

Zech. 12:1 The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.

This verse seems to introduce a new message from YHWH for Zechariah to deliver to Israel. As I read through this chapter several times, it was clear that this message is for the whole nation—not just the remnant from Judah to whom Zechariah is ministering.

YHWH makes a point of identifying Himself without question in this verse as:

- The One Who stretched forth the heavens. – The Hebrew for “stretched forth” is direct reference to the extent of the heavens, the far reaches of the universe.
- The One Who laid the foundation of the earth. – The Hebrew for “laid the foundation” is declaring that God established, ordained and made sure the position of planet earth in that universe.
- The One Who formed the spirit of man within him. – The Hebrew for “formed” references squeezing into shape like a potter the life force (spirit) of each human being (man). This paints a picture to me of God equipping each body with a spirit unique to that body.

It came to mind that the Lord was looking down through the centuries to directly refute evolutionists as well as those through the millennia who have claimed allegiance to false gods. The universe and our existence are not accidental; they are deliberate actions on the part of YHWH, the self-existent eternal God. God had also declared this truth through the prophet Isaiah...

Is. 45:11-12 Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, *even* my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.

...and the prophet Jeremiah.

Jer. 10:10 & 12 But the LORD *is* the true God, he *is* the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.

Zech. 12:2 Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah *and* against Jerusalem.

Zech. 12:3 And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

These verses are some of the most frequently used verses by prophecy scholars today. The Lord is declaring His intent to make Jerusalem “a cup of trembling” to ALL the people round about and a “burdensome stone” for ALL people; and just to clarify “all people,” He states “all the people of the earth.” At the time that Zechariah is prophesying, Jerusalem is widely known as the capital of Israel and intimately connected to the glory of the God of Israel. The Hebrew for “a cup of trembling” is a reference to reeling and shaking from intoxication. The Hebrew for “a burdensome stone” is reference to a weight that is troublesome, painful and hard to bear.

Point is made that the Lord is going to put Israel in this position among the nations. Point is also made that the nations will respond by laying siege in Judah and Jerusalem. I think verse two can in retrospect be seen to be describing the siege of Rome prior to Jerusalem's fall in 70 AD, but I do not discount that future events may also be included in this prophecy. I think verse 3, however, jumps way forward in time to the current age and specifically in reference to the final battle of Armageddon.

It's interesting to me that Jerusalem and Judah are singled out of the land of Israel. Much of the rest of Israel today is occupied by the "Palestinians," but they aren't satisfied with that; they want all of Israel. Chunk by precious chunk the Jewish people are ceding their God-given land in hopes of a peace that they will never have until Jesus the Messiah returns to establish His Kingdom. They've even been deceived into referencing themselves as the *occupiers* rather than the Palestinians.

The Lord is very clear; it doesn't matter how large a group of multi-national forces may gather against Israel. Those nations/forces will end up being "cut in pieces," and haven't Israel's victories in face of overwhelming odds proven this truth over and over again. Frankly, I think this truth will also continue to be proven regarding those nations that may not be participating in direct battle with Israel, but are acting with disregard to Israel's well being in other ways.

It's interesting to have the present day perspective of how Jerusalem and the nation of Israel have been positioned exactly as prophesied by Zechariah. The Jewish people are more secular than religious, and the Islamic world is determined to destroy the nation. I'm sure Satan thinks he has been very clever in his game of deceit and in assisting in the establishment of the Islam. Prophecy declares the truth of Who has been in control all along. Our amazing God has brilliantly utilized the actions of evil men (and spirits) to bring about His purposes—and will continue to do so until He has determined it is time for sin to be no more and His kingdom established for eternity.

Zech. 12:4 In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness.

"that day" – The day when the nations are gathered together against Jerusalem and Judah

I don't see how one can make application of this verse to the siege of the Romans in the first century; Israel was overwhelmingly defeated. This seems to be much more descriptive of miraculous military victories in our day and in the days yet to come in connection with the forces of Gog and again with the forces of Antichrist at Armageddon. I wouldn't even have made the connection to current times, except that I've heard accounts of miracles on the battlefield beginning with the War of Independence that seem to be directly connected to this verse.

The following in reference to the War of Independence in 1948 is from http://www.christiantrumpetsounding.com/nation_of_miracles.htm.

"To liberate the airport at Lydda the tactics of Gideon were employed. Seven thousand Arab troops were ready to attack. Sixteen Israelis dressed as Arabs infiltrated into the city of Lydda. Like Gideon's band of 300 they made such a

commotion during the night that the Arabs, totally confused, fired upon each other. Finally the majority fled back across the border.”

Regarding the 6-Day War in 1967 at

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/122435>.

“The Israeli soldiers didn’t have to parachute out of the Nord airplanes which took them to the Tiran Straits. They landed like spoiled tourists in the airport, because the Egyptian regiment which was on guard there fled before the Israeli troops were visible on the horizon. After landing, I was sent with another reserves soldier, an electrician, to patrol the area. When we had distanced ourselves two kilometers, an Egyptian half track appeared before us filled with soldiers and mounted with machine guns on every side. We had only light weapons with a few bullets that couldn’t stop the half track for a second. We couldn’t turn back, so we stood there in despair, waited for the first shot, and for lack of a better idea, aimed our guns at them. But the shots didn’t come. The half track came to a halt, and we decided to cautiously approach it. We found 18 armed soldiers inside sitting with guns in hand, with a petrified look on their faces. They looked at us with great fear as though begging for mercy. I shouted ‘Hands up!’ As we were marching them and I had returned to a state of calm, I asked the Egyptian sergeant next to me, ‘Tell me, why didn’t you shoot at us?’ He answered, ‘I don’t know. My arms froze – they became paralyzed. My whole body was paralyzed, and I don’t know why.’ It turned out that these soldiers didn’t know that the Straits of Tiran were already in Israeli hands; why didn’t they eliminate us? I don’t have an answer. How can one say that G-d didn’t help us.”

These are just two of many more such as those reported by Michael Greenspan in his series, “Against All Odds: In Search of a Miracle.”

Zech. 12:5 And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the LORD of hosts their God.

Zech. 12:6 In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.

The KJV wording here is a bit difficult, but reading through the other translations helped. The prophet is declaring that (in context with the above scriptures) the leaders of Judah will recognize that it is the Lord who is strengthening and empowering them.

This would seem to look more forward to the attack of Gog and Magog (see Ezekiel 38-39) in my thinking since much of the leadership in Israel today is far from religious, although I am sure there are many in Israel even today who recognize God’s hand in their victories against their enemies.

Ezek. 39:7 So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel.

Ezek. 39:22 So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day and forward.

Zech. 12:7 The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah.

This verse is hard for me. I think the key truth to grasp is that no man will be glorified above another since it is God Who is the obvious deliverer and source of strength for all in Israel. In times past, the royal family of the house of David and those who lived in Jerusalem were accorded greater honor among the people of the nation, and that will be reinforced when Jesus, the final King of the line of David, establishes His kingdom.

Zech. 12:8 In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.

Again, the key truth—YHWH is the defender of Jerusalem and His people. He will empower the weakest among the people to be as mighty and courageous in battle as David; the house of David will accordingly seem to possess the power of God Himself as shown in the person of His Son Jesus Christ.

Zech. 12:9 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

Again, I think this has double reference—to the attack of the armies of Gog and the attack of the forces of Antichrist at Armageddon. We may fear for Israel's safety and wonder how she can possibly survive the combined forces of the Islamic world backed by the military might of Russia, but she will survive. She will survive to eventually face the combined military might of the forces of all the nations on planet earth at Armageddon. "In that day" the Lord will destroy those armies by the sword of His mouth.

Rev. 19:13-15 And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Rev. 19:21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, *which sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

I was very interested to see the Hebrew definition for *seek*, "to search out (by any method, specifically in worship or prayer)." I think the speaker in this verse is the Lord Jesus, and I believe the words that go forth from His mouth to destroy the nations are a prayer to the Father that is immediately answered in the destruction of the armies of Antichrist.

Zech. 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn.

Finally, at this time, the "house of David" and the "inhabitants of Jerusalem" will recognize Jesus as LORD. They will "look upon" Him; this is direct reference to His physical return as King Messiah. Point is made that the Jewish people will recognize that they were guilty of the crucifixion of Jesus, and it will be a cause for great

mourning and sorrow—the type of sorrow and grief one would feel at the death of his/her only child or the firstborn child.

What produces the wonderful change of heart in the Jewish people? It is the pouring out of the Spirit of God in grace upon His people in establishment of the New Covenant. He will replace their hearts of stone with hearts of flesh.

Ezek. 11:19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

This repentance will be expressed in their prayer to God for deliverance.

Matt. 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall **say**, Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

The Greek for the word *say* in verse 37 above includes “bid...call.” In other words, the pouring out of God’s Spirit on His people will result in repentance of their sin and recognition of their need for Jesus the Messiah to return.

Zech. 12:11 In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.

Zech. 12:12 And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart;

Zech. 12:13 The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart;

Zech. 12:14 All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

These verses speak to the fact that the mourning for Jesus the Messiah will resonate throughout Judah. The comparable time of great mourning mentioned in verse 11 is in reference to the death of King Josiah (2Chronicles 35).

The houses of David and Nathan are direct references to the royal house of David through whom both Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Joseph, her husband, were descended. Though scholars may argue the facts, scripture is clear that Jesus would be a physical descendant of David, a son of David.

Psa. 89:3-4 I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.

Is. 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

Rom. 1:3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

The only way that can be true is through His earthly mother, Mary. Both the genealogies in Matthew and Luke are worded as though they both pertain to Joseph—Matthew’s coming from Solomon and Luke’s through Nathan, Solomon’s brother.

Matthew's genealogy includes Jechoniah, also known as Coniah, whom God had declared would never have seed that would occupy the throne of David.

Jer. 22:28-30 *Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.*

I found an article by Arnold Fruchtenbaum at <http://www.messianicassociation.org/agf-throne.htm> that gives the best clarification of this issue that I've heard.

"The final question is: On what grounds can it be said that Luke's account is actually Mary's genealogy? While there is much evidence to support this, it will be necessary to limit it to only three lines of argument.

First, the Talmud itself refers to Mary as the daughter of Heli. It is obvious, then, that in long-standing Jewish tradition, Mary was recognized to be the daughter of Heli as mentioned in Luke 3:23.

Secondly, although most versions translate Luke 3:23 as follows:

... being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli ...

That same Greek phrase could easily be translated in a different way. While all of the names in Luke's genealogy are preceded with the Greek definite article, the name of Joseph is not. Because of this grammatical point, that same verse could be translated: "being the son (as was supposed of Joseph) the son of Heli." In other words, the final parenthesis could be expanded so that the verse reads that although Jesus was *supposed* or assumed to be the descendant of Joseph, He was really the descendant of Heli. The absence of Mary's name is quite in keeping with Jewish practices on genealogies, and it was not unusual for a son-in-law to be listed in his wife's genealogy.

The third argument is the obvious viewpoint of the two genealogies. Matthew is clearly writing from the viewpoint of Joseph. Luke, however, is obviously writing from the viewpoint of Mary. So from the context alone, it would appear that Luke is giving Mary's lineage, because his whole perspective is focused on Mary.

The house of Levi is a reference to the priestly tribe of Judah. So by naming the houses of David and Levi, the prophet is making note that both the governmental and religious leaders would lead the people in this national repentance. This is a very vivid contrast to the actions of those leaders who had led the people in rebellion to God and rejection of His Son Jesus.

It's also interesting that reference is made to the mourning of whole families. Scripture is clear that one day "all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:26).