair and put on sackcloth.  
(13) But see, there is joy and revelry,  
slaughtering of cattle and killing of sheep,  
eating of meat and drinking of wine!  
"Let us eat and drink," you say,  
"for tomorrow we die!"  
(14) The Lord Almighty has revealed this in my hearing: "Till your dying day this sin will not be atoned for," says the Lord Almighty. (Isa 22:8-14)

The situation described in Isa 22, and in other similar passages of the Old Testament, is one of unrealized need. Foreign armies are at the gates and Jerusalem is under seige. The people have some sense of danger and mount a defense, but do not take their situation seriously enough to ask God for help. God looks for mourning and repentance but finds only revelry. The people indulge in pleasant diversions while enemies destroy their city. This condition pierces the prophet's heart and he cries out both to God and to his people.<sup>48</sup>

*Daniel 11.* The church is at once an object and vehicle of instruction. It is reproved, esteemed, protected. Thus, another form that Jerusalem symbolism can take in the Old Testament is that of a pure and persecuted object of God's supreme regard.

A passage that comes to mind in this connection is Dan 11:40-45.<sup>49</sup> We must proceed with caution when studying it, because at the end of Dan 11 the events predicted are future to us just as they were to the prophet. The setting at the end of Dan 11 is once more a description of the world's final confrontation with Christ in the person of His saints (Dan 11:44-45) and His personal response to their need (Dan 12:1-3).

If the entire passage is taken literally, then we must not only posit a return of the Jews to the "Beautiful Land" (vs. 41a), but also a return of the Edomites, Moabites, and some Ammonites to their former homelands as well (11:41b). If we say they are already there in the modern kingdom of Jordan, then the country will have to be partitioned before the prophecy can be fulfilled because Edom and Moab are not only mentioned as separate entities but are wholly spared in contrast to Amon which is partially destroyed.<sup>50</sup> If we interpret literally, the above distinctions will all have to be made, and more than this, earth's final war in a technologically advanced age will have to be fought using "chariots and cavalry" (Dan 11:40). Such positions are not only wrong in a few details but are radically flawed. An entirely different point of view is called for.

The city that is besieged in Dan 11:44-45 is not literal Jerusalem located in Palestine, but a beleaguered remnant of the church who insist on giving their loyalty to no one but Christ--a group that refuses to go along when the king of North extends his authority everywhere else, North and South. The issues are spiritual in nature and universal in scope. When the remnant loses its hope of a solution from any other quarter (Dan 12:7), Christ comes again personally to rescue them (12:1-2). They then shine "like the stars for ever and ever" (12:3).

*Summary.* The Old Testament must be allowed to speak to the church. Not every event in Israel's history has an immediate application to the church, but some do. The connection between Israel or Jerusalem and the church is typological in nature and as such the controls on its application--apart from good sense and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit--have to do with the time and circumstances of the people addressed in comparison with the later circumstances of the church. Any principle of interpretation can be misapplied, including the typological principle. But that is the one needed here and it can be used well if we take all relevant information into account.

## Conclusion

It is possible that the Holy Spirit never in any Old Testament passage had anything more in view than a group of stone buildings located "in the hills of Judah, about 50 km from the

Mediterranean, and over 30 km W of the N end of the Dead Sea<sup>51</sup> as He spoke through the prophets concerning Jerusalem, but it is unlikely. God's Word is an expression of God's thoughts and His thoughts are more expansive than ours (Isa 55:8-9). It is not that the words are filled with hidden mystery, but that they reflect the thinking of an infinite mind.

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, (2) but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. (Heb 1:1-2)

It is not the case that "in these last days" God has decided to change the topic. When He speaks of spiritual things through His Son, and in doing so penetrates to "the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Heb 4:12), He is not displaying a new awareness of our fallen condition or revising His earlier goals for mankind.

The cattle on a thousand hills are His (Ps 50:10). Are there a thousand hills in Palestine? And in any event, "Is it about oxen that God is concerned" (1 Cor 9:9)? We should be careful that we do not make the God of the Old Testament into the type of local or nationalistic deity that He constantly had to warn Israel not to worship (Rom 3:29).

During his own lifetime, and in the next generation, what Zechariah wrote was seen in relation to the immediate task of building the temple. His first purpose was to encourage people to take up this work and complete it without delay. Thus, Zechariah had a mission in the present from his point of view. But what he wrote also has broader significance. The nature and extent of that significance can be seen most clearly through the inspired comments of Zechariah's New Testament interpreters.

Note: All Scripture quotations in this paper, except when noted otherwise, are from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright (c) 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society.

<sup>1</sup>Paris: Gabalda.

<sup>2</sup>LaMarche gives a comparative table on p. 9 that correlates passages from Isaiah and Zechariah on the one hand with verbal parallels from each of the gospels on the other. It appears he has done his work well, but only two passages from Zech 12-14 are cited and only three New Testament passages are compared with them (Zech 12:10/John 19:37; Zech 13:7/Matt 26:31 and Mark 14:27). There is more material available than that (see Appendix below).

<sup>3</sup>The chiastic structure LaMarche proposes for Zech 12-14 is as follows: a (9:1-8), b (9:9-10), c (9:11-10:1), d (10:2-3a), c' (10:3b-11:3), b' (11:4-17); c" (12:1-9), b" (12:10-13:1), d' (13:2-6), b"" (13:7-9), c"" (14:1-15), a' (14:16-21). In this structure there is a straightforward correspondence between a' and a, and d' and d, but the middle two blocs are inverted. Thus, in chaps. 9-11 we have material from b before c (thus, b and b' before c and c'), while in chaps. 12-14 we have material from c before b (thus, c" and c"" before b" and b""). The structure is certainly elegant, as stated above, but I question the wisdom of making half of a sentence fall in one major chiastic division while the rest of the same sentence falls in another division (d [10:2-3a], c' [10:3b-11:3]). Also the integrity of LaMarche's sections b" and b"" depends on including 13:1 with 12:10-14. This is demonstrably incorrect. There is a clear thematic break between 12:10-14 and 13:1. The sections should be divided 12:10-14; 13:1-6, 7-9. Doing so jeopardizes LaMarche's model, but the thematic break still falls at 12:14/13:1. For discussion of this last point see below.

<sup>4</sup>See Hardy, "The Context for Ezra's Use of a Fall-to-Fall Calendar," *Historicism* No. 8/Oct 86, pp. 23-24, 37.

<sup>5</sup>Exceptions are Haggai's prophecies about the future destiny of the temple (2:6-9) and that of Zerubbabel (2:20-23).

<sup>6</sup>Examples of apocalyptic may be found throughout the book of Zechariah. Some speak of a deutero-Zechariah (chaps. 9-14), or even separate deutero- and trito-Zechariahs (chaps. 9-11, 12-14 respectively). I here assume that the book is a unified corpus of prophecies all written by one man: "In the nature of the case it is not possible to prove conclusively who wrote chapters 9-14, but when every argument has been considered the fact remains that all fourteen chapters have been handed down to us as one book in every manuscript so far discovered" (Joyce G. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1972], p. 69).

<sup>7</sup>The above point is similar to one made by Richard Rice in his book, *The Openness of God: The Relationship of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Free Will* (Nashville, TN and Washington, DC: Review and Herald), but in fact our points of view are widely different. Rice states that, "All prophecy is intended primarily to evoke a positive response to God. God wishes to inculcate a saving relationship. . . . It always involves a call to decision. It is always an invitation to respond to God in the present" (p. 67). I wish I could quote more of the paragraph in a supportive manner. It may be that prophecy is "always an invitation to respond to God in the present" but it is not *only* an invitation to respond to God in the present. Rice inserts the appropriate disclaimer that predictive prophecy does intend to convey information about the future (p. 64), but the net effect of his model is to limit God's knowledge of the future to what we might reasonably conclude is knowable about the future (p. 46). God does not reveal exhaustive knowledge about the future because He Himself does not have such knowledge. Any facts about the future that depend on the exercise of human free will are unknown because they are logically unknowable. Here we are on very precarious ground. Even the soundest and most plausible of human reasoning loses force when it comes into confrontation with God. Instead of saying that the future is unknown to God because it is unknowable, I would argue that the future is knowable because God knows it. The foreknowledge of God--in a plenary sense--is not something I can explain, but it is a soundly biblical doctrine.

Rice's work appears to be an opposite counterpart to that of Augustine. On the one hand foreknowledge and free will are incompatible and foreknowledge is the point emphasized. On the other hand foreknowledge and free will are incompatible and free will is the point emphasized. The two systems hold a majority of assumptions in common and are followed through to equally logical conclusions, but in different directions. Both are convincing, extreme, and defective to the same degree and in the same ways. Rice is a mirror image of Augustine in respect to the present theory. In my opinion neither man has captured the entirety of his subject, although both write in a convincing manner.

<sup>8</sup>See Hardy, "The Chronology of Ezra 4," *Historicism* No. 10/Apr 87, pp. 20-21.

<sup>9</sup>See Hardy, "The Ten Commandments, Part 2: A New Testament Sequel," *Historicism* No. 9/Jan 87, p. 57.

<sup>10</sup>No argument's full force can be determined from its factual content alone. Our sentences are more than the sum of their parts. The direction of an argument must be taken into account as well as the number and provability of its facts. It is possible to say a number of things that are true and yet to support a conclusion that is false (Matt 4:6). Similarly, it is possible to miss a given fact--and be wrong in one sense--and yet to support a conclusion that is true. One must determine not only what an author says, but what he intends by saying it. The broader purpose is part of any statement and more than this it is an important part. As an aside let me point out that one area where the above insight might be applied is in our approach to the writings of Ellen G. White. The motherly concern for a movement which she saw born and grow

beyond infancy, the pervasive love for Christ, the desire to see Him return in her lifetime--these and other similar factors represent a dimension of the problem that is sometimes neglected.

<sup>11</sup>Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, p. 59.

<sup>12</sup>On the difficulty of saying with precision when one biblical writer is or is not quoting another see Hardy, "New Testament References to Daniel," *Historicism* No. 1/Jan 85, pp. 10-11.

<sup>13</sup>*Zacharie*, p. 9.

<sup>14</sup>Christ's place in Scripture is never available to unaided human reason. It is always something that must be opened to us by the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. (See the editorial to *Historicism* No. 1/Jan 85.) This is why Paul speaks as he does of "the mystery of Christ" in the following passage: "In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus" (Eph 3:4-6). Paul does not here claim that in the Old Testament either the messianic ministry of Christ or the inclusion of Gentiles as "members together of one body" and "sharers together in the promise" (vs. 6) remained unforeseen. Instead he asserts that the information we have on these matters had to be "revealed to God's holy apostles and prophets" before it could be understood (vs. 5). Nothing in the life of Christ or in the history of the church has taken God by surprise.

<sup>15</sup>There is no clear distinction, especially in chap. 14, between the time before and after the millennium. <sup>16</sup>LaMarche has firmly established this much (see n. 3 above). In my view, however, we need to take a fresh look at the materials he deals with. LaMarche has not said the last word on the subject of chiasmus in Zech 9-14, but rather, as it were, the first word. He has opened the discussion convincingly, but has not given us a basis yet for closing it.

<sup>17</sup>Zech 12:2, 3, 5, 6, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11; 13:1; 14:2, 4, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 21.

<sup>18</sup>"But he was pierced [*m<sup>h</sup>ōlāl*] for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed" (Isa 53:5). The word in Isaiah is different from that in Zechariah but both convey the same thought. Another clear reference to the Messiah's death and to the historical circumstances surrounding it is: "Then an overwhelming army will be swept away before him; both it and a prince of the covenant will be destroyed" (Dan 11:22).

<sup>19</sup>Notice in passing that only John preserves the account of a Roman spear piercing Christ's side (John 19:34) and that only John uses Zech 12:10 (John 19:37; Rev 1:7).

<sup>20</sup>People are not saved or lost in groups but as individuals. One is not saved because he is a Jew or lost because he is a Jew. Instead each person--Jew or Gentile--is accepted by accepting Christ or rejected by rejecting Him. The remorse of those who are finally lost is felt individually.

<sup>21</sup>In this model the question of whether the battle is literal or spiritual may well not arise. The battle is real but the issues are spiritual. One does not need to choose between the two as though both could not be true simultaneously. The world at the time these things happen is in a state of social disintegration so it would be reasonable to assume that people are also fighting other people. This fact in turn might account for statements by Ellen G. White such as, "The final movements will be rapid ones" (*Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. [Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1948], 9:11). It is unfortunate that the gospel is accepted most rapidly in places where the entire fabric of society is undergoing stress. Central America is an example. But people fighting people is not Armageddon. Armageddon is people fighting God. Rev 16 must be read in the context of Rev 19. In the one chapter it is merely stated, "Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon" (Rev 16:16). In the other chapter the same events are treated, but in more detail: "Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth



and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army" (Rev 19:19).

<sup>22</sup>It does not mean "mount of assembly" (Isa 14:13, Hebrew *har-mô'ed*). The fact that kings gather or assemble at Armageddon makes the latter interpretation believable, but there is no linguistic basis for it. If the Septuagint translators had chosen to represent the sound instead of the sense of Hebrew *har-mô'ed* in the latter passage, the result would have been the Greek spelling *harmôed*--widely different from what we actually find in Rev 16:16. The Septuagint reads *orei hupsêlō* "high mountain" in Isa 14:13. Equating Hebrew *har-mô'ed* with Greek *harmagedōn* requires the assumptions: (1) that the Hebrew vowel shewa is represented by Greek omega, (2) that the Hebrew consonant ayin is represented by Greek gamma, (3) and that the Greek ending *-ōn* corresponds to nothing in the Hebrew. It is not impossible for ayin to be transliterated with gamma in some roots. "Gomorra" (Hebrew *gômôrâ*, Greek *gomorra*) provides a familiar example of what we might call hard ayin. But the ayin in *mô'ed* cannot be transliterated with Greek gamma or English g. The root on which this word is built is *\*y'd* "designate, appoint." Another word from this same root is quoted in Alexander Sperber's paper, "Hebrew Based upon Greek and Latin Transliterations" (*Hebrew Union College Annual* 12-13 [1937-38]), p. 228. That is the word *nô'ad* "designated, appointed," as used in the personal name *nô'adyâ* "Noadiah" (Ezra 8:33). In the Septuagint the name Noadiah is spelled *nōadia* (2 Esd 8:33 [Ezra 8:33]; 16:14 [Neh 6:14]). Thus, in words built on the root *\*y'd* the ayin was nothing more than a carrier for a vowel sign. This is a significant fact because it rules out any connection between Rev 16:16 and Isa 14:13. This was point (2) above. Another linguistic impossibility for the *har-mô'ed* hypothesis involves point (1). Greek omega bears no similarity whatever to Hebrew shewa. By contrast, in the case of *magedōn* (Josh 12:21; Judg 1:27; 2 Chr 35:22), Greek alpha does sometimes correspond to Hebrew shewa, as for example in Greek *sabaōth*/Hebrew *š'bā'ōt* and Greek *labana*/Hebrew *l'bānâ* (ibid., p. 183). In addition Greek epsilon (*e*) frequently, though not routinely, corresponds to Hebrew *hîreq* (*i*), as in Greek *remmōn*/Hebrew *rimmōn* (ibid., p. 189).

<sup>23</sup>Mount Gilboa was closer to Megiddo than Carmel but was less prominent both geographically and historically. Saul died at Gilboa (1 Sam 28:4; 2 Sam 21:12), while at Carmel Elijah challenged Baal (1 Kgs 18:19, 20, 42).

<sup>24</sup>"The Location and Significance of Armageddon in Rev 16:16," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 18 (1980): 157-162.

<sup>25</sup>The Greek word *harmagedōn* ends with a nu. The only place in the Hebrew Old Testament where the word for Megiddo is spelled with final nun is Zech 12:11. Thus, the Greek of Rev 16:16 closely approximates the Hebrew of Zech 12:11. But if John based his spelling directly on the Hebrew, there are some differences to account for as well as similarities. The word in Hebrew is consistently spelled with doubled dalet (*dd*, thus *m'giddō[n]*). The word in Greek has doubled delta six times (Josh 17:11; Judg 5:19; 1 Chr 7:29; 2 Kgs 23:29, 30 [*mageddō*, without final nu]; 2 Kgs 9:27 [*mageddōn*, with final nu]). Thus, the Greek spelling in 2 Kgs 9:27 also approximates the Hebrew of Zech 12:11, but the Greek spelling in Rev 16:16 differs from both by using a single delta (*d*, not *dd*). John's term *harmagedōn* does have the Hebrew in view, as he himself points out ("the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon"), but his spelling of that term in Greek is apparently conditioned by the Greek spelling of Megiddo most current when he wrote.

<sup>26</sup>"Many scholars refer all his to the time of the Second Coming. The problem with such an interpretation is twofold: (1) the reference to the time of the crucifixion, according to Christ Himself (as we have seen); and (2) such interpreters understand that after the Second Coming of Christ many Jews will be saved--implying that, at that time, the Jews may still be saved, but not the Gentiles" (*The Wesleyan Bible Commentary*, 6 vols. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969],

vol. 3: *Isaiah; Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel; Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai and Malachi; Jonah; Zechariah*, p. 784).

<sup>27</sup>See also vs. 56: "'But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.' Then all the disciples deserted him and fled." (Matt 26:56)

<sup>28</sup>Here is perhaps the best single reason why the Christian church must be considered the spiritual Israel of God now after the cross. It went through the same type of experience that caused God to give Jacob that name initially. "Then the man said, 'Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome'" (Gen 32:28).

<sup>29</sup>What made the little scroll so bitter in John's stomach was something it said. After eating the scroll the same message that had made it sweet at first turned his stomach sour (Rev 10:10). The reason for this change is clarified in the next verse. Speaking for the church at the time indicated John says, "Then I was told, 'You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings'" (Rev 10:11). If having to prophesy again was what made the scroll's message so bitter after it was correctly understood, what made it sweet earlier was something else, i.e., the incorrect understanding that the church would *not* have to prophesy again. From this I conclude that the scroll was understood to contain a prophecy of Christ's second coming. This prospect was sweet. But the expectations created in this way were bitterly frustrated. The prophecy had been partially, though not wholly, misunderstood. More time would have to pass before Christ could return. Then He would indeed come again. For now the church would have to go back into the world and "'prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings'" (Rev 10:11).

The historical situation described both here and in Rev 10:1-7 is the broadly interdenominational second advent movement of the early 1800s and ensuing disappointment of 1844 (see LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, vol. 4: *New World Recovery and Consummation of Prophetic Interpretation* [Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1954], pp. 15-852; P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977], pp. 3-100). The eleven disciples saw Jesus taken away from them at the cross. In 1844 many expected to see Him come to them in glory. Both groups went through a period of severe disillusionment--the same in kind and degree. Both groups were wrong in an immediate and limited sense, but in the way they responded and also in their broader factual expectations both groups were clearly right.

<sup>30</sup>George E. Mendenhall's landmark studies on law and covenant that were published in 1954 [*BA* 17 (1985): 26-46, 49-76] have virtually given birth to a sub-specialty area within the larger realm of biblical studies" (William H. Shea, "The Covenantal Form of the Letters to the Seven Churches," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 21 [1983]: 71).

<sup>31</sup>I disagree with Eichrodt on the above point. For discussion of the problem of identifying a single theme that unites either or both of the testaments see Gerhard F. Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 77-103. Hasel rejects each theme he considers as a potential theological center for the Old Testament and then concludes, "In short, God is the dynamic, unifying center of the OT" (*ibid.*, p. 100). This comes very close to my own view, but I would argue that the Old Testament can be expected to have an independent center only if it is believed to have an independent existence. If it is incomplete without the New Testament, we should not look for a center in it. If there is a center it must reside not in the half but in the whole. Taking both testaments together the great center is not a literary theme at all but the preexistent, incarnate, and glorified Christ in His person (see Hardy, "The Christocentric Orientation of Daniel and of Scripture Generally," *Historicism* No. 1/Jan 85, p. 7).

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.* Shea lists the following parts of a covenant: (1) preamble, (2) historical prologue, (3) stipulations, (4) witnesses, (5) blessing and curse, and points out that Mendenhall adds a

sixth element, (6) provision for deposit in the temple and periodic public reading (ibid., pp. 72-73, see n. 4).

<sup>33</sup>Bear in mind that Rev 16:16 and 19:19 are parallel to each other. The term "Armageddon" is used only in Rev 16, but the events are not described. The events are described in Rev 19, but the term "Armageddon" is not used. It is imperative that these two passages dealing with last events be studied together.

<sup>34</sup>There is an earlier general application as well. Consider Christ's response to the woman at the well: "Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water'" (John 4:10). See also John 7:37-39. But the most direct parallel to Zech 14:8 is Rev 22:1.

<sup>35</sup>See F. E. Peters, *The Harvest of Hellenism: A History of the Near East from Alexander the Great to the Triumph of Christianity*, Touchstone Books (New York: Simon and Schuster [Touchstone], 1970), pp. 531-32.

<sup>36</sup>Hans K. LaRondelle quotes Zech 14:20-21 and draws an additional point: "The prophet Zechariah predicted that in Israel the difference between ritual holiness and the ordinary life will ultimately be abolished and that no idolater shall remain in Israel" (*The Israel of God in Prophecy: Principles of Prophetic Interpretation*, Andrews University Monographs, Studies in Religion, vol. 13 [Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1983], p. 90). His purpose is show that the remnant of Israel is spiritual rather than fleshly in nature. This agrees with what I have been arguing for above. In the new Jerusalem there is nothing profane.

<sup>37</sup>The final separation of sheep and goats (Matt 25:31-46) is a special case of this more general process.

<sup>38</sup>See Hardy, "*w<sup>e</sup>nišdaq* in Dan 8:14, Part 3: The Context of Atonement," *Historicism* No. 5/Jan 86, pp. 26-45.

<sup>39</sup>Heb 7:25 should be mentioned in the present context. The Greek phrase *eis to panteles* ("to the uttermost," KJV) refers to an extent of time, as can be seen from vs. 23-24. It does not refer to the quality ("completely," NIV) or duration ("forever," NIV margin) of benefit that one receives from Christ's ongoing ministry, but to the process of ministry itself. It is not that those who accept Christ's ministry are "completely" saved or "forever" saved, although when these expressions are correctly understood they are true, but the assertion in Heb 7:25 is that Christ "always lives to intercede for them." Christ did not end His intercession on the cross, but—precisely because His sacrifice on the cross was fully sufficient—established a basis there for a ministry in heaven that would continue as long as mankind was able to benefit from it. Otherwise the sacrifice would have to be repeated endlessly just as those did that it was designed to replace (vs. 27).

<sup>40</sup>At the root of this suggestion lies an important principle of interpretation: "The Servant is called Israel (Isaiah 49:3) and also thought of as having mission to Israel (Isaiah 49:5-6). To modern thought, this tension between identification and differentiation posits an antithesis but, as is being widely acknowledged today, 'The Hebrew concept of corporate personality can reconcile both, and pass without explanation or explicit indication from one to the other in a fluidity of transition'" (LaRondelle, *The Israel of God*, p. 93).

<sup>41</sup>Hinckley G. Mitchell, John Merlin Powis Smith, and Julius A. Bewer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Haggai, Zechariah[,] Malachi and Jonah*, International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), p. 336. It is irrelevant to the present argument that the above authors apply the "better state of things" not to an absolution for past sin but to an assurance of future protection from ritual pollution with idolatry. Gross idolatry has not been a Jewish problem since the time of Ezra, so, if the cleansing is provided in the end time, I do not see how an interpretation that looks even farther to the future can be considered meaningful. An interpretation that looks back from the end time for absolution from past sin in Zech 13:1 is equally meaningless. Decision making is the stuff of human history. When history

comes to an end, so does decision making. Now is the time to decide. The point of reference in Zech 13:1 is not the end time, but the cross.

<sup>42</sup>See n. 32 above. LaRondelle's book was reviewed by Jon Paulien in *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 22 (1984): 373-74.

<sup>43</sup>Scheduled to appear in *Historicism* No. 22/Apr 90.

<sup>44</sup>LaRondelle, *Israel of God*, p. 81.

<sup>45</sup>LaRondelle makes a similar statement in regard to Abraham: "For Jesus the true descendants of Abraham were ultimately defined, not by the blood of Abraham, but by the faith of Abraham. Sonship and fatherhood are primarily determined, not by physical, but by spiritual relationship (cf. Matthew 12:47, 50)" (ibid., p. 100).

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>48</sup>There are parallels to the above in both testaments but they come from a surprising quarter. In Dan 5 Belshazzar feasts while Cyrus' general is at the gates of Babylon. Belshazzar mocks the danger because he considers himself secure. And in Rev 18 we find spiritual Babylon thinking to herself, "I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn.' Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine" (Rev 18:7-8). These passages stand in parallel to others that have God's own people in view.

The impure woman of Rev 17 and 18 is not a godless world power or an evil individual. It is the same church that John had seen earlier under widely different circumstances in Rev 12 (see Hardy, "A Brief Note on Rev 12:1 and 17:3-6," *Historicism* No. 9/Jan 87, pp. 42-44). It is the vast majority of the church as Christ sees it just before He returns. Paul once wrote to the church in Corinth, "I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him" (2 Cor 11:2). But the virgin has become a harlot. The merchants of the earth have made commerce of her affections and routinely penetrated her defenses (Rev 18:11-19). The church is intoxicated with the effects of her many adulteries (Rev 17:2) and cannot discern her present danger (Rev 18:7). God calls for repentance but finds only revelry and spiritual drunkenness. It is not a pretty picture, but it is firmly biblical. If our hermeneutic prevents us from seeing the plain cutting truth about our own condition as Christians in prophecies such as these, it is one that serves us poorly.

<sup>49</sup>See Hardy, "Notes on the Linear Structure of Dan 11," *Historicism* No. 7/Jul 86, pp. 29-35.

<sup>50</sup>"Not only must Israel be restored as a national theocracy, but also Edom, Moab, and Ammon must then be restored as nations, because the prediction reads: 'They [Israelites] will lay hands on Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites will be subject to them' (Isaiah 11:14). Such a consistent literalism may not unjustly be called 'the insanity of literalism'" (LaRondelle, *Israel of God*, p. 26, quoting A. B. Davidson.

<sup>51</sup>*New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1982), s.v., "Jerusalem," p. 566.