

DELIVERANCE FOR JERUSALEM

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Zechariah 12:1-9 contains a wonderful prophecy: “The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, saith the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him. *Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.* In that day, saith the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness. And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of hosts their God. In that day will I make the governors of Judah like a hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem. The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah. *In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and 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.*” There is much to be learned from a study of this great prophecy of God’s deliverance of Jerusalem from those gathered against her.

Deliverance from the besiegers

The wording in Zechariah 12:2 is quite interesting, as God promised to make Jerusalem “a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, *when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem.*” That is, at the very time when Judah and Jerusalem was under siege, Jerusalem would be made a cup of trembling to all her besiegers. God would also “make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people” (Zech 12:3). God would ultimately save Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem in spite of the siege: “*In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and 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*” (Zech 12:8). God would then “seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem” (Zech 12:9) and cut them in pieces (Zech 12:3,6). And God said, “Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem” (Zech 12:6). This prophecy makes clear that when Jerusalem was under siege, God was going to defend and deliver His people.

Deliverance for the *spiritual* Jerusalem, not the physical city

From the chapter preceding chapter, it is also clear that the physical city of Jerusalem and its wicked inhabitants would be destroyed and there would be

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(continued)

no deliverance. Zechariach 11:6 says, “*For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord: but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbor’s hand, and into the hand of his king: and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver them.*” Therefore, chapter 12 must be speaking of a different Jerusalem than the physical city which would ultimately not escape her enemies. The New Testament speaks of a *spiritual* Jerusalem and Zion that will indeed be besieged by enemies, but also be protected and delivered by God. Hebrews 12:22-23 says, “But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, *the heavenly Jerusalem*, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly *and church of the firstborn*, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.” This “Israel of God” (Gal 6:16), and the “true Jews” (Rom 2:28-29) are Christians. The church is that holy and spiritual house, nation, and priesthood (1 Pet 2:5-9). It would certainly fit the context of Zechariah 12:2-9 for the Lord’s church to be the “Jerusalem” and “Judah” that would be delivered from her enemies by her God. In fact, Daniel (Dan 2:44-45) and Jesus (Matt 16:18-19) prophesied that the church would be an eternal kingdom that would never be destroyed.

Overcoming tribulation

As foretold by Zechariah, the church is under continual persecution from the world. In John 16:33, Christ said, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. *In the world ye shall have tribulation*: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” We are *promised* persecution: “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim 3:12). Yet, even during the worse of the tribulations, God always delivers His church. This was notably fulfilled in the first decades of the existence of the church. For example, during Saul’s great persecution against the church, “they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria,” as Saul “made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison” (Acts 18:1-3). Yet Acts 18:4 informs us that “they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.” When the church was persecuted in Asia Minor, the end result is summarized in Acts 19:20: “*So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.*” And at the end of the First Century A.D. under the Roman Emperor Domitian, a severe persecution was inflicted upon the church in which tens of thousands of Christians died. This is the background context of the Book of Revelation. Although the world indeed surrounds “the camp of the saints” to fight against God’s “beloved city,” the Lord will ultimately defeat all her enemies (Rev 20:7-9; see also Rev 7:13-17). God’s protection and deliverance of His church is still occurring today. Christians who overcome will reap eternal reward (Rev 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21; 21:7), while the persecutors of the church will be eternally punished (Rom 12:19; Php 1:28-29; 2 Thes 1:4-10; Rev 11:5; 19:15). This is exactly what God foretold through His prophet Zechariah over 25 centuries ago.