

THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH
Lesson 32, Chapter 14 Continued

We've worked our way to this final chapter of Zechariah, and last week paused at verse 8. Starting at verse 6 we read about changes in nature, or better a change in the very nature of nature, that has (since Creation) regulated the Universe and especially the earth. We talked about how at Creation, and up to the time that God began to ready planet earth for life, the stable state of the Universe was darkness at least as how it would have been viewed from earth. And, this itself, is something we need to wrap our minds around.

When we speak of the Universe and of Creation, the words of the Bible are earth-centric. The viewpoint is as if someone were on earth to observe what God was doing. Since the earth does not give off its own light, then some object has to provide the light if anything like life as we understand it can exist. The earth, even before God began His creative work of developing earth for sustainable life, was in a state of perpetual darkness. Sure, there would have been some distant light emitting things... little dots in the sky like newly formed stars... but just as today when if one is in some rural area and all the lights go out, there is not enough light for humans to see to read or to navigate well, nor enough for plants to have the needed photosynthesis to grow and remain alive, and so on. More, earth was (is) of course located within the Galaxy we call the Milky Way. But, as astrophysicists will explain, some parts of our Galaxy are inherently very dark, and others are so inherently bright it would blind you. The earth was, and is, in a relatively darkened part of our enormous galaxy such that, without our own personal star... the Sun... life could not exist in any form that we understand life... plant or animal.

As we try to interpret what is being said in Zechariah 14:6 & 7, we looked to Revelation chapters 21 and 22, to understand that some of what is being spoken of in Zechariah concerns NOT the End Times, but rather later still when the Universe including earth, are going to pass away, to be followed by a re-creation event. And, in the re-creation the stable state (as viewed from earth) will be the opposite of the original Creation. Whereas then earth was dark and without light until God gave us the Sun, upon the re-creation there is no more

need for any light emitting object but, ironically, the steady state of the earth will be light. No more daytime and nighttime occurring in a regular cycle. Things are going to be very, very different and I have not even scratched the surface in speaking about what that will be like.

Let's re-read from Zechariah 14:8 to the end.

RE-READ ZECHARIAH CHAPTER 14:8 to end

Verse 8 begins, yet again, for the 3rd time with the words "on that day". Thus, it returns us to the End Times that is at the building of the Millennial Temple. It proceeds to tell us even more about some other radical changes that will happen, and this time the view shrinks its scope from earth-centric to Jerusalem-centric. In this future age, it is said that living water shall flow from Jerusalem. Living water is *mayim chaim* in Hebrew. When the Bible speaks of living water, it needs to be viewed from the Reality of Duality. That is, there is both a physical and spiritual nature to it. From a purely physical side, this is water that moves and is not stagnant. Some scholars say it has to be spring-fed fresh water; I don't think so. The ocean waters can be thought of as living water. The idea of living water seems to be water that doesn't come from a stagnant pond, or from some contaminated source like a mud puddle. It needs to be flowing in some way or another. The spiritual aspect of it is that it is the only water that is suitable for ritual cleansing from uncleanness. And, to be clear, it is not that this water contains magical qualities. As with the sacrificing of animals, it is the obedience to the protocols that God has set down that makes it efficacious.... and not some inherent quality of the animal, its blood, or as with living water, something more holy or spiritual about its molecules than other kinds of water.

There will be two flows of this water coming from Jerusalem: one flow to the east, and the other to the west. Each flow winds up at a sea. The western sea from Jerusalem's perspective is the Mediterranean. The eastern sea is the Dead Sea. Both Joel and Ezekiel get even more specific. They say that the water comes from the Temple in Jerusalem.

CJB Joel 4:18 *Then, when that time comes, the mountains will drip with sweet wine, the hills will flow with milk, all the streambeds of Y'hudah will run with water, and a spring will flow from the house of Yehoveh to water the Sheetim Valley.*

Joel calls the Temple the House of Yehoveh. The Sheetim Valley no doubt is to the east, as it describes the area around the Dead Sea. **Sheetim** is Hebrew for Acacia trees. They are a desert plant. And, in those enormous dried river beds of the eastern desert surrounding the Dead Sea and then all the way south to the Egyptian border, these dried river beds are teeming with Acacia trees. Ezekiel goes into much more detail about this flow of living water.

CJB Ezekiel 47:1-11 *Then he brought me back to the entrance of the house, and I saw water flowing eastward from under the threshold of the house, for the house faced east. The water flowed down from under the right side of the house, south of the altar. ² Next he led me out through the north gate and took me around outside to the outer gate, by way of the east gate, where I saw water trickling from the south side. ³ With a line in his hand the man went out toward the east and measured a thousand cubits [one-third of a mile] and had me wade across the stream; the water came up to my ankles. ⁴ He measured another thousand and had me wade through the water, which reached my knees. He measured another thousand and had me wade through water up to my waist. ⁵ Finally he measured a thousand, and it was a river I couldn't cross on foot, because the water was so deep one would have to swim across; it was a river that could not be waded through. ⁶ He asked me, "Human being, have you seen this?" Then, guiding me, he got me back to the riverbank. ⁷ After being returned, I saw on the bank of the river a great number of trees on the one side and on the other. ⁸ He said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and continues down to the 'Aravah. When it enters the sea, the sea of stagnant water, [the Dead Sea,] its water will become fresh. ⁹ When this happens, swarms of all kinds of living creatures will be able to live in it wherever the streams flow; so that there will be a vast number of fish; for this water is flowing there, so that, wherever the river goes, everything will be restored and able to*

live. ¹⁰ Then fishermen will stand on its shores spreading their nets all the way from 'Ein-Gedi to 'Ein-'Eglayim. There will be as many kinds of fish there as in the Great Sea, [the Mediterranean,] a great variety. ¹¹ However, its mud flats and marshes will not become fresh but will remain salty.

Ezekiel is telling us that the Dead Sea will receive so much fresh water that it will again support life. The life will be so abundant, that it will become a great fishery. It saddens me that the Christian Church, for the most part, has 100% spiritualized everything about the Millennial Temple, the water that flows from it, etc. such that it has no physical realization at all. It's all symbolism and spirit. And the reason they do this is that if they admit that there will be a real tangible Temple on earth for Yeshua to live, and for the Levite Priests to serve, and for altar sacrifices to begin again, then it demolishes their nearly 1700-year-old doctrine that the Law of Moses is dead and gone.

This water flow will proceed day and night, winter and summer, without interruption. Realizing that as it stands today, Jerusalem is quite an arid place, and that water is scarce, this is a pretty amazing prophecy, this goes a long way to explain just how much God is going to interrupt and change some of the geophysics of the earth. Again... this is not up for misinterpretation or some later editor's fantasy having been inserted. This is present in the writings of 3 different Prophets, and they all agree. So, this is going to happen.

Verse 9 is not easy to understand. It begins simply enough, by saying that Yehoveh will be king over the whole world. No problem. Yet, nearly universally, Christendom says that this is actually referring to Jesus. They are more able to do that because in virtually every English Bible, the word Yehoveh is removed, and it is replaced with Lord. And, all Christians have been trained to identify every use of the word Lord as referring to Jesus. This is fundamentally wrong and intellectually dishonest. From Genesis on, God the Father has been identified as Yehoveh. The Son has been given the name Yeshua, and they don't exchange names. The Bible always speaks of them as two distinct entities or persons or whatever other inadequate word anyone might feel most comfortable with. Yes, they have some form of unity (echad) that goes beyond human understanding. We never have a time when one

transforms to the other. That is, for instance, when Yeshua walks the earth, he is the transformed Yehoveh, and so Yehoveh is no longer in Heaven, He is now walking the earth in the guise of a Carpenter from Nazareth.

Thus, this is saying that Yehoveh will be king over the entire earth. What's different than has ever been? It is that until that moment, Satan had always been given mostly free rein over earth and its inhabitants, to go about his mischief. Yes, clearly Yehoveh put some boundaries around what he could do, but with the pronouncement of verse 9, Satan's power over humans is now taken from him and truly no other source of spiritual power than God will affect humankind.

Once again, the words "on that day" appear, assuring for us that this is the End Times when this is happening. Here's where it gets tricky in understanding this verse. It says that Lord will be one, or something similar. The difficulty is highlighted because we see so many different ways this has been translated. The CJB says "Yehoveh will be the only one." The JPS says "the Lord be one". The KJV says "there be one Lord". And the YLT says "there is one Jehovah". None of these are very satisfying.

One way to approach this is to notice that the final words of Deuteronomy 6:4, which forms part of that special communal pronouncement called The Shema, are: "Hear O Israel; Yehoveh our God, Yehoveh is one". Those same final words are used here in Zechariah 14:9. This follows the 10 Commandments opening command that says: "Yehoveh is the one God for Israel".

Some Jewish scholarship that especially deals with the more ancient Hebrew word meanings suggests that perhaps we need to re-look at the Hebrew word "echad" as used in several places in the Bible, which is usually translated as unity or one, allowing for a meaning that gravitates towards a sense of uniqueness (as in "one of a kind"). **Echad** seems to work much like we think of the English word "one". That is, it can mean simply the amount of one. Or we can say that we should all band together and act as one, which more means to share an ideal or a purpose or a single mindset. Not to see that the more traditional way of thinking of it as a unity is necessarily incorrect, it could also mean in some contexts that Yehoveh is unique for Israel, and this reality

is reflected in that Yehoveh is the governing party in His covenants with Israel. Therefore, all of Israel's allegiance and loyalty logically belongs to Yehoveh. It could also stretch to mean monotheism... the idea that God is the only god in existence. Or that He is Israel's only god.

So, unique or exclusive as a means to explain Yehoveh's nature and therefore our relationship with Him might be what is intended here. And, yet, while Christians and Jews today both see this as including the idea that there is only one God in existence, the Hebrews of ancient times thought no such thing. Their idea of monotheism was NOT that there were no other gods whatsoever; it was that Yehoveh was they only God that Israel was allowed to have. Let's take that one step further.

If **echad** was taken to strictly mean a unity of plurality as traditional Christianity takes it, then the ancient Hebrews necessarily would have to have had this notion of God as multiple "persons" or even multiple gods (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), which of course they did not. It is Christianity that developed the notion of **echad** that fit better with their doctrine of The Trinity. And, once embedded in our minds, it can be nearly impossible to consider the meaning and nuance of **echad** as being anything else.

We were told in earlier verses and chapters (as well as in the words of other Prophets) that the day was coming that idols and their names would be removed from Israel. Thus, also in that same sense, by default Yehoveh becomes the one God (**echad**) because He's the only God left standing. I readily admit that this understanding at this point and in this context in the Bible of the term **echad** less meaning oneness or unity, and more meaning uniqueness or exclusivity, or as one-of-a-kind is not a mainstream Judeo-Christian theological thought. And this *is* primarily due to the Doctrine of the Trinity. Yet, if we can assume for a minute that indeed the notion of uniqueness and exclusivity *is* the more accurate sense of the word **echad** as used in verse 9 and other similar ones like Deut. 6:4, then it seems to become more clear and understandable, if not more rational and logical. Otherwise, we are left with a real dilemma about how to take this verse's meaning, in which if left as we typically find it in English is awkward at best.

Just as an experiment, let's insert this alternate meaning into verse 9 and see what we get.

CJB Zechariah 14:9 *Then Yehoveh will be king over the whole world. On that day Yehoveh will be unique, and He will be the exclusive God.*

Or perhaps:

JPS Zechariah 14:9 *And Yehoveh shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall Yehoveh be exclusive, and His name the only one.*

I'm not claiming that this is how it must be, but what I have suggested is well within the bounds of the complex meaning of the word. Lots to think about, so let's move on.

Verse 10 says:

CJB Zechariah 14:10 *All the land will be made like the 'Aravah, from Geva to Rimmon in the Negev. Yerushalayim will be raised up and inhabited where she is, from Binyamin's Gate to the place where the earlier gate stood, and on to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hanan'el to the king's winepresses.*

The Aravah (or Arabah) is a long rift valley that extends essentially from the Sea of Galilee all the way through the Dead Sea and on to the Red Sea at Eilat... at least it did in Zechariah's era, which, of course, was his only reference point. It was marked by a water course that we know as the Jordan River. For his era, the river that flowed was the main identifying feature. Today, although the geological feature of it being a rift valley naturally remains, the flow of water turns into a trickle at the Dead Sea, and it goes no farther.

It also means that whereas the lushness of vegetation and ability to have agriculture in Zechariah's era extended north beyond roughly near to Jericho and a little beyond to the south, today it has become arid beginning a few

miles north of Jericho, and then well beyond as one moves to the south. So, what this process is envisioning is that **all** of the land of Israel will become lush and fertile as it was for the Arabah in Zechariah's time.

Geba is modern day Jeba and it lies a few miles to the north and east from Jerusalem. Rimmon is well south (and somewhat west), nearly 40 miles, from Jerusalem and today is most arid, dry, and stony. Thus, the future time will see a full reversal of how we see it today.

When we read about Jerusalem being raised up, we must try to visualize this in the minds of these ancient Israelites. From a purely physical standpoint, Jerusalem at 2400 feet above sea level is literally higher than the more flat tablelands, plains, and valleys that surround it. This reality intersects with the cosmic and mystical beliefs of the people (we could call it spiritual, perhaps) in that the places where gods dwelled were always in high places... at least the highest place within that local territory. Jerusalem and the Temple are the cosmic center not just of Israel but also of the earth. So, this concept of Jerusalem being "lifted-up" doesn't mean that some geophysical event is literally going to raise the elevation (although that, too, cannot be completely ruled out as happening), but rather it is primarily an ancient means to express the supreme holiness and ultimate glory of the city, which obtains that from being where the Temple of God is located.

The remaining point of this verse can be a bit confusing, until we remember that as the End Times comes to a climax, most of Jerusalem will have been destroyed, and over half of its people gone... either dead or having fled. Therefore, this is about the reestablishment and restoration of both the city of Jerusalem and the repopulation of it by the Jewish people. Truly, exactly where Benjamin's Gate, the Corner Gate, the Tower of Hanan'el and the king's winepress were located is but guesswork and so there's no need for me to add further speculation. The point is that the curse on the city will be lifted, Jerusalem will once again be richly inhabited by Israelites, and the people will dwell there in peace and full security because God will ensure it. This is expressed in verse 11 where it says:

CJB Zechariah 14:11 *People will live there, the curse will be broken, and Yerushalayim will live in safety.*

It is sort of fascinating to me that in Zechariah's era Jerusalem was intact, well inhabited, and secure. So, I'm sure it was disturbing to he and his readers to hear that sometime in the future (and that future could have been months, years, centuries... they had no idea) Jerusalem and its inhabitants would be decimated before it later be restored. And, yet, here we are today with Israel constantly under attack, the people living in a perpetual state of readiness and alarm, and peace a seemingly impossible dream. This, and other reasons, is why I think we are on the threshold of the End Times, or have stepped over it into the End Times. Time will tell, but what is important for Believers is to take the opportunity to know the Bible prophecies so that we can sort-out what we see happening and make sense of it. If we are in the End Times, then we have a general roadmap of what to expect if only we'll access it. Yet, if we don't look closely at that map, then we'll not understand what's going on around us and in Israel in relation to Redemption History.

Verse 12 changes course a bit.

CJB Zechariah 14:12 *Yehoveh will strike all the peoples who made war against Yerushalayim with a plague in which their flesh rots away while they are standing on their feet, their eyes rot away in their sockets, and their tongues rot away in their mouths.*

To being, I think the CJB has taken a bit too literal approach with this verse by saying "Yehoveh will strike" instead of "And this shall be the plague". The Hebrew word that the CJB translates to strike and everyone else to plague is ***maggepa***. In truth, the root of the word does mean to smite or to strike, however nearly universally in the Bible it deals with the concept of disease and physical maladies and suffering. It is viewed as being a divine punishment. Further, the divine judgment of all sorts of physical affliction that stems from the idea of "plague" is said, in Scripture, to be sword, pestilence, and famine with disease as well but disease was not looked at as we do today medically and caused by viruses and germs; it was always something spiritually caused. So, for English speakers the better sense of the word is, indeed, plague.

What we are to picture is that since all the worlds' nations were involved in attacking Jerusalem, then nearly planet-wide there will be massive social upheavals that will bring down governments and decimate populations, and it will be due to these plagues that God will inflict upon humanity... except for the nation of Israel. It will be Egypt all over again, only this time on a global scale. So, what is it, exactly, that the remainder of this verse is describing? Historically, and even in modern times more than ever, pandemic disease can erupt quickly and catastrophically, and spread rapidly. When we read this prophecy carefully, it is a little ambiguous as to whether this plague is part of the ending phase of the War of Armageddon, or it is following it. So, that makes it also a bit ambiguous as to whether these consequences we read about are from disease or from weapons of war. We have flesh rotting away on living humans, eyes rotting away, as well as tongues.

It is trendy in modern days to assign this to the effects of nuclear war. I lean away from that because the words and tone of this passage is of a malevolent force coming from Yehoveh that is causing this. And, the way God has done this historically is to take naturally occurring things in nature, and to greatly amplify their intensity, and to make them happen at His command. There is no reason to think that modern technology is in any way necessary to inflict the terrible effects that are described. We are already aware of gruesome diseases like Ebola and other flesh-eating maladies, and they tend to evolve to become even worse over time, outpacing our ability to produce vaccines or treatments.

When we read the Book of Revelation, we get a more detailed view of the End Times and what concludes or immediately follows the War of Armageddon. Revelation chapter 8 deals mainly with the cosmic changes and the upheaval of nature and the geophysics of the earth, as we have read about... although briefly... here in Zechariah. Revelation 9 then shifts to the topic I am currently speaking about in Zechariah. As it is important to collate all the pertinent prophecies especially about the End Times to get a fuller and more fleshed out picture, let's read just a couple of verses from Revelation chapter 9 that I think adds to what we just read in Zechariah.

CJB Revelation 9:6 *In those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.*

This seems to connect well with the statement in Zechariah that "their flesh rots away while still standing on their feet". So, the idea is, they remain alive and conscious with these horrific things happening to their bodies. And surely, says Revelation 9:6, these people will want death and long to die because of the terrible pain they are in, but they won't be able to die. In other words, God will prevent these millions, perhaps billions, of afflicted people from the relief that death would bring.

CJB Revelation 9:20-21 *²⁰ The rest of mankind, those who were not killed by these plagues, even then did not turn from what they had made with their own hands- they did not stop worshipping demons and idols made of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk. ²¹ Nor did they turn from their murdering, their involvement with the occult and with drugs, their sexual immorality or their stealing.*

So, some of humanity will die from the plagues, others will be like the walking dead who cannot die, and yet many who see what is happening will still refuse to acknowledge Yehoveh, and certainly also Yeshua, and instead (as Pharaoh) harden their hearts even more and keep right on doing the worst sins and committing idolatry.

I want to pause to present to you something that I can only offer as opinion, but nothing I can claim with certainty is inspired instruction from Heaven. This is point at which I think there is some resemblance of what both Zechariah and John the Revelator are saying, to the Tim LaHaye concept of those Left Behind. It is my belief that it is upon the opening of the 6th Seal Judgment, that we turn the page from a time of men's evil run amok causing the most indescribable and inhumane inflictions of suffering upon one another (what the Bible calls tribulation), to when God intervenes and begins to pour out supernaturally His divine wrath. It is my view that this is the moment that the Rapture of God's Believers and Worshipers will occur, and not before. As

Believers, we are guaranteed to suffer tribulation; but we can also count on not suffering God's divine wrath.

Thus, despite the average Christian's belief that generally all Church attenders will be whisked away from the horrors to Heaven, in fact it will only be those that have a sincere trust in Yehoveh and Yeshua and who follow their ways. Like LaHaye, I see that there will be a large number of those who think their faith is manifested to God by belonging to a Church and living however they please, that will be left behind to endure God's wrath right along with all the others. I don't know where that line is between a casual non-saving trust, and a true sincere saving trust as God sees it; so, I advise you to be most introspective to determine where you stand and make the needed corrections while there is still time. To use Yeshua's verbiage of being one of those who are "least in the Kingdom of God"... that is, getting in by the skin of your teeth... and you are satisfied with that...you might have overestimated. It's a tiny step from the least to disqualified.

Verse 13 pulls us back, again, to the fact that this has nothing to do with Zechariah's time and everything to do with the End Times.

CJB Zechariah 14:13 *When that day comes, there will be among them great panic, sent by Yehoveh, so that everyone lays hands on his neighbor, who in turn attacks him.*

"When that day comes" is a synonymous phrase equal to "on that day". And, considering what we are reading, we can rightly extrapolate that this is happening in connection with the plagues that God is sending upon the nations. There is going to be tremendous loss of life and property and even the wealthiest won't escape it. While panic is not a poor translation, the Hebrew word **mehuma** is most usually used to describe of some judgment or another from God. It speaks of panic in the sense of great confusion and chaos caused by terror. So, the "them" has to be the gentile nations and what happens is that people are befuddled, bewildered, they don't know what to do, or who to turn to, to lead them or correct the deadly mess they find themselves in. In dynamic translation (instead of purely literal), a good way

for a modern Westerner to think of it is as a "holy terror"... that's the sense of the phrase a "panic from Yehoveh".

This "holy terror" goes hand-in-glove with the flesh-eating plagues that have been described, as well as the seemingly impossible situation whereby the nations are certain they have won the war against Jerusalem, with so much of the city destroyed, the people killed others having fled, that they relish in the spoils of war. But just when they think it is all over, the Lord intervenes, the nations are defeated, and then the curses for having harmed God's people begin to take hold.

And despite what their leaders might say to their soldiers and civilians, how can one explain away the changes in nature and topography, in the heavens above, the horrible plagues, and the snatching of certain victory away from them? Now, suddenly an inexplicable sense of dread and confusion overtakes the soldiers and the people. It can only be supernatural, and many will realize it must be from the God they had cared so little about.

Laying hands on one's neighbor is meant in a violent sense. It speaks of a struggle. This sort of thing happens when people are afraid. And when we do, where possible a reciprocal action will come back upon us. I suspect that this isn't something where people just go crazy and start attacking their neighbors for no good reason. This will likely be about acute shortages of food, water, shelter; insufficient hospital availability and staff to handle the massive influx of patients that will arrive. The idea of a neighbor against neighbor fighting over meager supplies is what I picture, here. Such a thing is neither new nor modern; it has happened throughout history. This could be military activity, or it could be civilian vigilantism, or perhaps both.

On the surface, verse 14 says something that is rather hard to wrap our minds around. It says that Judah is going to fight against the residents of Jerusalem. Therefore, I think the CJB has this wrong. The KJV has it: "And Judah shall also fight AT Jerusalem". The YLT says: "And also Judah is fought with IN Jerusalem". This makes much more sense. There is nothing we have read to this point that sets the nation of Judah against its own capital city. In fact, the

final verse of Zechariah makes the meaning of verse 14 as Judah and Jerusalem warring against one another impossible.

YLT Zechariah 14:21 *And every pot in Jerusalem, and in Judah, Have been holy to Jehovah of Hosts,*

That is, Judah and Jerusalem are spoken of as a unit. Together this is meant to represent the entirety of the covenant nation of Israel (here called Judah). Who else would be holy to God? The entire verse reads:

CJB Zechariah 14:14 *Y'hudah too will fight against Yerushalayim; and the wealth of all the nations will be assembled- gold, silver and clothing in great abundance.*

Earlier in Zechariah we read of the nations plundering the people of Jerusalem and Israel. Here, the situation gets reversed, and it is Israel who is victor and thus wins the spoils of war. Although gold, silver and clothing are mentioned as that which is confiscated from the enemy by Israel, by no means does it exhaust all the possible items to be taken from the vanquished. It is merely meant to be representative of the full range of everything the soldiers and the civilians had.

We'll stop here and complete the Book of Zechariah the next time we meet.