

CHRIST'S KINGDOM ON EARTH

BIBLE TEXT : Zechariah 6:12, 13; 12:9, 10; 14:4-21.

LESSON 428 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one" (Zechariah 14:9). .

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Zechariah 6:12-13

12 And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD:

13 Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

Zechariah 12:9-10

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

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.

Zechariah 14:4

4 And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which *is* before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, *and there shall be a very great valley*; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

Zechariah 14:21

21 Yea, every pot in Jerusalem

Bible References:

Notes:

Sabbath of the Land

God had made a ruling when Israel became a nation in Palestine that they were to let the land rest every seventh year. They were to plant no crops, and that which grew of itself was to be left for the poor. It was called a sabbath of the land. But the Israelites had not obeyed God's rules, so He prolonged Judah's captivity in Babylon to 70 years to make up for the years they had not let the land rest.

Now the 70 years were up and the Israelites were gradually going back to the Holy Land, and had begun rebuilding the Temple. Darius was the king of the Medes and Persians who had succeeded the Babylonians as world conquerors. Zechariah was one of the prophets God had sent to preach to the Israelites in about 520 B. C. to 518 B. C.

Prophecies of the Future

God gave Zechariah many visions, which foretold future events. The things he talked about usually did not refer to their rebuilding Jerusalem at that time, but pointed toward our Christian dispensation or to the yet future Golden Age: the Millennium. The Jews were always looking for their Messiah to come to set up His rule and make Israel a strong nation that would rule the world. They hoped now that so many of them were returning to Jerusalem, and the building up of the city had begun, it must be the time for the Messiah's kingdom on earth.

It seemed that the Israelites always had to suffer, and Zechariah explained why: they had refused to obey God's commandments. He told them: "Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother: and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart" (Zechariah 7:9, 10). These teachings sound very much like those, which Jesus gave, but which people today fail to live up to. If the Jews were punished for not obeying them, surely people today who refuse the Gospel will also be punished.

The Children of Israel had refused to heed God's law and had "pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts bath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts. Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts: but I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate" (Zechariah 7:11-14). Zechariah was prophesying by the Spirit of God that though the Jews were returning to Jerusalem at that time, they were to be scattered again into all nations, and no one would enjoy the blessings, which God had poured out on Palestine when the Children of Israel were obedient. That time came to pass after Jesus was crucified.

and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and see the therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

Refused Jesus

All through the centuries since Zechariah spoke, the Jews as a whole have refused to believe that Jesus is the Messiah for whom they looked, and about whom all the Old Testament prophets wrote. Jesus said that the Jews should have known Him. He told them to search the Scriptures, look at what the prophets had written, for "they are they which testify of me." But it did no good. When they crucified Him they said: "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Mathew 27:25).

After they have suffered the judgments of the Great Tribulation, they will cry in desperation for their Messiah, and they will recognise Jesus whom they crucified, when He comes with ten thousands of His saints to exercise judgment against the nations which have gone to battle against Jerusalem. They will look upon Him whom they pierced, and "they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him" (Zechariah 12:10).

Strength of the Jews

Two-thirds of the Jews will be killed during the time of Jacob's Trouble, but the remaining Jews will be saved when they receive Jesus as their Messiah. Then He will fight for them and make them strong -- so strong that "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. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" (Zechariah 12:8, 9).

King of Kings

When all the judgments are finished, Jesus will set up His reign of peace on the earth, with the centre of His government at Jerusalem. He will be King of kings and Lord of lords. Of that time Zechariah wrote: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again" (Zechariah 2:10-12).

The Jews who were returning to Jerusalem in Zechariah's time were working hard to build the Temple, but he told them that when their Messiah would come He would build another Temple: "Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zechariah 6:12, 13).

Isaiah also referred to Jesus as the Branch, saying: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, . . . the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD" (Isaiah 11:1, 2).

The Curse Lifted

This world has never had such a ruler as Jesus will be. When He rules, the curse that came upon the world when Adam sinned will be lifted. There will be no more wars to upset nations, no more disease and poverty to make people unhappy, no weeds and bugs to spoil the vegetation. He will have wisdom to solve every problem; He will love everybody and cause all to love one another so that no one will be lonesome. He will provide homes and pleasant places for everyone.

For many centuries the Jews have been without a homeland,

but God promised them: "There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof" (Zechariah 8:4,5). Does that not sound peaceful? There will be no one to hurt them, no evil governments to threaten them with disaster. The elderly people will be well taken care of, and will be happy, and the children and young people will be contented with what the Lord provides for them. The Lord will bring back the Jews from all the lands of the world to dwell in Jerusalem during the Millennium. "I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness" (Zechariah 8:8).

They will prosper, too. "For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things" (Zechariah 8:12).

Not Yet Fulfilled

More than two million Jews now live in Palestine, and today the Jewish flag flies over their land, but the time Zechariah spoke of is not yet. Jesus is not now dwelling in their midst, and there certainly is no peace for them yet. On every border their enemies are waiting to cause them trouble, and within the country there is much tension because so many people came in such short time, bringing nothing with them to make a living and because violence erupts regularly due to terrorism. And above all, the people of Palestine are not worshipping Jesus. These cannot yet be "the remnant" who will be saved at the close of the Great Tribulation.

A Great Earthquake

In that day when Jesus comes with His saints to set up His rule on earth, His feet will rest upon the Mount of Olives, near Jerusalem, and there will be a great earthquake. The earth will open up, dividing the mountain in two, with a big valley between. People in Old Testament times seldom heard of an earthquake, but there was a tremendous one in the time of Uzziah, and Zechariah predicted that the one when Jesus comes will be just as great: so great that people will flee to the mountains for protection.

Living Waters

In a spiritual sense, too, living water will flow from Jerusalem. Jesus often spoke of the Spirit of God as water. He said to the woman at the well of Samaria: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life", (John 4:14). On the last great day of the feast before He was crucified, He cried out: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given," (John 7:37-39). When Jesus reigns on earth "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14). Jesus will have complete rule of the world, and He will rule in justice and equity. People everywhere will go to Jerusalem to worship. "In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you" (Zechariah 8:23).

There will be people born during the Millennium with the carnal nature, and some of them will refuse to go to Jerusalem to

worship. God said He would withhold rain from their land as a punishment. If they continued to refuse, He would send plagues upon them. People will have to obey God, for He and His saints will rule with a rod of iron. "And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one" (Zechariah 14:9).

When the nations go up to Jerusalem to worship God and keep the feast of Tabernacles it will be like a tremendous camp meeting. Everyone will be united in one faith, and will enjoy the same things. They will worship God in one accord. Even the horses will carry banners: "HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD." There will be no difference between Jew and Gentile. What a glorious time awaits the faithful who love to worship God now, and are preparing themselves in every way possible to be ready for the coming of Jesus!

QUESTIONS

1. Why was Judah in captivity for 70 years?
2. What did Zechariah prophesy about mostly?
3. How had the Israelites received the Gospel God had given them?
4. What will cause the Jews to plead for their Messiah?
5. How will they mourn?
6. How will Jesus answer the Jews when they call for Him?
7. Who will rule the world during the Millennium? What kind of ruler will He be?
8. Who will worship God during the Millennium?