

What Lies Ahead

by Oswald J. Smith

The sermon explores the prophecy in Zechariah 14, which describes the capture of Jerusalem, the Lord's intervention, the physical changes, and the new order of things that will take place when Jesus Christ returns.

Duration: 38:47

Scripture: Zechariah 14:2-3, Zechariah 14:6-7, Malachi 4:5, Matthew 24:29, Revelation 21:1, Revelation 21:22

Topics: "End Times"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the 14th chapter of the book of Zechariah, which is divided into four sections. The first section focuses on the capture of the city of Jerusalem, with four events that occur in connection with it. The second section highlights the Lord's intervention, with four things that happen when the Lord intervenes. The third section discusses the physical changes that will take place in Jerusalem and Palestine in the future. Lastly, the fourth section explores the new order of things that will be inaugurated after Jesus Christ takes over the reins of government. The speaker emphasizes the importance of studying and understanding these prophecies, which are also discussed in his book 'Prophecy, What Lies Ahead.'

Transcript

I do not know whether or not you all have your Bibles with you tonight, but if you do have your Bibles, I wish you would turn to the fourteenth chapter of the book of Zechariah. Now in order to find Zechariah, all you have to do is to turn to the last book in the Old Testament. And when you have found the last book in the Old Testament, which is Malachiah, then go back one book, and you'll be right in the midst of Zechariah.

Zechariah is the second-to-last book in the Old Testament Scriptures. So turn to the end of the Old Testament, find yourself in Malachiah, turn back one book, and you'll be in the midst of Zechariah. I want you to get it ready so that you can listen as I speak tonight and follow me as I read from the fourteenth chapter, and turn if you will at once to the fourteenth chapter of the book of Zechariah.

Then we'll be ready for our study. Now let me say before I speak tonight that this message that I'm going to give this evening is in this book that God gave me many years ago, Prophecy, What Lies Ahead. It's the ninth chapter in the book.

Many many years ago I was tremendously interested in Zechariah fourteen, and after preaching again and again the prophetic message that I want to use tonight, it was published in this book in chapter nine, Prophecy, What Lies Ahead. And if you want to get this message tonight, you may get it at the close of the service. If you'll get a copy of my book, Prophecy, What Lies Ahead, and then after having heard it you can read it, word for word, and I'm sure it will be a blessing to you.

Now let me just begin with some kind of an introduction as I speak on the drama of the end time, the drama of the end time. There are four great sections in this chapter. Chapter fourteen of Zechariah, four great sections.

Let me give you their names first of all. The first section is called The Capture of the City, The Capture of the City, and I'm referring now to the capture of the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem has fallen again and again and again.

Many many times it has been captured in years gone by. It is going to be captured once again. After that, it will never again be captured.

The word of God makes it perfectly clear that the city of Jerusalem will be captured once more, and after that final capture, it will never again be captured, at least not for a thousand years. That's going to happen so far as the city of Jerusalem is concerned. So the first section has to do with the capture of the city, and you'll find that in verse two.

I'll come back to it in a few moments. The second section of this chapter is called The Lord's Intervention, The Lord's Intervention. You'd like to keep these headings or these divisions in your mind, just take note if you will as I give them one by one.

Now The Lord's Intervention is found in verse three. When you get to verse three, you'll be dealing with The Lord's Intervention. So first the capture of the city, verse two, second The Lord's Intervention, verse three.

Now the third division is called The Physical Changes, in other words the physical changes in Jerusalem and in Palestine that are to take place in the future, the physical changes. And then last of all, the final division, The New Order of Things, The New Order of Things. Now those are the four sections that I have found in this chapter, which I've studied for many, many years, those are the four sections that I've found in the fourteenth chapter of Zechariah.

Now here's a very striking thing. Under each of these headings that I've already given you, there are four subdivisions or four things that take place, four things that happen in connection with each one of these four headings that I've given you tonight. First, for instance, the capture of the city, there are four things that take place in connection with the capture of the city of Jerusalem.

Second, The Lord's Intervention, there are four things that happen when the Lord intervenes. Third, The Physical Changes, there are four great physical changes that will take place. And last of all, The New Order of Things, and there are four new orders that will be inaugurated in connection with the city of Jerusalem after it has been captured and after Jesus Christ has taken over the reins of government.

So this chapter is a very logical chapter, and that's the way the various divisions are set forth in Zechariah chapter fourteen. Now the first division, as I've already stated, is the capture of the city. Jerusalem is going to fall once again.

Not perhaps in our lifetime, I do not know. It may be within the next few months, it may be within the next few years. I do not know when Jerusalem is going to fall again, but I'm certain as I'm standing here, I'm certain of the fact that Jerusalem is going to fall again, as I am that I'm speaking to you tonight.

So I say the first division is the capture of the city. Now, here are the four things that take place in connection with the capture of the city. They're all found in verse two.

Verse two reads like this, I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken. Well, I've just said that, that Jerusalem will be captured once again. That hasn't happened yet.

I know Jerusalem has been captured many, many times, but this captivity of the city has not yet taken place. I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle. That has never happened.

All nations have never yet been gathered together against the city of Jerusalem, and the city shall be taken. Now, this is still future. As a matter of fact, everything in this chapter is future.

Everything in this chapter has yet to be fulfilled. It is still in the future. It never has been fulfilled, and I can for the life of me understand how those who believe that all prophecy for the most part has already been fulfilled, how they can read the fourteenth chapter of Zechariah and still maintain that all prophecy has already been fulfilled.

This prophecy has never yet been fulfilled. Here are the four things that are going to happen, and I want you to look at verse two as I mention them. First of all, the houses are going to be rifled.

In other words, the houses are going to be looted. That always happens when an army, if it's a heathen army, when it conquers the city, it loots the city, and that's exactly what is going to happen to the city of Jerusalem. The city of Jerusalem is going to be looted.

In the second place, the women will be ravaged, and that has always happened. When heathen armies have captured a city, they have ravaged or raped the women of the city. And then in the third place, one half of the population of the city will be taken into captivity and led out of the city.

One half of the entire population will be conquered and taken away from the city. And last of all, the other half will be left in the city. Now look at verse two as we read it together.

I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken. There's the capture of the city. Here are the four things that are going to happen.

First, and the houses rifled. They'll be looted, the houses in Jerusalem. Second, and the women ravaged, and that will take place in the city of Jerusalem.

The women will be ravaged. Third, half of the city shall go forth into captivity. One half of the population will be led away captives, slaves, servants.

Fourth, and the residue, the rest of the people, shall not be cut off from the city. Now there are the four things that will take place in connection with the capture of the city of Jerusalem when it falls for the last time. And this will be the last time that Jerusalem will ever be captured, the last time it will fall.

Now the second statement that I made was the Lord's intervention. What's going to happen? What's the Lord going to have to say about it? Is he going to allow the city to be captured? Is he going to allow the

houses to be rifled, the women to be ravaged, half of the city to go into captivity? Is he going to permit all that permanently? Is he going to continue? The Lord's intervention. Well there are four things in connection with the Lord's intervention.

The first is found in verse 5. When he intervenes, he returns with his saints. Look at verse 5 if you will. The last part of the verse, the very last statement in the verse, and the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with thee.

Now this doesn't refer to God the Father, even though it says the Lord my God, because we know that God the Father is not going to come at any time. We know the Lord Jesus Christ, the second person in the Trinity, who was here upon earth nineteen hundred years ago is the one who is to return again. And the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with thee.

Now I do not know just what saints will come back with him. I could not say this group of saints or that group of saints, but a great multitude of saints will come back with the Lord Jesus Christ when he comes. And so when the Lord intervenes, he'll first of all come back to this earth with his saints.

In the second place, he will stand first of all as his feet touch the earth on the Mount of Olives. Look at verse 4 if you will. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east.

Now there's no misunderstanding that statement, you can't spiritualize it, there's no way to spiritualize it. It tells us that the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ will stand or rest on the Mount of Olives. That's where he will arrive when he comes back to this earth.

The first spot on this earth where the feet of Jesus Christ will rest will be the spot where they rested when he left nineteen hundred years ago, the Mount of Olives. His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem. There's no mistaking it now.

It's the Mount of Olives before Jerusalem on the east. There's no doubt about that at all. And so that's where he's going to come when he returns.

He'll come first of all to the Mount of Olives. Now in the third place, what will he do when he gets back? Well first of all he'll punish the nations. He'll punish the nations.

That's how he'll begin his reign. That's the first thing he'll do when he gets back to this world, after his feet have touched the Mount of Olives. Now we have to turn to verse twelve to get that statement cleared.

And here it is very, very plainly. In the last half of the verse it says, this is a plague, commencing at the beginning, this is a plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem. Now the armies of the Antichrist will fight against Jerusalem.

And as I've already stated, they'll capture the city of Jerusalem. And the houses will be rifled, the women will be ravaged, half of the city will be let out into captivity, the rest will be left. So that the Antichrist, with his armies, will capture the city of Jerusalem.

And it says here, and this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people, the armies of the Antichrist, that have fought against Jerusalem. Now the only armies that will have fought against Jerusalem will be the armies of the Antichrist. There are no other armies that will fight Jerusalem at this

time.

That's made clear in other scriptures. The armies of the Antichrist will fight against Jerusalem and will capture the city. But then, when Jesus Christ comes back, he'll smite the people that have fought against Jerusalem, the armies of the Antichrist.

How will they be smitten as he comes back? Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongues shall consume away in their mouth. Now, visualize it if you will, here are the vast armies of the Antichrist. They are gathered all around Jerusalem.

They haven't left the city yet. They have surrounded the city. The captives are in their hands, and there they stand, a great, vast army, and Jesus Christ breaks the clouds asunder and comes back through the sky, ready to stand upon the Mount of Olives.

What happens as they gaze at that wonderful spectacle, as they watch the Lord Jesus Christ returning to the Mount of Olives? Well, these three things mentioned in verse 12 will happen. As they stand there, gazing up into the heavens, watching the Lord Jesus Christ as he descends to the earth, it says, first of all, their eyes shall consume away in their holes. Now, please do not ask me to interpret this statement spiritually.

I wouldn't for the world take a statement like this and interpret it spiritually. I believe it's going to happen exactly as stated. As they gaze at the Lord Jesus Christ coming back in his glory, their eyes will consume away in their holes.

Then they'll be instantly blinded, hundreds of thousands of them. The armies watching Jesus Christ return, their eyes will consume away in their holes. Second, their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.

That's going to happen. Their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. Now, whatever that means, something's going to happen to the tongues of those comprising the armies of the Antichrist as they gaze at Jesus Christ as he returns to earth.

Their flesh will consume away while they stand upon their feet. Their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. Now, after that, there'll be nothing on the ground for miles around except heaps of bones.

Heaps of bones. The eyes will have consumed away, the tongue will have consumed away as they stand there on their feet, gazing at that sublime spectacle while the Lord Jesus Christ returns in great glory. And that's the way he's going to punish the armies of the Antichrist.

If they knew that, they wouldn't follow him. But they don't know it. They do not believe God's word, and that'll be their punishment.

And the fourth statement, just as there were four statements on the capture of the city, so there are four statements under the Lord's intervention. He reigns as King for the first time in the history of the world. Jesus Christ takes over the reins of government and reigns as Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

Where do I get that? In verse 9. Are you going to believe verse 9? What can you say about it unless you do believe it? And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. His reign is going to be universal. He'll not

reign over just one nation on the earth.

He'll reign over the entire earth. This earth will be subdued by Jesus Christ, who will become its King. The Lord shall be King over all the earth.

In that day there shall be one Lord and his name one. Do you believe that? Do you believe that Jesus Christ is going to take over the reins of government and reign? I do not know of anything else that I more firmly believe than the fact that the day will come, in spite of what the Antichrist will do, in spite of what the world is experiencing today, in spite of what is happening to the nations today, the day will come when Jesus Christ, who died on Calvary's cross, will reign as Lord of Lords and King of Kings. He'll take over the reins of government and he'll govern the entire world.

That's why I'm glad I'm on his side now, because I want to reign with him when he reigns. And that'll be the last thing that will take place under the Lord's intervention. That's in verse 9. Now we come to the third great division, the physical changes.

What physical changes will take place when Jesus Christ comes back to the Mount of Olives, when he reigns as Lord of Lords and King of Kings? What physical changes will take place? Four of them. First, the Mount of Olives will be cleft by an earthquake. That's in verse 4. Now look at verse 4 if you will, and this is the way it reads.

I've already read the first part. His speech shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east. Now listen.

And the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west. Am I going to spiritualize a statement like that? If you want to see the Mount of Olives as it was in the days of Jesus, you will have to go soon, because the day will come when Jesus Christ will have returned, and when his feet stand again on the Mount of Olives, the Mount of Olives will be cleft by a great earthquake. And this is what it says in verse 4. The Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a great valley, and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

Now that's one of the greatest changes that will ever take place physically in this world of ours. A mountain, the Mount of Olives, cleft in the midst until there's a great valley from one side of it to the other. Half of it moves in one direction, half of it in the other direction.

The Mount of Olives cleft in the midst and moved from the west to the east so that there'd be a great valley from one side of it to the other, half of it toward the north and half of it toward the south. That's the first thing that will take place after the armies of the Antichrist are overcome and conquered. The Mount of Olives will cleave in the midst, it will never be the same again.

Complete change in the Mount of Olives. Now in the second place, the day when these things happen will be prolonged. Now there was a day in Joshua's time when the day was prolonged.

It was prolonged until the Israelites had won the victory. That never happened again, and it never will happen again, until Jesus Christ returns. When he returns, in order for all these things to be accomplished, it's going to happen once again.

The day will be prolonged. We get that in verses 6 and 7. Notice what it says. And it shall come to pass in that day that the light shall not be clear nor dark, but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day nor night.

It'll not be dark, it will not be light, but it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light. There will be time for the Lord Jesus Christ to do all that will have to be done by a prolonged day. And only twice in the word of God is it ever stated that the day would be prolonged.

It was prolonged in Joshua's day, it will be prolonged when Jesus Christ comes back again until all that has been prophesied for that day will have been fulfilled. Now what's the third great event or change? What physical change will take place? Here it is. There will be a new river flowing from the city of Jerusalem.

Now I do not know where the source of that river is. All I know is this, that somewhere down underneath the city of Jerusalem there is a great river, and as a result of an earthquake, the earth will open up. That river will burst forth and will flow, and that will be the next great transaction in connection with the physical changes in Palestine.

There will be a new river. Now Palestine has been a dry land. There's a lot of sand in Palestine, a lot of rock.

I would never want to go back to Palestine again. I was there in 1932. I saw so much sand, so many miles of sand, so much rock, that I said to myself when I was there, I never want to see this country again until Jesus Christ gets back and all the sand turns green and the rainfall comes again and the whole country becomes a Garden of Eden, as it will when Jesus Christ comes back, as it is today, unless it's been cultivated by human hands and irrigated, it's dry, it's thirsty, it's sand, it's rock.

I'll never forget going from Jerusalem to Jericho. I could not bear the sight hardly as I saw the sand to my left and the sand to my right everywhere, all the way down from Jerusalem to Jericho, miles upon miles of sand, and it's still that way, except where individuals have irrigated it and have brought in water. Water can change the land of Palestine into a Garden of Eden.

Today, it's still a desert, but someday it will become a Garden of Eden when Jesus Christ comes back again. And so, there's going to be a great river flowing out from Jerusalem, its source will be in Jerusalem. Where is it going to flow to? It will flow in two directions.

Half of the river will flow to the Mediterranean and empty into the Mediterranean. The other half will flow to the Dead Sea and enter into the Dead Sea. Jerusalem will be the source of the river and the river from the city of Jerusalem will flow to the Dead Sea and will at the same time flow to the Mediterranean from the city of Jerusalem.

That's exactly what it says in verse 8, look at verse 8 if you will, of this chapter. And it shall be in that day, it shall be in that day, not before. That living waters, living waters, shall go out from Jerusalem, there's their source, Jerusalem, half of them toward the former sea and half of them toward the hinder sea, half to the Mediterranean, half to the Dead Sea.

In summer and in winter shall it be. Now, no one knows where that river is today, it's never been discovered, its source has never been discovered. But as the result of an earthquake, that river will burst forth from the heart of the city of Jerusalem.

It will break into two rivers. One river will flow to the Mediterranean, the other river will flow to the Dead Sea and there will be abundance of life-giving water in that day so that Palestine, instead of being a desert, will become a Garden of Eden. Now in the fourth place, the entire land will be made into a plain.

Look at verse 10 if you will. Have you ever been to Palestine? Do you remember how hilly it is, how rough it is? I'll never forget it. But look what it says is going to happen when Jesus Christ comes back in verse 10.

And the land shall be turned as a plain. It shall be lifted up. It shall be inhabited from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, unto the king's wine presses.

The entire land surrounding the city of Jerusalem will be leveled as a result of an earthquake and become flat, a plain. What is it today? Valleys and hills. Hills and valleys.

Everywhere you go in Palestine, hills and valleys. But in that day, all around about the city of Jerusalem, there will be a vast plain and the entire plain will be cultivated and will produce a hundredfold. What a day that will be.

What a change will take place when Jesus Christ comes back. For the remaining portion of this prophetic message, please turn this tape over. Now we come to the new order of things.

We've already looked at the capture of the city. We've looked at the Lord's intervention. We've looked at the physical changes.

Now the new order of things. What is going to take place after these changes have appeared? What will take place in the land of Palestine after that? Well, four things again, just as there have been four things as I've already revealed. First, Palestine and Jerusalem will be safely inhabited.

There never has been a time in the history of Palestine or of Jerusalem when it has been safely inhabited. War after war has broken out. Army after army has marched across Palestine.

There has never been such a thing as safety anywhere in Palestine. There is nothing like safety there today. All you have to do is to read your newspapers and listen to the radio or watch the television, and you realize that a great army has to be maintained in Palestine because there is no safety anywhere in the country today.

There is danger on every side today, and lives are being snuffed out time after time, week after week, month after month. Palestine is anything but safe today. It never has been safe.

Lives have been lost for centuries. But in that day, after Jesus Christ takes over the reins of government, Palestine will be safely inhabited. Look at verse 11, if you will.

And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction. Never, never again, never again will Jerusalem be destroyed. There shall no more be utter destruction.

But Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited. For the first time in the history of the city, it will be safe to live in Jerusalem. It never has been safe.

It is not safe today, and it will not be safe until the Lord gets back. And then, one of the safest places on the face of the earth will be the city of Jerusalem. Men shall dwell in it, there shall be no more utter

destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

Now, the second of these four things, under the new order, Jerusalem will become wealthy. Now, as you think of the wealthy cities of the world today, you think of New York, you think of Chicago, you think of Paris, you think of London, you think of Berlin, you think of some of the cities with which you're more or less familiar. But let me say tonight, without any fear of contradiction, the wealthiest city the world has ever known will be the city of Jerusalem.

There will be more wealth in that city than in any other city on the face of the earth. And if you know anything about the surrounding country, you know that there's a vast wealth in Palestine buried in the earth and around the Dead Sea that will be found, that will be recovered, and that will make Jerusalem the wealthiest city on the face of the earth. You get that in verse 14, Jerusalem made wealthy, and Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem.

Now listen, and the wealth, and the wealth of all the heathen, the Gentiles, round about, shall be gathered together, gold and silver and apparel in great abundance. And again and again in God's word we are told that Jerusalem is to become the wealthiest city on the face of the earth. Now the third thing, an annual convocation, or an annual gathering of the people.

And what will be the penalty if the nations refuse to send their representatives to Jerusalem to this convocation? The penalty according to the word of God will be no rain. What happens when there's no rain? Famine. And therefore the punishment will be famine.

You say, where do you find that in this chapter? Look at verses 16 and 17, if you will, and see what it says about this. And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, every one that is left. Now remember, the nations out of which the armies of the Antichrist came are not to be destroyed.

You must differentiate. It's the armies that are to be destroyed, not the nations that produced the armies. The nations will still be intact, but the armies will be destroyed.

Now what about these nations that will be left? And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. Think of it, if you will. What a tremendous change.

The very nations that produced the armies of the Antichrist will be subject to the reign of Jesus Christ. And they'll send their delegates and their representatives every year to the great annual convocation. You remember, the Passover was held every year in Jerusalem.

And the Jews from all over Palestine went to the Passover at Jerusalem every year. That was when Jesus Christ was born. That's when Joseph and Mary went.

Now there's going to be that kind of a convocation for a thousand years. And every year the nations of the world will send their delegates to that convocation. And it shall be that whosoever, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no reign.

That's the punishment. If a nation anywhere in the world refuses to send its delegates to the great annual convocation, God will withhold the rainfall. The result will be famine.

Now in the last place, what will characterize this new order of things? Holiness will be the special characteristic of the kingdom age. There will be a complete separation from all defilement. Notice, if you will, verses 20 and 21.

Look the way it reads. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses holiness unto the Lord. Now in my Bible, those words are printed in capital letters.

Holiness unto the Lord. Those words will be upon the bells of the horses. Holiness unto the Lord.

And the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts. And all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them and see their end.

And in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts. The Canaanites always represent defilement. There will be no defilement of any kind for a thousand years in the courts of the house of the Lord.

And there you have the four things that happen under the new order of things. And so as we look at the drama of the end time, there is first the capture of the city, there is second the Lord's intervention, there is third the reign of the King, the Lord Jesus, and last of all the new order of things. And thus Jesus Christ, who will have returned to reign in millennial splendor, power and glory, will continue his reign over this earth of ours for one thousand years.

And the nations will be subject to his reign. And whether you and I will be reigning with him, or whether we'll be above some place, I do not know. I do not know exactly who will reign with him at that time, except that God says if we suffer, we shall also reign with him.

And those of us who are willing to bear his reproach and to go without the city into his camp and suffer with him in this day of his rejection and humiliation, this I know, those will reign with him when he returns in his glory. Now, if you want to reign with the Lord Jesus Christ, if you want to be among the millions who will come back with him, if you want to be one of his saints who will return with him when he comes, then suffer with him now. Go without the camp.

Bear his reproach. Don't go with the majority. Go with the minority.

Be with Christ. Be on his side. Serve him faithfully.

Live for him completely. Renounce the world and all its attractions and plead to the Lord Jesus Christ, because God has promised that if you are willing to suffer with him now, you will reign with him then. That's the drama of the end times.

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