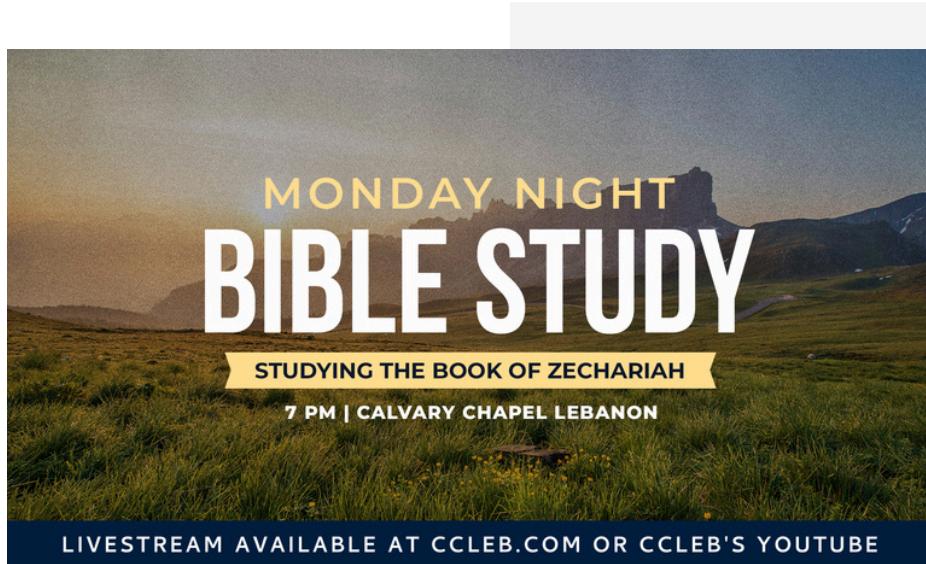


# CCLEB BIBLE STUDY

## NOTES

MONDAY DECEMBER 15, 2025  
ZECHARIAH 14

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I have good news: The Lord is coming back. Zechariah tells us, in a veiled way about His return. He will set His foot down on the Mount of Olives, the mountain will be split, and His people will have refuge in Him forever more. I say this is a veiled reference because, by the time we get to Zechariah's prophecy, we are still about 500ishBC. Emphasis on BC.

We often take for granted, this side of the cross, the full revelation of God. Think of what life would have been like for those with just the first five books of the Bible. I guess, you could add Joshua, because the Israelites are not settled in a safe place until after God uses Joshua to conquer the land. Of course, right after that, we have the turmoil that is the book of Judges, so maybe by the time of Samuel the people of Israel are actually reading and applying the law. But in that time, they have some really veiled promises about a Snake crusher, a prophet like Moses, and a Commander of the Lord's army. But at this point, they have no idea what this promised Messiah is going to be. Zechariah gives a glimpse of it here in our passage tonight, or does he? **Verse 1, Verse 3, Verse 5b**

Who is coming? Yahweh my God

Verses like these can help us understand that when a lowly baby raised in a manger Who becomes a humble carpenter, then a homeless teacher Who gets crucified is not quite the Messiah the people thought they were promised in the Old Testament. The Messiah is God, Yahweh Himself. The messenger sent before Him, Elijah, you know, John the Baptist, is said to be sent before Yahweh. **Isaiah 40:1-5**.

This is the very verse that John the Baptist quotes when the religious leaders send priests and Levites to ask him if he was the Messiah. He said, "I am the voice shouting in the wilderness, 'clear the way for the Lord's coming.'" This is a great precursor to the tension between the religious leaders and Jesus.

You know, if anyone ever writes a memoir of me, a biography, so to say, I hope they title it: "He didn't get the memo." There are so many times in my life that I seem to be a step behind on various things. For instance, the other day, my kids were out waiting on the bus. The bus didn't show up, so I had to take them to school.

Now, they go to New Covenant, and they get on a bus from North Lebanon. Now, it was snowing a little, but we never got a text from New Covenant saying that school was delayed or anything. Well, then, come to find out, North Lebanon was on a delay which means there is no bus coming. At first, since I was in a tizzy, I was upset. But with a little bit of thought, I am sure that was in the fine print of the original paperwork I got from them. But I never read the whole document, so I didn't get the memo.

Well, when Jesus came on the scene, the religious leaders were waiting on a bus on a snowy day. They didn't get the memo. Why is that? Was it because the Old Testament doesn't talk about Jesus? No, it is because they weren't looking for Him, at least not in the way He came. They were trusting in their ability to do good works, so they spent their time practicing the sacrificial system. And if you think that you are actually able to be a good person, well then God just might as well roll out the red carpet when He comes to visit you. In the Jews' minds, they had no reason to be saved from their sin, just those pesky Romans.

They were expecting a military hero, a Snake crusher, a prophet like Moses, who led them out of Egypt, the Commander of the Lord's army, but what they got was a baby in a manger. But, we, in our post-empty tomb setting know that Jesus is coming again, but in Zechariah's day, they were not prepared for the Messiah to come twice. **Zechariah 14:1-5**

Now that passage sounds a bit familiar doesn't it **Revelation 19:11-chapter 20**

With fuller revelation, we get a bit more detail of this Day of the Lord. Not only does He come down and fight the nations gathered around Jerusalem, but He also vanquishes the Antichrist and False prophet, binds Satan, and reigns on earth for a thousand years, and will show Himself a Snake crusher, a Exodus leader, and the Commander of the Lord's Army. More details on that when it actually comes to pass.

But what strikes me, and probably a lot of people who see this is what it says in **Verse 2**

God will gather the nations against Jerusalem to do terrible things. Why must there be suffering involved with God's moving? Maybe you have never had this thought before, but I have spoken to people who have, and this has been a tempting thought in my own life, like God is picking on me.

The life of the Christian is not all roses. We are never promised that life will be smooth, in fact, it's the opposite: **John 15:18-25** says:

"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'"

But why is it that we must suffer? Now different people suffer on different levels. Often, but not always, we have 1st world problems in America. At least day by day we suffer because we are not sure how ends will meet, but we know they will. We suffer because things are not going our way, or we get a demotion at work, insurance bills go up, such as that. In other places in the world, people suffer because they go days without food, get tortured or martyred because of their faith. Suffering is real with real effects, and as Christians, it is promised to us that we will suffer.

But why? Why does God allow it?

You know, the other day, my wife said something to me that meant the world to me. She told me that if I ever came home and told her, "Get up, we have to go," she would trust me enough to get up, go, and ask questions later. In my mind, I am thinking, even with all the stuff I have put her through, she would trust me enough to get up and go. That is only by the work of God in our lives and marriage. But anyway, she would do that because she trusts me.

When it comes to God promising suffering, there can be a few answers. Number one, we suffer because we make bad choices and face the consequences. Sometimes God intervenes to remove those consequences, sometimes He does not. Number two, we suffer because we need to go through a trial in order to develop Christ-like character that can be learned no other way. Number three, we suffer because of the reality of the broken sinful world we live in. Sometimes, for God to stop the tsunami, the earthquake, the untimely death, is to deny the gravity of sin.

So, how do you know which is which? Well, follow these three easy steps, and make three easy payments of \$49.99 and I'll tell you. Just kidding. How do you know which is which? Often times you don't. Sometimes you do years later looking back on it. But if you can't know, how can you trust God in the suffering? Because of the crucified Savior.

No, God did not stop the tsunami, He did not stop the bullet, He did not stop the cancer from spreading, but neither did He stop His Son from taking on the sin of the world, being tortured, and crucified. But that is what brought the promise of the empty tomb. Not only is Jesus' tomb empty, but one day yours will be too. We don't always know what God is up to. We don't always know why He allows suffering and why it endures, but we do know that He Himself entered into that suffering, and He could have stopped the cross, but He wanted the empty tomb.

You know, recently I have been thinking a lot about Job. When I read for my morning devotions, I read the Old Testament in Hebrew. I recently finished reading Job. Thank God I finished Job. Now, Job is hard enough to read in English, but in Hebrew it is even harder. To start with, there are words in Job that don't often show up in other books of the Bible, so those vocab words are hard to remember. Secondly, and more primarily, Job could be only about 5 chapters long

But instead, it is 42 chapters long, and the longest section is chapters 3-37, which is Job saying he unjustly suffers, his friends telling him that he has sinned, lather, rinse, repeat. So why is that part so long?

Well, as I have sat and thought about it, I think it is because it can be a good thing to sit in our suffering. Suffering is often the thing that drives us to change, that motivates us to help others. As you sit in your suffering, no matter how trivial or severe it may be, don't lose sight of the crucified One, and His suffering for you. Suffering that He Himself said, "Do you not think that I could call a myriad of angels to rescue Me?" But, for the joy set before Him, namely that you and I would be His, He endured the cross and scorned the shame.

**Verse 1-4:** So, God calls the nations to the battle point at Jerusalem. The nations, since they are ungodly, do what ungodly people do, then God stands up to fight for His people. He stands to the east of Jerusalem, facing the Temple, not coincidentally, I might add, the same way He left the Temple and city before Babylonian captivity **Ezekiel 11:14-25**

In the way He left He came again, just like Jesus left, ascending into the sky and will return in the same way the apostles saw Him go. Maybe you are in a valley today. Maybe you haven't felt God's presence in a while and wonder what happened. I assure you, if you hang on to Him, worship Him, pray to Him, read the word, He will come back in the same way He went. He is always with us. Jesus says in **Matthew 28:18-20**: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore, make disciples, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Just because it doesn't feel like God is with you, doesn't mean He is not with you. It is in those valleys, where we feel like God is not present that we are tested and tried. Consider Adam and Eve. What is interesting about the fall is that after they eat, then they hear the sound of God walking in the garden. Where was God during that time? He was there, but He allowed an opportunity for free will to show love or faithlessness. God is with you whether you feel it or not. If it seems He has left you He has not. **Verse 5**

God stands on the mountain top, carving out a valley for His people to hide in. If you are in the valley, just know that God's presence stands over you on the mountain.

Now, the first thing to point out about **verse 5** is the location of Azel. I tried to find it, nobody really knows where it is, but the word interestingly means "lazy." So, the valley carved out for the people of God leads to the town of laziness. Perhaps that is because God is going to do the fighting, and God's people are just going to lazily sit back and watch their God.

Now, as for this earthquake in Uzziah's day, listen to what Josephus (the first century Jewish historian) says about that earthquake Josephus

Well that is pretty interesting. Scripture does not actually mention anything about this earthquake, but lets read the Scriptural account of Uzziah and his contracting leprosy **2 Chronicles 26**

So Uzziah, who the Scripture says started out a godly king, became proud. In his pride, he entered into the Temple of God, which was not lawful for him to do. I wonder if this gives us a glimpse into what the "nations" that God has gathered to Jerusalem are doing. **2 Thessalonians 2:1-12**

So, we are told that the "Man of lawlessness will set himself up in the Temple of God, like Uzziah, and will have pride like Uzziah, except, this Man of Lawlessness will go even further, standing in God's Temple, proclaiming Himself to be God, but he will be overthrown by the breath of Jesus' mouth and the splendor of His coming.

I think God gives us a reference to the earthquake in Uzziah's day to tell us that what was going on in Uzziah's day will go on again when He comes.

**Verse 6-7:** So here we are with a, sort of, reversal of creation order. **Genesis 1** is a fine telling of how God order the chaos. To the mind of a Jew, darkness and watery places are chaos. You can't survive in that. Oddly though, we need both darkness and water to survive, but you can't stay in them. Darkness helps us rest, water quenches our thirst. **Genesis 1** is about God forcing back the forces of chaos and giving order to sustain life. You have probably heard the word *Cosmos*. We typically think of that word as the universe. And that is correct, but there is another translation of that word. *Cosmos* is a Greek word, and it means order. There is a few times in the Bible it is translated as make-up. Think of the term cosmetics. *Cosmos*. So, when you say the word *Cosmos*, you are not talking about the stars and planets in the sky, but how they are arranged orderly in the sky.

But, even though the sun/moon/stars are not shining, there is still light. Zechariah says that only the Lord knows how that could be, and that is true, especially in his time, because we have further Revelation, in **Revelation 22:3-5** that says, "For the throne of God and of the Lamb will be there, and his servants will worship him. And they will see his face, and his name will be written on their foreheads. And there will be no night there—no need for lamps or sun—for the Lord God will shine on them. And they will reign forever and ever."

When the Lord comes, He Himself will light the way. I am not so sure that the sun won't be shining, but the sun will pale in comparison to God. Just think, as **2 Thessalonians 2** said, the Man of Lawlessness would be overthrown by the splendor of His coming. Could it be inapproachable light?