

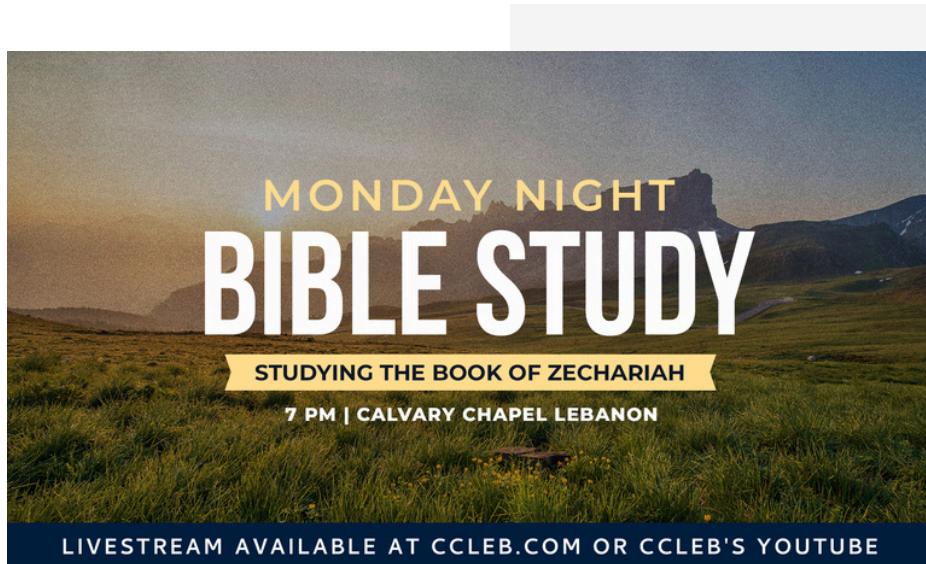
CCLEB BIBLE STUDY

NOTES



MONDAY JANUARY 5
ZECHARIAH 14 PART 2

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To begin with, I have a confession to make. No, its not that I pretty much ate a whole 3 layer cake by myself, though yes, that did happen. Its not that I ate a whoooole lot of cookies to go with that, though also true. And, finally, it is not that I overcooked the turkey non Christmas. No, the confession is that I have spent so much time looking in the past that I have neglected looking to the future. Now, first Monday after the New Year, this could seem to be a New Year's reference, but I mean when it comes to the Bible.

I have said before that I am an Old Testament nerd, and the reason for that is because Jesus walks out of the pages of the Old Testament, and the Old Testament shines light on His earthly ministry, but you really learn about His second coming in the New Testament. Sure, the Old Testament talks about His second coming, but we don't know that it is a second coming until the New Testament.

In fact, all through the Gospels, everyone thought there would only be one coming, and they were waiting for Jesus to show His power. This is the reason for much of the conflict in the Gospels between Jesus and the Jews. "This homeless guy is supposed to overthrow Rome and subjugate all nations?" "What is this He says about "Turn the other cheek," and "Love your enemies?" "Why isn't He banding an army together?" Even the phrase, "Son of David," is treasonous in Jesus' day.

Well anyway, the Old Testament points to the New, and the New Testament points to what is to come. If you asked me who was the king of Ur, under the 3rd dynasty, when Abraham lived there—well, when Abraham would have lived and left there—I would very easily tell you "Shulgi. He was second in line to this dynasty under his father Ur-Nammu, who wrote a law code that probably set the basis for King Hammurabi (actually of Amorite decent), and expanded the kingdom of Ur from its previous border around Haran (where Abraham settled a bit) to Canaan (where Abraham was called to go and seemed fearful to go until Shulgi had dominion over the territory).

But, if you asked me something about end times, I could give you a general idea, but could not expound on details. The same is true of church history. I have a slight working knowledge, but not enough to dive into like I would of the Old Testament. I can just hear some of you saying, "Well great, thanks for that, who cares?"

Well, the reason I bring that up is that last time we were together, brother Dennis brought up a question about how we can reconcile this passage saying a river would flow through from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea, when the book of Revelation says there will be no sea there. We had an online listener email me, and when I read the comment, it was one of those, "Oh yeah, that is the correct answer." The reason you can have the two seas here is because the sea is gone after the final judgment, whereas this passage in Zechariah is talking about the Millennial Kingdom, which comes before the final judgment.

So, maybe I can connect this to New Years in that I am going to put, at least a bit, of my mind toward studying the end times so that I can better answer questions like that.

But anyway, lets dive back in, and I would like to start a little where I was finishing last time, so we can flow back in. A few of the things I mentioned were that a terrible time (Great Tribulation) precedes the Millennial reign of Christ that is described here, Jesus, Who is the one to reign, is described here as Yahweh Himself. God Himself steps down to battle against the nations who have plundered Jerusalem, and comes in the way He left the Temple described in **Ezekiel 10-11**. In so doing this, he opens a valley through the Mount of Olives which allows His people to escape to a place called Azel, which in Hebrew means "lazy." We read from Josephus, the 1st century historian who recounts the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, that it was precipitated by his arrogance of going into the temple to offer incense, which is not lawful for him to do, but only the priest. An earthquake then ensues, and Uzziah contracts leprosy. This seems to be foreshadowing that when the Millennial kingdom is about to begin, similar circumstances would be going on in Jerusalem that make Zechariah mention the earthquake of Uzziah, and doesn't just say earthquake. And, we know from **2 Thessalonians 2**, that the antichrist does set himself up in the temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

Then, **verses 6-7** show us a reversal of the created order, where the evening is light and the day is dark, and that Revelation tells us that God's very presence is light. And that brings us to where we left off.

Verse 8: As I mentioned before, water is necessary for life. Here, as in the garden of Eden and the New Jerusalem, a river flows out of the place where God dwells, not any old water, but life giving water.

Verse 9: Now, the Lord resumes His eternal reign. Not that He stopped being king at any time, but now He comes to show all the other chumps they were never actually king. This tricky language of **verse 9b**, seems to be a paraphrase version of the Shema. The Shema is Deuteronomy 6:4, which says, "Hear O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is one." Shema is the Hebrew word for "hear," and since the first word of the verse is "hear," or, "shema," they call it the shema.

The shema is recited by Jews daily, even multiple times a day. It is meant to remind the people that there is only one God, and they shouldn't have any other gods. Of course, the part that follows the shema is quoted by Jesus as the greatest commandment, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might."

To the Jew, that verse recalls the shema, and the shema recalls that verse. And in our day, the shema is a declaration of hope, a declaration of truth, but in the Day Zechariah is talking about, it will be a response to what we see.

Verse 10-11: When God steps down and takes over Jerusalem, it will be an exalted city on a hill, able to see for miles and miles, though there will never again be any reason for a lookout at the corner. No need for an army to be ready in a moment, no battle trumpet, because it will be safe for ever more. At this point, the world will have ended its final tribulation, and will be in peace in God's presence to eternity.

Verse 12-15: So, looks like Covid is going to be coming back. All the nations that fought against Jerusalem will simply dissolve. How terrible would that be?

The enemies of God are stricken in a panic, I guess you could say the zombie apocalypse has finally come, and who can blame them fighting one another. Usually, when someone's flesh dissolves completely, they die. But it looks like these people keep on fighting, and while they are fighting each other, God sends Judah to fight as well.

Verses 16-19: Ok, this is an interesting passage.

Verse 16: If they are enemies, why are they allowed in the city? Well, Hebrew doesn't actually say "enemies," I think the NLT translators are trying to show us that these are people from the same tribes and nations of those who went up to fight against Jerusalem. Hebrew says, "And it shall come to pass, everyone who is left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem..." Not enemies, but those who are left of the people who came up against Jerusalem. So, one of two things, perhaps. One, these were non-combatants who came to know the Lord during the Great Tribulation. Two, these are combatants who came to know the Lord during the battle. What patience of the Lord, what forgiveness, that the very people who stand against Him, He would forgive.

I don't picture these people coming into the city begrudgingly, like, "Dang it man, now we have to go celebrate the Feast of Booths (Tabernacles)." The Feast of Booths represents the Israelites' freedom from captivity in Egypt. Passover is the redemption, Pentecost (Feast of Weeks) is the giving of the law in the Old, Spirit in the New, and the Feast of Booths is the in between. I have been redeemed, but am not yet standing in the promised land of the Old, I have been redeemed but am not yet in Heaven with Christ in the New. But in the time Zechariah is talking about, this will be the fulfillment of the Feast of Booths. This is not just a regular, "Go live in your tent for a week," this is, "We are finally in the promised land!"

Verse 17: As for the "no rain," Numbers shows us that the Israelites celebrated the Feast of Booths by pouring out drink offerings on the altar. Because of this passage, **Zechariah 14**, during the second temple, the Jews had this practice where they would pour water around the altar, and on the last day, the "Hoshanna Rabbah" or, the great Hosanna, they would pour water on the altar 7 times, asking the Lord to cause it to rain in the rainy times. The Feast of Booths also coincides with one of Israel's two rainy seasons, one in Spring, one in Fall. **John 7:1-2, 37-39**

Jesus would have said this when they were pouring water on the altar, saying that out of the believer would flow rivers of living water, which very well likely comes out of **Verse 8**

As people are pouring water on the altar, and this passage would have been on their minds. Jesus is taking the physical, as He often does, and makes it spiritual.

Another practice during the Feast of booths is that they take leafy branches and make tents. The tents represent temporary housing, with hopes to exit the temporary and enter the permanent. Paul picks up on this physical concept and makes it spiritual (but I must add also physical) in **1 Corinthians 15:35-58**

The Israelite celebrating the Feast of Booths would know that they were promised a permanent dwelling when God would restore to them the kingdom. Also on the Feast of Booths, they would take leafy branches and cry out, "Hosanna, blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord." This comes from Psalm 118, which is a Messianic Psalm, and Hosanna means "Save now." It is a call for the Messiah of God to come and save the people of Israel.

Matthew 21:1-11 in the NKJV says:

"Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them." All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

"Tell the daughter of Zion,
'Behold, your King is coming to you,
Lowly, and sitting on a donkey,
A colt, the foal of a donkey.'

So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them. And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:

"Hosanna to the Son of David!
'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'
Hosanna in the highest!"

And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?" So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee."

Interestingly, they start to celebrate the Feast of Booths the week before Passover. Why is that, because they recognized the significance of the Feast of Booths for the Messianic reign. How did they recognize that? Well, the Feast of Booths was celebrated, remembering how good it was to enter the Promised Land, and according to passages like **Zechariah 14**, a better promised land, where God and His King would be present was yet to come. And that is why **Verse 16**.

And the last thing I would say on that is that Jesus is shouting out in the New Testament with Old Testament language, "I AM the Messiah." But He spoke in parables, so that seeing they do not see, hearing they do not hear, lest they see with their eyes, believe with their hearts, and turn, and I heal them. They thought the Old Testament gave them a way to be righteous by their own efforts, but it was meant to point to the inability of man to be right with God by his own efforts, and a Saving one Who would come to make them right. Seeing they did not see.

Verse 17-19: Well here is another interesting bit, why are we singling Egypt out? Well, geographically, because Egypt doesn't need rain for crops to grow Nile

So, Egypt didn't need rain. Egypt could hear this passage and say, "Go to Israel to celebrate the Feast of Booths or no rain? No thanks, we don't need rain. But I think we are meant to see further connections to Israel's past here.

This is a good phrase to know: When it comes to the Bible, history is prophecy. History is prophecy. Egypt, in the Old Testament sense, is where Israel were literal slaves. Egypt, in the New Testament sense, represents the world of sin that we live in. The Feast of Booths is a wonderful, victorious celebration for the Israelites, but to the Egyptians, it is a poke in the eye.

When I was in state prison in Indiana, we had a lot of down time, you can imagine. We would play this card game called Dad. Its probably only an Indiana game. But we would play for dead cockroaches. Now, before you think we were malnourished in Indiana prison, not literal cockroaches, but it means that, say you bet 5 dead cockroaches, and you lost the game, that means 5 times, at the whim of the one who won the game, you had to drop on the ground... All he had to do was say, "Dead cockroach."

Not only did you have the humiliation of having lost the game, but now you also had to wear it, by doing these humiliating acts. Three times a year, every year, Egypt has to wear the humiliation of a battle lost to God. Every time the Passover occurs, Pentecost, the Feast of Booths, they are wearing the shame of a humiliating defeat. Then God tells them they have to celebrate it to. Knowing that could go over like a Chinese spy balloon over Surfside Beach North Carolina, God calls them out individually.

And with that in mind, I just couldn't help but look at this passage through the lens of the Exodus.

Verse 1-2, Think Israel going into captivity in Egypt. **Verse 3-4a**, Think God visiting Moses on Mount Sinai, **Verse 4b-5, Exodus 14:21-22**: Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

Verse 6-7, plague of darkness, **Verse 8**, distinction between Israel and Egypt, **Verse 12-13**, Plague of death on the firstborn, **Verse 14**, Israel plunders Egypt, **Verse 16**, Israel is free dwelling in tents. Because with the Bible, history is prophecy. The playing out of the Old Testament will be played out in spiritual terms, as well as physically.

Verse 20-21: When the Lord is in the Temple, there is no distinction between secular and sacred, religious and non-religious, holy and defiled. Even the bells on the horses will be adorned as the turban on the high priest, "Holy to the LORD."

I think this can apply to our lives, as we are the Temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in us. We have a tendency to separate church from our regular lives. When I go to church I am holy, I keep the Sabbath holy, when the pastor is around I am holy, but when I am home, Monday-Friday, all alone, I live how I want to. "I can't bring God into my business, after all, how am I going to make my tithe? But in Christ, there is no longer anything secular, defiled, unholy, except sin. This is why, in the Kingdom, the job of custodian, security guard, fast food worker, CEO or pastor is just as sacred as the other. If you fly those wings to the glory of God there is rejoicing in heaven, and your reward is great. If you plunge that toilet because no one else is doing so, do it to the glory of God and your reward will be great.

When Jesus washed feet, I don't think He was doing it to prove a point—though He did—He was doing it because no one else was. In the world's eyes it was the task of the lowest servant, but in God's eyes, it is just as sacred a job as the high priest. Remember, the one who would be greatest among you must be your servant, and the one who would be first must be slave of all. For not even the Son of Man came to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.