Kings and Prophets 17-12-14

This is Thursday, the 14th of December, 2017. We continue our study in Kings and Prophets. We have come to the ultimate chapter, the final chapter of the book of Zechariah, Zechariah chapter 14.

And it grieves me a little bit because we're skipping so much that could be profitably excavated here, but I would like to finish this series within my own lifetime and not have to move it into the millennium. So we'll pick up here at chapter 14 in just a moment. Let's begin by taking a moment to focus our concentration and dedicate our time and our attention to the study of God's Word, cultivate the presence and power of God's Holy Spirit to be our teacher and to help us not only understand what's here, but see why it ought to make a difference to us.

Shall we pray? Father, it's a wonderful thing to be reminded at this time of the year of the tremendous work that you have accomplished in bringing your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to this earth to dwell with us, to inhabit flesh like ours, to experience our sorrows and tribulations as well as to know what it is to be sustained by your Spirit and by your Word, and to set an example for us to follow in that regard. We thank you for His example. We thank you for His work on our behalf and the relationship that we enjoy with you as sons and daughters because of His willingness to fulfill your plan and purpose at His own expense.

We are humbled at the thought that you have chosen to weave us into the fabric of your plans and purposes and to use us for your own glory. We pray that as we study this portion of your Word tonight that each of us will find in it those truths that the Holy Spirit can use to improve us, to purge and purify us, and to equip us for every good work. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. As I said, we've come now to Zechariah chapter 14. Let's read this chapter.

It's not terribly long and it's terribly interesting. Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all nations to battle against Jerusalem.

The city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations as He fights in the day of battle.

And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley. Half of the mountain shall move toward the north, and half of it toward the south. Then you shall flee through my mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal.

Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the Lord my God will come, and all the saints with you. It shall come to pass in that day that there will be no light, the lights will diminish.

It shall be one day which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen that it will be light. And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea.

In both summer and winter it shall occur, and the Lord shall be king over all the earth. In that day it shall be the Lord is one, and His name one. All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimeh, south of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem shall be raised up and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate to the place of the first gate and the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses. The people shall dwell in it, no longer shall there be utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited. This shall be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem.

Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths. It shall come to pass in that day that a great panic from the Lord will be among them. Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor, and raise his hand against his neighbor's hand.

Judah also will fight at Jerusalem, and the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be gathered together, gold, silver, and apparel in great abundance. Such also shall be the plague on the horse and the mule, on the camel and the donkey, and on all the cattle that will be in those camps. So shall this plague be.

It shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations who came up against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, on them there will be no reign. If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no reign.

This shall receive the plague with which the Lord strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the feast of tabernacles. In that day holiness to the Lord shall be engraved on the bells of the horses.

The pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the Lord of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them.

In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts." Interesting note on which to end this prophecy. I suspect that we will have one more session. I don't think I can get all the way through this particular chapter in one night.

Tonight we'll see how far we get. So chapter 14 verse 1, Behold the day of the Lord is coming. Literally in Hebrew a day, the Lord's is coming.

And your spoil will be divided in your midst. Well already we have a note of foreboding here. You think the day of the Lord will be a day of great deliverance, all of God's people are going to be happy to see Him come, but this doesn't sound good.

And when it says your spoil or your plunder will be divided in your midst, this is not the conquering armies of Judah and or Jerusalem amassing spoil and dividing it up in the capital city. This is the wealth, the goods, the contents of Jerusalem being divided up. And when it says divided in your midst, this is a bad thing.

Normally when invading armies would come in and sack a city like Tyre or some other target, they would haul off the plunder and divide it in the field because you don't know until you've been there a while that the city is secure, that you don't have a resistance or a counterattack of some kind or reinforcements coming or allies that might come and counterattack. And so if there's plunder and spoil, they would haul it out to a guarded location where the security is well in place and divide the spoil there. But when the spoil is divided in the midst of the city, what it means is the conquest is so complete, there is no prospect of resistance.

There's no prospect of any pushback on those that have been conquered. They are so utterly ruined and despoiled that they can take their time. They don't have to bother hauling the stuff off.

It's a complete and total conquest. And if you are the conquered, this is as low as it gets. But notice, this is the place of the day of the Lord.

This is the day of the Lord. And yet, how does it begin? It begins with the utter defeat of the city where God's people dwell, the capital city here. Look at verse 2, I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem.

God gathers them. He doesn't even allow them to come. He gathers them.

He impels them. He is the reason that they come. And the city is taken, the houses rifled, the women ravished.

This is all at God's behest. God initiates this. God doesn't just permit it, He causes it.

Half of the people of Jerusalem have had some basic math, right? And we've got some math that goes on in this chapter and you need to keep track. So we've got a population in Jerusalem. This obviously by way of setting is in the closing days of the tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble such as has never been seen.

There's been a lot of trouble in the history of Israel but none like this. And even when Titus came and sacked Jerusalem, there wasn't the kind of destruction and pillage and plunder that they are talking about here. The temple was destroyed, yes.

The people were scattered, yes. But it says half the city shall go into captivity. So you've got a

full population in Jerusalem.

And you remember we just saw in the preceding chapter and a half, you remember chapter 12 and part of 13, the Lord that stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation and forms the spirit of man. You've got everything with the material universe and the spiritual, man, information, thought, the immaterial, realm. I'll make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness.

It's going to be a rock and it's a heavy stone. When they try to pick it up, they're going to be cut. And it's a cup and when they try to drink it down for their pleasure, it's going to make them stumble and drop.

Well, where is that? This is the same time period. But you notice that God gives this assurance of ultimate deliverance to the remnant first. He says, look, you're going to be delivered.

I'm about to give you some really bad news here. But let me assure you up front that there is victory, there is deliverance, there is salvation for God's people. That's why chapter 12 and the first half dozen verses of chapter 13 precede chapter 14.

Remember that? I'll strike all of these attacking horses with confusion and the riders with madness. I will open my eyes on the house of Judah. I'll strike every horse of the peoples with blindness.

The governors are going to say, the inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength. Verse 7, the Lord will save the tents of Judah first, so the glory of the house of David and glory of the house of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and so on. In that day, I will destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

Verse 9, God says, look, all of these conquering hordes are going to be destroyed. That's the first part of the message. Not to say that there isn't going to be some trouble before that happens.

That's what we're getting now in chapter 14. He says back in 12, I'll pour on the house of David, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication and so on. Remember that? In chapter 13, in that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, sin and uncleanness.

I'll cut off the idols and so on. And the false prophets are going to be cut off. That's what we saw last time, right? But then, beginning in verse 7 of chapter 13, we see what's in the valley between what precedes this deliverance and this salvation and this cleansing and this purging.

What is the mechanism for this purging? It is the time of Jacob's trouble. The trouble necessarily precedes the deliverance. It is a part of the deliverance.

Remember your fractions because we're going to be watching those as we go forward. So back in 14 now, the day of the Lord is coming and they think, oh yes, that's the day you were just

talking about where there's going to be deliverance and victory and people are going to be brought through. But he says it's going to start badly.

The morning of that day is terrible. There's going to be utter conquest. Your spoils are going to be divided up.

Half of the people are going to be hauled off captive. So how many people are left in Jerusalem at the point that half of them are hauled away? The other half, right? Half of them. Okay.

But the remnant of the people, end of verse 2 there, shall not be cut off from the city. You would think, well, they've hauled half of them off captive. Are they going to destroy the other half? God says no.

The half that's left in the city, they're going to be okay. Verse 3, then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations. Now, it says, then the Lord will go forth.

This is powerful language. When it says the Lord will go forth, I wrote down some of the other places in the Bible where the Lord goes forth, and we're going to look at them in just a minute. But it says, then the Lord will go forth.

And this is a good translation given the context. All of these things happen, then the Lord goes forth. He doesn't go forth before that.

He brings all of these nations and allows all of this to happen. So what all has happened? Let's just summarize here. There's the loss of leadership in chapter 13, verse 7. Strike the shepherd and the sheep will scatter, right? Two-thirds of the population will be cut off and die.

Remember 13, 8? It shall come to pass in all the land, says the Lord, that two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, but one-third shall be left in it. I will bring the one-third through the fire. I will bring the one-third through the fire.

So in all the land, two-thirds are cut off. During this time when the nations come and assemble in their surrounding Jerusalem, what happened to everybody in the land? Two-thirds of them are cut off and die. So how many people are actually left in Jerusalem when we get to chapter 14? One-third.

And out of that one-third, half of those are taken away and no more is heard from them. They are in the camp of the enemy. They are taken captive and the camp of the enemy is going to be obliterated.

You remember some of that dissolving language later on? So how many people are actually left in Jerusalem after you take two-thirds of them away and they die and then you take half of the third? One-sixth. Just make a mental note, one-sixth. So two-thirds of the population were cut off and died.

The remaining one-third is subjected to fiery trial. That's what God says in the end of chapter 13

that we saw last time. I will bring the one-third through the fire.

He doesn't say I pull them out of the fire. They are delivered through the fire and they are tested as gold is tested. They are refined as gold is refined.

How is gold refined? Is it a nice room temperature process? It is heated to the point of melting. Heated to the point where the gold all gets together and excludes and pushes out the dross and the impurities. Gold is very heavy and so the impurities, not being so dense, rise to the top and they are scooped off.

The gold is united. The gold is together. The impurities are pushed out by the density of that gold, the quality of the gold.

Refine them as silver is refined. Test them as gold is tested. Silver and gold both work the same way.

When you liquefy them, they push their impurities to the top. This is a fiery process. The precious metals experience the same heat as the impurities, but the impurities are removed and the precious metal survives.

They will call on my name and I will answer them. That one-third is going to be tested. About half of what survives, half of that one-third is going to be dross.

That's what gets removed in chapter 14. The original population, you end up with one-sixth that makes it through. One person out of six is going to be the remnant that is not cut off from the city.

Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, not before. They've lost their leadership. Two-thirds of the population is cut off.

You can imagine, look around in your community. Look around in your circle of acquaintance. Look around in your neighborhood and imagine two-thirds of the people dead or disappeared.

Imagine that the remaining one out of three is subjected to intense, fiery trial of whatever sort. There is utter and complete conquest of the capital city. They're so relaxed about their complete confident victory that they divide the spoils right there where they sit.

They don't even bother to haul it out. They don't bother to set up any security. They're utterly assured that they are in complete control.

The houses are pilfered. They're going from house to house, just pulling everything off the shelves, everything out from under the bed, anything they can find of any value. They're pulling it out and splitting it amongst themselves.

The women are ravished. We would like to think that of the remaining population, the ones that are getting ravished are the dross half. It doesn't say.

That's what we would like to hope, that God is going to give a special preservation or special wisdom to the qualified remnant. But it just says the houses are rifled, the women are ravished, and half of them are hauled away. Only one of six is going to survive.

Then the Lord is going to come. You can legitimately ask the question, look at this devastation, look at this destruction, look at this horrible process and this complete and utter victory with all of the most secularized, perverted, and depraved results of a godless victory perpetrated on the city and its people. Why didn't God show up sooner? Is he late? Is he weak? Was he distracted? Why didn't he intervene before all of this? As soon as the nations assembled, God could have calmed down, the mountain could have split, all these other great things could have happened.

God assembled the nations and God waited for all of this to take place. It is a part of his judgment. This is the secular world judging itself, essentially.

This is the fire breaking out in the hay and incinerating itself. It's sort of a spontaneous combustion of all of that which is not dedicated to God, is not of faith. And God lets them self-destruct in a sense.

One part destroys the other part. Then the Lord appears. In your Bible, if you keep your finger here and turn back to Isaiah chapter 31 and verse 4, then the Lord will go forth.

The Lord going forth is quite an impressive thing. God is normally pictured on the throne dwelling between the cherubim. You've got the seraphim, you've got the heavenly realms, you've had the symbolic crystal sea and so on.

There's an ironic, pacific, orderly appearance to God's presence. God's dwelling, God's throne in heaven. But when you get to chapter 31, Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many, and horsemen because they are very strong, and who do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the Lord.

He also is wise and will bring disaster, and will not call back his words, but will arise against the house of evildoers and against the help of those who work iniquity. The Egyptians are men and not God. Their horses are flesh and not spirit.

When the Lord stretches out his hand, both he who helps will fall, and he who is helped will fall down. They will all perish together. For thus the Lord has spoken to me, as a lion roars, and a young lion over his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is summoned against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor be disturbed by their noise.

So the Lord of hosts will come down to fight for Mount Zion and for its hill. This is the idea. When God decides that he is going to come down and intervene on behalf of his people, it is a fearsome thing.

If you think it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, wait until he's not just

judging his own people, but he's judging the enemies of his people. You find the same thing a few pages over in Isaiah chapter 42 and verse 13. This is in the servant chapter, if you remember that, the 40s of Isaiah.

Behold my servant whom I uphold, my elect one in whom my soul delights. But you get down in that chapter to verse 13, 42-13. The Lord shall go forth like a mighty man.

He shall stir up his zeal like a man of war. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud. He shall prevail against his enemies.

I have held my peace a long time. I have been still and restrained myself now. I will cry like a woman in labor.

I will pant and gasp at once. I will lay waste the mountains and hills and dry up all their vegetation. I will make the rivers coastlands and I will dry up the pools, bring the blind by a way they did not know.

I will lead them in paths they have not known. I will make the darkness light before them and crooked places straight. These things I will do for them and not forsake them.

They shall be turned back, greatly ashamed, who trust in carved images, who say to molded images, you are our God. And it goes on from there. But this is a theme that the Old Testament prophets visit and revisit time and again.

And notice the deliverance is at a time of God's choosing. It isn't the time man would choose. We would choose to prevent and forestall disaster.

We would choose to not see the destruction. Why can't God quietly have them all, lay them down to sleep and not arise? Let me ask you this. You think about this scene in Jerusalem and in Judea of Armageddon, all of these assembled nations, and you think of the fearsome sight that has been described in this chapter 14 of Zechariah.

Could God have just had these people melt into a pile of dry dust? Could He just simply have never let them appear? It's kind of like could the Lord Jesus, could He not have just laid down on the altar like Isaac and had a very solemn and very peaceful sacrifice instead of the bloody, violent death He suffered on the cross? Which do you think is more memorable? The cross of Christ or a relatively peaceful closing of the eyes and falling asleep? We remember the cross and the violence of Christ's death on the cross is real, but it also is a reminder of the terrible, awful effects and consequences of sin. It is a graphic portrayal of how destructive sin is. To judge sin, sin had to be exposed for what it is, and when the Lord Jesus was exposed on the cross, when His flesh and bones were exposed by Roman whips and by the whole crucifixion process, it is a picture, graphic and unforgettable of the consequences of sin.

This is what sin does. Armageddon is the same. God could easily have peacefully just disappeared all of the unbelievers, all of the enemies.

Why does He gather them together in the valley of Armageddon? Why does He let them ravish the city and the people and the women and the houses in it? Why? Why so violent? Why so awe-inspiring a picture? They almost win, don't they? They seem to have utterly prevailed, and in the moment of their greatest and most complete triumph, God appears, overwhelms, and destroys them in ways that make their victory over Jerusalem look paltry. And the whole thing will stand as a monument. Nobody in the United States of America, as long as this country has any kind of historical memory at all, will ever forget Gettysburg.

It is one of the bloodiest moments. We lost more Americans on that day than we've ever lost before or since in any battle, not in Vietnam, not in World War II. A single day's carnage at Gettysburg exceeds them all, and it's unforgettable.

And this day, the day of the Lord, is unforgettable, and it is going to serve God's purpose to remind all of us who have eternal life and go forward of the awful presence of sin and what it can do, and of the mighty power of God in overcoming it. He overcame its moral power at the cross, and he is going to overcome its presence at Armageddon. It is going to raise its ugly head one more time a thousand years later at Gog Magog, and we see that through a glass darkly in Revelation.

It will be the final memorial reminder, and we will be forever, we and the angels will be forever inoculated against any even momentary idea to be entertained of choosing something other than God's grace and God's mercy and God's life. But it is awful, and it is necessary, and it purges out people. As we go forward here, let me just give you one other passage in Isaiah.

Turn to 37.32 in Isaiah. This is in the message that God sends back to Sennacherib when he's facing Hezekiah, but it has those prophetic overtones. The sign that he gives in verse 30, he says, this will be a sign to you, you'll eat this year what grows of itself, the second year what springs from the same, in the third year sow and reap, plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them, and the remnant who have escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward.

For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, and those who escape from Mount Zion, the zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this. This is the kind of thing God has done before, but never on the scale that you'll see in the closing days of the Tribulation and the opening days of the Millennial Kingdom. But there is a pattern here, there's a principle here, there's an expression of the character of God here.

God is willing to let sin be fully sin, and for evil to be fully manifest and fully exposed for what it is, to let it show its total ugliness before he removes it. And this is the difference between hearing about somebody who had a diseased part or organ or tumor or whatever removed and actually seeing the thing and being horrified by what it is doing to the body. When you see something like that, it is unforgettable, and God wants this to be unforgettable for all of us who go into the eternal future.

You've only got two choices to prevent us from making the same mistake that Satan made, the same bad choice, the same bad choice that Adam made in the garden. Neither one of them apparently had any previous exposure to what sin could be and what it could do, and their free will exercised itself. We have seen it, and we will see it in its full horror, and none of us are ever going to want to be anywhere near that direction, going down that road, making that kind of choice again.

The only other thing God could do is take away our free will to prevent sin in the future, to prevent a new outbreak, another metastasizing cancerous presence of sin, another malignancy developing and spreading. But we are immunized. We will be bullet-proof from any, all of the people who have any predilection in that direction have already manifested themselves.

They were the two-thirds. They were the one-half, and one out of six is left. So God will manifest Himself.

Turn over a book to Jeremiah, chapter 25, verse 30. As I said, the prophets are very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very expressive on this subject. Jeremiah 25, verse 30.

I'll begin in 27. Therefore you shall say to them, Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Drink, be drunk, and vomit, fall and rise no more. You remember the picture of the cup in chapter 13? Because of the sword which I will send among you, it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup from your hand to drink, you shall say to them, Thus says the Lord of hosts, You shall certainly drink.

For behold, I begin to bring calamity on the city which is called by My name. And should you be utterly unpunished, you shall not be unpunished. For I will call for a sword on all the inhabitants of the earth, says the Lord of hosts.

Therefore prophesy against them all these words, and say to them, The Lord will roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation. He will roar mightily against His fold. He will give a shout as those who tread the grapes against all the inhabitants of the earth.

A noise will come to the ends of the earth, for the Lord has a controversy with the nations. He will plead His case with all flesh. He will give those who are wicked to the sword, says the Lord." Same idea here.

Now, this picture, this truth, should have two effects on us. One, a sober anticipation that even for God's people, even for those who are the called according to His purpose, we may be called to persist and endure through the fire. It isn't always.

Notice, this is the day of the Lord. This isn't something to draw habitual application from. We don't go to a nearly unique event or rare events, the judgment days of God, and say, well, this should inform our daily faith and practice.

But there are times, there are occasions in God's plan where God's people will be delivered

through the fire. Other times, you're floating on top of the judgment, like Noah. Sometimes, you are passing through the waters on dry ground, and the enemies of God's people are drowned in them later.

The horse and his rider are cast into the sea. Remember that? In fact, turn back to Exodus chapter 15. This is very pertinent to our passage.

Exodus chapter 15. This is actually the celebration song that Moses wrote after the very famous episode in the Yom Suf. Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the Lord and spoke saying, wouldn't it be great if you could actually sing a song dedicated to the Lord that would be inspired scripture? That's what they did.

Moses wrote this and they sang it to the Lord and spoke. They sang and spoke. So there might have been musical portions and then spoken portions.

Some great gospel songs are that way. I will sing to the Lord for he has triumphed gloriously. The horse and its rider he has thrown into the sea.

The Lord is my strength and song. He has become my salvation. He is my God and I will praise him.

My Father's God and I will exalt him. The Lord is a man of war. The Lord is his name.

Pharaoh's chariots and his army he has cast into the sea. His chosen captains are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths have covered them.

They sank to the bottom like a stone. Your right hand, O Lord, has become glorious in power. Your right hand, O Lord, has dashed the enemy in pieces.

And in the greatness of your excellence, you have overthrown those who rose against you. You sent forth your wrath. It consumed them like stubble.

And with the blast of your nostrils, the waters were gathered together. The floods stood upright like a heap. The depths congealed in the heart of the sea.

The enemy said, I will pursue. I will overtake. I will divide the spoil.

That's how confident they were. My desire shall be satisfied on them. I will draw my sword.

My hand shall destroy them. You blew with your wind. The sea covered them.

They sank like lead in the mighty waters. Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? You stretched out your right hand. The earth swallowed them.

You in your mercy have led forth the people whom you have redeemed. You have guided them in your strength to your holy habitation. Now hold that thought and go back to Zechariah

chapter 14.

Remember what time of day it was when Israel passed through the waters of the sea and then Pharaoh tried to pursue? Do you remember what time of day it was that they passed over on dry ground? I'll give you a clue. It wasn't the pillar of cloud. It was the pillar of fire.

So what time of day was it? It was night. It was dark. They passed across in the darkness.

There will be no light, verse 6. The light will diminish. It shall be one day which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen that it will be light.

One of the last times this happened, at evening time it was light, was when God's pillar of fire was lighting the way for the children of Israel to cross through the Red Sea. There is another path of deliverance. In that day it shall be, verse 5, you will flee through my mountain valley when the Lord Jesus descends and his feet are planted on the Mount of Olives, verse 4. If you look at that on a map, the Mount of Olives is to the east of the Brook Kedron and it's pretty much a north-south ridge looking mount.

It's really a big hill, we'd call it around here. People in Colorado would say it was just a gopher mound compared to what they've got. But for that part of the world, it's a mount and it's got kind of a north-south axis.

It's long and it's on that east side of the Brook. When the Lord Jesus' feet touch that thing, it is going to crack and split in half. Part of it's going to move to the north, part of it's going to move to the south.

Now, picture this in your mind. Pick any comparably sized hill and imagine that suddenly some fault gives way and the thing cracks open and moves a sizable distance, half of it to the north and half of it to the south. What do you think is in the middle? I've watched a guy operating a backhoe out here in the backyard, not once but twice here within the last week.

What does disturbed earth look like? Does it look like a highway you could paint a stripe on? By the way, did you notice they painted the stripe out here on the road yesterday? I went to do a piano and it was black. I came back and it was striped. But you can't paint a stripe on that.

That north and south separation, what do you think is in between? What do you think is going to look like no man's land in World War I after artillery barrages spanning weeks? That is going to be the worst jumbled up, unsafe looking mess you can imagine, right? It's going to crack in half. But what does God say? Mount of Olives will split from east to west making a very large valley, half to the north, half to the south. Then you shall flee through my mountain valley.

Now, who is going to take the Lord at His word? People are going to look out from Jerusalem and say, well, I don't know what's worse, staying here in the city or going, I mean, what if that thing slams back together? It's unstable. It's a fault. Aftershocks, earthquake, that doesn't look, I'm supposed to, me and my family, whatever is left of us, we've already been decimated, I say

decimated, we've already been fractioned twice.

Two-thirds of us were died and then half of us were hauled away. Now, here's a crack in the earth and we're supposed to flee through that thing? Can you imagine what the Israelites were thinking when Moses held out the rod and the waters heaped up on each side? He said, okay. Very similar.

It's like bookends. God heaped up the waters on each side and made a path of deliverance for His people and He lit the night with His presence. Here, God is going to split the earth and provide a path of deliverance and He's going to light the night, but they've got to have the faith to go through there.

It's not going to be inviting. People who are going to go through there are the people who trust God. After having been through so much and they say, oh, fine, now I've got to go through an earthquake crack to be delivered, but they're going to have Zechariah chapter 14.

They're going to have Isaiah in their minds because these are the call. These are people who know their Bible. These are the faithful down through the ages, down through biblical ages, down through post-biblical ages.

People who know the Word of God and are willing to place their faith in it despite what common sense might tell them, despite what people might advise, despite what the wisdom of the world would suggest. This is what God says. This is what I'm going to do.

Though He slay me, I will trust Him. And they're going to come to this passage. We're looking at it now.

They're going to be looking at it in the day. And they're going to say, you know what? That's God's own deliverance. We are supposed to go through that crack.

Now notice, who are they going to pass as they're heading east? Who are they going to pass coming west? Who just got through putting his feet on the mountain? He's going to be heading west. They're going to be heading east. And anybody that's left is going to be dealing with the Lord Jesus Himself and the hosts that come with Him, His Holy Ones.

His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. It will split. You shall flee through it.

You shall flee as you fled from the earthquake. Thus the Lord my God will come and all the holy ones with you, verse 5. Now a lot of commentators say these are the angels. I would submit to you as a good, solid, pre-trib, pre-mill, evangelical, that's us.

Those of us who are qualified. Those of us who by faith and patience inherit the promises and are worthy to wear white and to accompany the Lord on His victory mission, His deliverance mission here. The lights will diminish.

The lights of the sky are going to diminish. The Lamb is going to start being the light, even at this point. It will be light and living waters will flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea.

In both summer and winter it shall occur and the Lord shall be king over all the earth. So you see this blending into the future millennial kingdom. You get the idea if you think about this and this is a little bit of a stretch and you can ignore it if you want to, but what direction does the brook Kidron run? Kidron runs north-south and the Mount of Olives is right beside it.

You've got the mount on which Jerusalem was built, ultimately Mount Zion over on the other side. So you've got that brook. When a river flows out of Jerusalem which is up on the left hand side and goes to the east and west, what's that going to do with Kidron? You're going to have a cross.

You've got the north-south waterway and you've got the east-west riverway. The sign of the cross is going to be on the eastern side of the town which is the deliverance side. That's why these people are going to flee to the east.

Nobody's going west. They're going to go through the Mount of Olives that's been solid. Somebody says, how can we possibly go? There's a mountain in the way.

Well, talk about faith moving mountains. Those people of faith are going to pass right through the mountain. Let me close by giving you one little special part here.

This is the Mount of Olives. Why doesn't Mount Zion split? Why don't they just head south down the brook? Why don't they go north to the sides of the north or something? Why the Mount of Olives? Turn back with me real quickly now to 2 Samuel chapter 15. 2 Samuel 15.

This is the Absalom revolt. Absalom has been mercifully allowed back after murdering his brother Amnon. David let him back in because he loved him, wanted to try to cultivate him back into faith and obedience, so to speak.

But in chapter 15, Absalom provided himself with chariots and horses, 50 men to run before him, stands by the way of the gate, and whenever somebody came in for a decision, Absalom would cultivate their company and say, look, your case is good and right. The king's not going to listen to you. Oh, that I were the judge.

I would judge according to my standard, not David's standard. David would never hear your case. David would never grant you what you think would be justice, but I will.

Absalom has a different moral standard, and it is a standard that panders to the people. It's a standard that makes them feel good, but it's not God's standard. That's what's happening around us today.

The postmodern world develops a morality that panders to people, panders to the majority,

panders to those who have anything but God's righteous absolute standard at heart. Well, this is what Absalom brings in. He's almost a foreshadowing of the Antichrist in this sense.

And you remember in verse 13, the hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom. So David says, Arise and let us flee. This is verse 14, 2 Samuel 15, Arise and let us flee, or we shall not escape from Absalom.

Make haste to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly and bring disaster on us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword. The king's servant said to the king, We are your servants, ready to do whatever my lord the king commands. David says, We need to flee, and he's going to flee right across the Mount of Olives.

And they say, Whatever the king says, we will do. That's a picture of these people, this one-sixth that has remained. So the king went out with all his household after him.

And if you skip down to verse 23, after the Ittai, the Gittite thing, all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people crossed over. The king himself crossed over the brook Kidron, and all the people crossed over toward the way of the wilderness. This is going east.

This is going right up the Mount of Olives. Lest you have any doubt about that, skip down to verse 30. So David went up by the ascent of the Mount of Olives, and wept as he went up.

And he had his head covered and went barefoot. All the people who were with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up. They are climbing the mountain, leaving, because of the presence and power of evil that has taken over Jerusalem, that has conquered Jerusalem and driven out its rightful king and those people who are loyal to him.

You know this story. Skip over to 2 Samuel 19, verse 43. After Absalom is defeated, after David is given the news, he's gone clear across the Jordan.

He's gone so far east that he's across the Jordan in Mahanaim. Remember that? He goes all the way across the Jordan. So he crosses back and he comes to Gilgal in 19, verse 40.

And you remember Chimham and the people of Judah escorting the king? Half the people of Israel. Notice, half the people of Israel are currently with him at this point. Half of them.

Just then the men of Israel came to the king and said, Why have our brethren, the men of Judah, stolen you away and brought the king, his household, and all David's men with him across the Jordan? And the men of Judah answer and say, Because the king is a close relative of ours. Why are you angry over this matter? And they start kibitzing and quibbling over who's got more of a stake in David. And the men of Israel answered, verse 43, and said, We have ten shares in the king.

Therefore we also have more right to David than you. Why then do you despise us? Were we not the first to advise bringing back the king? They have ten shares, they say. Who are the other

two? Benjamin and Judah.

So the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel. And so in chapter 20, Sheba, the son of Bichri, blows the trumpet and says, We have no share in David, nor do we have any inheritance from the son of Jesse. Every man to his tents, O Israel.

Look at verse 2, So every man of Israel deserted David, and followed Sheba, the son of Bichri. But the men of Judah, from the Jordan as far as Jerusalem, remained loyal to the king. So two shares out of twelve remain loyal to the king and stay with him.

So two twelfths is what? One sixth. It's bookends. It's a symmetry.

And it is a reminder, it is an encouragement to those who know the word of God in those days, those dark days of Jacob's trouble at the end of the tribulation, that God has their deliverance assured. So, let's go back now quickly to Zechariah chapter 14. In that day it shall be that living waters will flow, verse 8, from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea.

In both summer and winter it shall occur. Why is that detail included? Many of the wadis and creek beds in Israel are fed by rainwater. Remember this the Brook Cherith thing dried up.

Why? It wasn't spring fed, it was rain fed. This is going to flow in summer and winter. What does that tell you? The source of this water is not rainfall, the rain that falls on the just and the unjust.

This is a spring of water flowing from Jerusalem, just as it will in the New Jerusalem in the kingdom of the Father. It is an inexhaustible supply. It is a permanent source.

It never runs dry. It runs fresh water summer and winter. And it goes east and west.

It's inexhaustible. Your sins have been separated as far as the east is from the west. This living water flows all the way to the sea and the sea connects all of the rest of the world.

The Lord shall be king over all the earth. In that day the saying will be, the Lord is one and His name is one. All the land will be turned into a plain.

Jerusalem will be raised up and inhabited and it gives the dimensions. The people shall dwell in it and no longer shall there be utter destruction. Remember the context in which this is delivered.

They've just come back from utter destruction. They've come back from well over a hundred years of captivity and they're trying to rebuild. Remember Zechariah and Haggai are still in the day where they're just trying to get the temple finished and the city is largely in ruins.

Nehemiah and Ezra haven't fully done their thing yet. And what is the message? There will no longer be utter destruction. Jerusalem will be safely inhabited.

And there's a clue here for people who know God and know His word. Don't think that this reconstruction you're doing in the days of the decree of Cyrus and returning to Jerusalem, these things aren't going to happen until the shepherd is stricken and the sheep are scattered. It isn't going to happen until the nations surround the city and are fully judged by God.

Until God comes forth like a mighty man of war and judges both His people and the nations. Then there will no longer be utter destruction. Jerusalem will be safely inhabited.

So this is the promise of God and like so many other things it depends for its efficacy. It depends for its power in the souls of God's people on whether or not they believe it. Whether or not they take it to the bank in their hearts and say, you know what, there may be hard times.

I may be seeing a lot of pillaging and destruction. I may be seeing a lot of loss, a lot of scary circumstances and it seems hopeless. All of the nations are gathered around Jerusalem.

They succeed. They destroy it. They pillage.

They're dividing the plunder in the city square. There is no place to go. There's no way to escape and yet they've got the promise of God.

There is a way of escape. When God chooses the time, it's His day. It is the day of the Lord's.

It's not the day of the man who really, really screams hard enough for it. It's the Lord's day. And when His timing is set, it's set for a reason.

It's set for a purpose. There is a necessary exposing of those who have a shallow and false commitment. Remember the guys in Israel? Oh yes, we have ten shares in David.

Let us. And a day later, we have no share in David. We're leaving.

And this presages what's going to happen after Solomon when they split in the Jeroboam-Rehoboam deal. But there's that fault line, that crack is exposed in the days of Absalom. And they come back but it's a very shallow and hollow and short-term commitment.

And within a hundred years, the kingdom will be permanently divided with these same, along that same line. And who is it that goes into idolatry? Who is it that has Ahab and Jezebel for the royalty? These that claim to have ten shares in David and they really don't. What exposes it? Pressure, testing, refinement.

We should not fear the refining that God brings. It's necessary. We need it.

The things that we go through that are harsh and hard and difficult, we need them. God wouldn't turn the temperature up any higher than He has to to purge out the dross. But He will turn it up enough to purge out the dross.

We decide if we are going to be gold and silver and precious stones or if we're going to be

wood, hay and stubble. We make that choice. And God judges accordingly.

We are either delivered or we are purged out. But He is not going to take us into the eternal future if we're not interested, if we're not those who love Him and who trust Him when a lot of what the world says conspires to say otherwise. And it is a promise for the tribulational generation, but it is an example for us even in prospect that we are either people who trust or people who don't.

There's just no middle ground. There's no one-third that hangs around just outside the city. There's the one-sixth that are delivered and there's everybody else that's gone.

Those who are delivered, that one-sixth that really have a stake in David so to speak, they will see the valley open for deliverance. And they're going to have to have the faith to cross that hard ground. That's not a nice flat highway.

That's going to be a struggle to get through. But God says, that's my way of deliverance so take it. Lord Jesus is going to be going the other way and He's going to prepare the kingdom and He's going to have His angels come and purge out of it all things that offend.

Just as a last thought, look at verse 12, the plague with which the Lord will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem, their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet. Their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths. There's not a person listening to the sound of my voice that hasn't seen pictures of that.

And that technology from a human point of view has only existed in less than the last hundred years. Everybody's seen pictures from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, shadows, people that were dissolved on their feet. And it is not nearly as hard for us to understand what God is talking about here as it was in the preceding 1900, 2000, 2200, 2300, 2400 years.

We know that this is possible even within the realm of human technology, much less what God is going to do. And you know how complete and total that kind of destruction is. And guess what? Those who are buried in the middle of that separated mountain and are beyond it are not going to be subject to it because they had the faith to take the hard path.

And I don't know if God is going to use a nuke or not, but I know that the people who flee to the east in the direction of the rising sun, the direction that God tells them to go, will be delivered. It's going to be a relatively small fraction of who was originally in the city, but they have qualified themselves by faith and patience and obedience. And they're in the cleft of the rock when all of these others are judged.

And when panic seizes everybody else, verse 13, it's like the days of Gideon with his 300 where they basically destroyed themselves in the darkness and in the panic. Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor, raise his hand against his neighbor's hand. Judah will fight at Jerusalem.

These who have been outside are now going to come back and finish the mopping up. The

wealth of the surrounding nations will be gathered together. Remember how it started out? Jerusalem's plunder was being divided in the city? What's the picture now? A thousand people will be gathered together and a thousand times that much plunder is going to be scraped up from what's left outside the city and brought in.

You think they're going to have any trouble rebuilding Jerusalem in the opening days of the Millennial Kingdom? The nations that conveniently brought all of these resources nearby then got judged and dissolved and it's just laying there for the taking. It's like, remember the lepers that went outside the city when the Assyrians had fled and they said, well, this is too good a news to keep to ourselves and they went in and here's all of the spoils and plunder and this starved city suddenly has a super abundance and guys are getting trampled in the gate that didn't want to believe the words of the prophet. You remember that? Well, this is that on steroids and they're going to go out and the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be gathered together, gold, silver and apparel in great abundance.

And that surviving one-sixth, they're going to come back. They're going to follow the Lord back through the Mount of Olives. They went, waited for the judgment.

Now they're going to come back and they've got the world's biggest retail store and everything is on sale for free. That's how God delivers. But do you think they will ever forget the process by which they came to be delivered? Those people are ironclad, bulletproof devotees of the Lord Jesus Christ for all eternity, just as we should be looking at what God has delivered us from.

Well, it's a beautiful picture. I knew I wasn't going to get to the last part of the chapter, so we'll do that next time. Depending on the 14 and 7 is 21, we'll probably have a little Christmas-themed study next week.

And then in the intervening week before the greatest of all holidays, New Year's Eve, in my opinion, we'll be able to finish Zachariah and we can start the new year with a new book. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the wonderful patience that You exhibit toward us.

You teach us. You show us so much in Your Word and You bless us with the presence of Your Holy Spirit to guide us, to enable us to see clearly and to understand and make application. We pray that as we reflect on what we've seen from Your Word, that that process will come to bear fruit so that we can bear fruit as 100-fold fields in the spiritual realm and be fit and useful as servants both now and in the kingdoms that are to come, that we can reflect the glory of our Lord Jesus now and in the future.

And we pray these things in His name. Amen.