

The Restoration of Jerusalem and Refining of Israel (12:1-13:9)

Chapters 9-14 contain two oracles or burdens that focus on the *return* of Messiah (9-11) and the *reign* of Messiah (12-14). Chapters 9-10 portray Israel as sheep without a shepherd and outline her need for Messiah, their shepherd-king. Chapter 11 details the misery of Israel’s *rejection* of her true shepherd in his first coming, but chapters 12-13 focus on his second coming to Jerusalem and Israel’s *restoration* and *refining* “in that day” (a phrase occurring 17 times in chapters 12-14 and signifying the eschatological culmination of the promises of God).

The authoritative prophetic introduction (12:1) is described as a *burden* or *oracle* (*massa*, מַסָּא), a load, a tribute, the carrying or lifting of a prophetic utterance (see Jer 20:7-9).

I. The Defense of an Assaulted Jerusalem (12:2-9) . . . and the Destruction of Her Enemies

The context of this passage which predicts that *all the nations of the earth will be gathered against* Jerusalem (12:3, 9) is the terrible battle of Armageddon (see 14:1-2; Rev 16:14-16).

A. Underestimated strength (12:2-5)

1. Jerusalem will be like *a cup of staggering* (12:2)

“The expression ‘cup of reeling’ is used elsewhere in Isaiah 51:17, 22, but here the text actually speaks of a bowl (*saph*) rather than a cup. It is possible that the author chose the word ‘bowl’ in order to execute a wordplay. The Hebrew word *saph* also means ‘threshold.’ Just as the drink from a vessel could cause drunkenness and stumbling, a threshold could easily cause stumbling, because part of the threshold was raised above ground level. The threshold consisted of a large stone slab that featured sockets on each end into which the door pivots were fitted (though large gates would have separate sockets sunk in the ground). The door would close against the protruding threshold. This threshold slab could also be the immovable rock that is referred to in the next verse.” —*IVPBBOT*, 807.

2. Jerusalem will be like *a heavy stone* (12:3)

B. Blessing instead of cursing (12:4)

Confusion, madness, and blindness were specifically mentioned among the curses that would come upon disobedient Israel in Deut 28:28, but now these will be redirected toward Israel’s enemies as her curses are transformed into blessings.

C. Safety in judgment (12:6)

1. The clans of Judah will be like *a fire pot* (12:6a)

2. The clans of Judah will be like *a flaming torch* (12:6b)

D. Sharing in God’s glory (12:7)

E. Divine protection (12:8-9)

II. The Mourning of a Repentant Jerusalem (12:10-14)

A. The national mourning over a missed Messiah (12:10) *whom they have pierced* (quoted as “fulfilled” in Jn 19:31-37)

B. The national and personal extent of this mournful repentance (12:11-14)

III. The Refinement of a Religiously Misguided Land/People (13:1-6)

Israel will be cleansed from false religion (*sin and impurity* in 13:1, *idols* and false *prophets* in 13:2-6)

In his study guide on Zechariah 9-14, John MacArthur lists six elements of this cleansing (pp. 106-113):

A. Cleansing from the defilement of sin (1)

B. Cleansing from the deception of spurious prophets (2-6)

C. Cleansing through the death of the Shepherd (7a)

D. Cleansing from the dispersion of the sheep (7b)

E. Cleansing from the devastation of slaughter (8-9a)

F. Cleansing through the decision of the soul (9b)

IV. The Suffering of a Purged and Purified Land/People (13:7-9)

A. *My associate* (7a) *gever amiti*, גֵּבֶר אֲמִיִּי is an equal with the speaker and hints at the deity of Messiah. The divine command *strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered* (7b) is an image related to Israel’s rejection of Messiah at his first coming (Mt 26:31) and the resultant scattering both in 70 A.D. and during the tribulation period.

B. *I will turn my hand against the little ones* (7c) = chastening the remnant (see Amos 1:8; Ps 81:15; Isa 1:25 and Ezek 38:12). God chastens those he loves (Prov 3:11-12; Heb 12:6), and those who love him desire to be refined (Ps 51:6-8; Heb 12:11). This *third part* of Israel that is *left* and *refined* (8-9a) will be the “all Israel” of Rom 11:26.

C. The covenant restoration language of 13:9 echoes Hos 1:9-11 (*lo ammi* = *not my people* will become *ammi* = *my people*).

Zechariah 12-13

12:1 ¶ The burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel.

¶ Thus declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him, 2 “Behold, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah. 3 “And it will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it. 4 “In that day,” declares the LORD, “I will strike every horse with bewilderment, and his rider with madness. But I will watch over the house of Judah, while I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. 5 “Then the clans of Judah will say in their hearts, ‘A strong support for us are the inhabitants of Jerusalem through the LORD of hosts, their God.’ 6 “In that day I will make the clans of Judah like a firepot among pieces of wood and a flaming torch among sheaves, so they will consume on the right hand and on the left all the surrounding peoples, while the inhabitants of Jerusalem again dwell on their own sites in Jerusalem. 7 “The LORD also will save the tents of Judah first in order that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not be magnified above Judah. 8 “In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the LORD before them. 9 “And it will come about in that day that I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

10 ¶ “And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born. 11 “In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo. 12 “And the land will mourn, every family by itself; the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; 13 the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself, and their wives by themselves; 14 all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves.

13:1 ¶ “In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity.

2 ¶ “And it will come about in that day,” declares the LORD of hosts, “that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they will no longer be remembered; and I will also remove the prophets and the unclean spirit from the land. 3 “And it will come about that if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who gave birth to him will say to him, ‘You shall not live, for you have spoken falsely in the name of the LORD’; and his father and mother who gave birth to him will pierce him through when he prophesies. 4 “Also it will come about in that day that the prophets will each be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies, and they will not put on a hairy robe in order to deceive; 5 but he will say, ‘I am not a prophet; I am a tiller of the ground, for a man sold me as a slave in my youth.’ 6 “And one will say to him, ‘What are these wounds between your arms?’ Then he will say, ‘Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.’

7 “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd,
And against the man, My Associate,”

Declares the LORD of hosts.

“Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered; //12:4 // Mt 26:31

And I will turn My hand against the little ones.

8 “And it will come about in all the land,”

Declares the LORD,

“That two parts in it will be cut off and perish;

But the third will be left in it.

9 “And I will bring the third part through the fire,

Refine them as silver is refined

And test them as gold is tested

They will call on My name,

And I will answer them;

I will say, ‘They are My people,’

And they will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’”