

**JERUSALEM: THE LORD AT WORK
ZECHARIAH 12:1-9**

Introduction

We know from recent news accounts that the entire world is focused on what is happening in the Middle East and with Israel right now.

About 2,500 years ago, the prophet Zechariah recorded God's predictions regarding that area of the world. **Read the Scripture.**

When this prophecy was written, Jerusalem **lay in ruins**. Its history after that was one of **repeated destruction** with the Jews being **scattered all over the world** and **hounded to the death**.

Yet God began **bringing His despised people** back into their own land **leading to Israel being reestablished as a nation** in 1948. And today, hanging like a millstone around its neck, Jerusalem is the number one problem of the Islamic world and the world as a whole (i.e. the United Nations), just as the prophet Zechariah foretold.

On its face, this prophecy might seem to many (especially to this lost world) to be an absolutely absurd prediction!

We know from the Bible that **Jerusalem is the ancient capital of Israel**. But we need to understand that **Jerusalem is a city with no natural resources, no harbor, no river, and no reason (humanly speaking) for it to have any strategic significance whatsoever**.

Neither would it seem to be that important culturally as **only a relatively small portion of Jewish people regard it as significant**. Even if all the Jews in the world viewed it as significant, it still is unthinkable from an entirely world viewpoint for it to be a place as described in the latter part of verse 3 for *"...all the people of the earth to be gathered together against it."*

The Muslims controlled it for a thousand years and they let it crumble into rubble - that is, until they discovered that it was significant to the Jews. Then, of course, all of a sudden it became critical to Islam!

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Most Christian religions regard Jerusalem for its historical Biblical significance. However, even **many who call themselves Christians don't see the real significance behind this tiny piece of real estate!**

But, **the eyes and thoughts of the nations** of our day remain on Jerusalem! It is a city that has become almost **a daily topic** of conversation in the media! Correspondents from all the various news agencies are planted in the area of Jerusalem to give the world the down and dirty on Jerusalem and all Israel!

And yet, in the United Nations and in the capital of every nation that has international relevance, leaders are struggling with the question of what to do about Israel and the issue of Jerusalem! Jerusalem has evolved from just a **political point of discussion to a major offense that must be resolved!** The city is becoming a more delicate and complex issue.

It is obvious to see that to the Arab and Muslim world, Jerusalem remains as its greatest bone of contention! It is a thorn in their flesh!

"Jerusalem" is mentioned **nine times** in this passage. The words *"people"* or *"nations"* occur **six times**.

Zechariah 12 clearly describes **the times we are living in** as well as **the end of the end times**. As we approach the coming of the LORD, the nations will increasingly focus upon Jerusalem!

Let me call your attention to the Prologue Of The God Of Israel recorded here in verse 1 of Zechariah 12.

Better words could not have been chosen to show the significance that Jerusalem and Israel hold for God!

The same God Who created heaven and earth and put the Spirit within man is going to have **the last word concerning Israel and Jerusalem! And it will be "for Israel" and against those who oppose her!**

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The Bible does indicate that there will come some very specific events which will find God intervening on behalf of His people Israel.

God will intervene to thwart an invasion from the far north. Speaking to the leader of the land of Magog (which I am convinced refers to Russia) listen to what God says in Ezekiel 38:16, 23:

16 “And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes...”

23 “Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD.”

The more one knows about the technical details of this passage, and the more one knows about what is presently going on in that region, the more it would seem that this event may be on our near horizon.

**I. JERUSALEM—A CUP OF TREMBLING TO THE
SURROUNDING NATIONS.(i.e. THE ISLAMIC NATIONS) Vs 2**

Consider this: Zechariah lived in the 6th century before Christ.

Islam was not introduced until the 7th century AFTER Christ!

But the prophet saw before hand the end-time problem between Islam and Judaism!

The nations surrounding Jerusalem are Islamic and Islam is spreading like a cancer out from the Middle East in all directions!

Israel is like a small dot of an oasis in the middle of a growing Arab and Islamic world! Though Islam is spreading like cancer, Israel is the one who is viewed as the cancer by the Arab nations!

Achmed Shukeiri, the first chairman of the PLO said this:

“Zionism is worse than Fascism, more evil than Nazism, more despicable than Imperialism and more dangerous than Colonialism. Zionism is a concentration of all these evils. It must be destroyed.”

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Jerusalem is most definitely a cup of trembling for Islam!

Islam is drunk over Jerusalem and Israel!

A drunk man usually feels stronger than he really is!

A drunk man cannot assess things properly (poor judgment)!

A drunk man doesn't make rational decisions!

A drunk man is boastful and careless!

The goal of all Islamic terror groups is the destruction of the Jews!

They want Israel gone and a Palestinian state in its place!

Sheich Achmed Yassin, a former head of the Hamas movement who is now dead said:

“The earth of Palestine is an Islamic sanctuary which belongs to the Muslims to the end of time. The liberation of all Palestine, from the sea to the river (Jordan) is the highest strategic goal.”

**II. JERUSALEM—A BURDENSOME STONE FOR ALL NATIONS!
(VS 3)**

One might say that this is a gloomy prophetic picture of Jerusalem's future! That's because, according to this statement, all discussions over Jerusalem—all the negotiations, all the peace accords, all the effort expended for nothing—will turn to a universal pure hatred for Israel and its people!

When this comes to a head—and it will—the one and only option that will remain is that the Jews must be eradicated from Jerusalem!

But, this is destined for failure from the get go because Jerusalem is like a rough, heavy stone with sharp contours that injure those who try to remove it!

Satan is behind the attempt to eradicate God's chosen people! He once sought to seat himself on God's throne in heaven, but was subsequently banished! (Isaiah 14:13-14)

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Now, he wants to sit on the throne in Jerusalem that is only intended for the Messiah! He wants to destroy Jerusalem and prevent the throne of God from being established there at all costs!

This prophecy shows that the conflict with the Arab and Islamic nations will ultimately spread to ALL of the other nations!

Can we not clearly see this beginning to happen even in our day and time? Understand that this united attempt to destroy Jerusalem will be to the hurt of the nations!

III. JUDAH—A HEARTH OF FIRE AND A TORCH OF FIRE FOR ALL THE PEOPLE ROUND ABOUT! (Vs 6)

What is happening here? The nations will unite their military strength against Jerusalem! When that happens, what will be the result?

What does a torch do to straw? If a match is enough to make straw burn, imagine what a torch will do!

The nations will desire to eradicate Israel, but instead, they will burn And Jerusalem will remain! She cannot be removed or destroyed because God has her destiny set! **Jerusalem is the city of the great KING—KING JESUS CHRIST!**

The power of the Jews lies in God Himself and in His promises! Israel will not be victorious over her enemies through her own power or her military strength! **She will be victorious through God! (Vs 4) God will intervene!**

Note Vs 5.

In the midst of this war, the Jews will begin to trust in God more and more!

Note Vs 7-9

The LORD intervenes and revival takes place in Israel!

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IV. WHY WILL GOD INTERVENE?

God will intervene for Israel and even as the Antichrist and his armies make their final assault at Armageddon God will intervene on their behalf!

Why does Israel deserve such special attention? The answer is most surprising. **Look at Ezekiel 36:19-24.**

It's not for their sakes: it's because God's name is on the commitment. So it is written, so it will be done!

Conclusion

So do you know why this is a most exciting time?

The God of the Universe has put His name on a particular people and a particular piece of real estate.

While the Bible says that *"the earth is the Lord's and fulness thereof,"* He has chosen to call a particular parcel of ground His Own. It doesn't belong to the Palestinians; it doesn't belong to the U.N. It belongs to Israel under the terms of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Our leaders need to understand that when we muck around in the Middle East foreign policies that go against God's purposes, we are poking our finger in the eye of God! **(Look at Zechariah 2:8-9)**

The land of Israel is His Land! He has given it to his people, Israel, and we need to stand clear of interfering with God's plans and programs.

And yet, the future scenario has been described, in detail, in God's Word. And we are approaching the LORD's consummation of all things.

We are being plunged into a period of time about which the Bible says more than it does about any other period of time in history - including the time when Jesus walked the shores of Galilee and climbed the mountains of Judea.

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So what should be our response to what we see happening?

Romans 13:11-14—“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

- 1. Place your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ!**
- 2. Live for the Lord!**
- 3. Tell others about Him!**
- 4. Look for His coming!**