

Title: My God will come
Text: Zechariah 14
Theme: The Coming of Christ
Series: Zechariah #15
Prop Stmtnt: Do not trade away eternal, overwhelming joy for a thrill blip.

Another semester of school is here. Imagine that you are a philosophy professor at an area college or university and you do not believe in God and therefore, you do not believe that we were created by God, nor will we ever be accountable to God. Life, as you explain, is a meaningless existence between birth and death, which of course means that you are a meaningless professor, and these students are meaningless globs of matter, and in the ultimate sense, it doesn't matter if you teach well, or if they learn well, or if you show up to class, or if they show up to class, or if they pass or fail, or learn anything. If I really believed that, why would I sign a contract to teach and bother to honor my contract? What a depressing job! If that were my job, then my life as a teacher would itself be a contradiction to what I am teaching. That is sad. I am so grateful to be able to preach this text this morning. This text is a monumental text, and I pray that it will awaken you to joys and glories that were made for, but are perhaps too distracted to consider.

Read Text:

This text is what the entire Bible is written for. My God will come and will change everything. But, imagine, if that were not true?

Let's say that you are in prison, and the maximum you can be incarcerated is seven years and at 6 years and 9 months, you are diagnosed with cancer. Are you going to pursue treatment? Sure! But let's say that you are in prison and you have a life-sentence with no parole and you are diagnosed with cancer. What do you do now? Let me ask it another way?

Let's say that you are trapped at Cedar Point. Everyday you stand in the same lines in order to ride the same rides, but you can never leave, ever. Then you hear the announcement that a brand new roller coaster is being built that is supposed to be the best in the world. Does it really matter? Does it really matter if you ride the rides 10,425 times or 10,426? If you can never leave, then the world's best amusement park becomes hell.

Suffering or amusement; if there is no God, and there is no end to it, then you are just another character in the Groundhog Day movie, only; it never changes, ever. There is no lesson to learn because there is nothing. Your life is just a scream into the canyon, and the noise around you is the just the echoes of your cries.

Zechariah 14 is a colossal text. These 21 verses speak of events that are cataclysmic, and literally earth-shaking. It breaks down into 3 parts that can be summarized like this: The Lion comes. The Lion roars. The Lion reigns. This is a good lion, but he is not safe. There is a great deal of intensity in this chapter and with good reason. This text is

speaking of the culmination of all things. This is the point of the story. This is why we have hope and why, as Paul says, this hope cannot disappoint us. This is why if your hope is in Christ, your hope and joy are safe and why, if your hope and joy are not in Christ, then you have no legitimate hope.

1. **My God will come with salvation** (1-11)

Here is the setting. Zechariah is a prophet, meaning that he is a mouthpiece for God who lived in Jerusalem 500 years before Christ. He is speaking to his people on behalf of God. His people are the Jews who are living in Jerusalem after that city was destroyed by the Babylonians and after decades of neglect. This rather small band of people are attempting to rebuild the city in the face of local opposition as well as feeling like pawns between major empires in the world. Jerusalem is not the center of the world's attention. Looking at what was going on in the world was very discouraging. Looking at what was going on in Zechariah's life and in Jerusalem was even more so. But God makes Zechariah of his future plans in such a way, that Zechariah has reason for confidence, even though the world around him was not turning out how he had hoped.

This chapter begins with, "behold!" This should grab your attention. And in the first half of this chapter (verses 1-11) we read that God is going to come personally, visibly, powerfully and permanently. We know from Revelation 19 that this is Christ who comes and that according to verses 1-2, he will come when there is no other hope.

A. **He will come when there is no other hope.** (1-2)

These verses speak of the day when the nations of the world are gathered in unity in order to wipe Israel off the map. Jerusalem falls into the hands of her enemies and the plundering and pillaging of her goods and the violence against her women speaks of the animosity and ruthlessness of them. Already half of the city has been taken captive and is being lead off into exile. (This would be particularly galling to Zechariah's audience.) But, there is a remnant who are still there. At the moment, when it is clear that no one else in this world will come to her rescue and there is no way that these people will survive, Christ returns. And this time, he doesn't slip into town quietly while sheep are safely grazing on nearby hills. This time, when Christ returns the earth literally shakes! Christ comes with power!

B. **He will come with power.** (3-5)

I take verse 3 to give us the big picture and verses 4-11 to describe what else happens to the people who run to Christ for refuge. The power and authority of Christ is immediately displayed by the fact that when he stands on the Mount of Olives, that this mountain which looms over Jerusalem on her east, actually splits in two from the north to the south. It is no secret that there is a fault line in that mountain that runs east and west. Now, remember, that this was written 500 years before Christ came to the earth. You should also remember that when Christ ascended into heaven, he ascended from the Mount of Olives and that his disciples were told by two angels, to stop standing there and staring

into the sky, but to get busy with their instructions. And then they said (Acts 1.11b) “*This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.*” He left from the Mount of Olives, he is returning to the Mount of Olives. But, the splitting of the mountain forms a valley that is now a means of escape for the remnant. I believe that it is this remnant who will look upon Christ and recognize that he is the one they rejected and pierced and will mourn for him, yet he will open his arms to receive them and they will run to him. This refuge, called the valley of my mountains will be large enough for them to be safe.

Zechariah, at this point, explains how they safe they will be. When they run to Christ, they will be safe, forever because Christ is going to change everything. In his first coming, Christ rescued us from our sins by dying for us. In his second coming he is going to rescue the earth and the kingdoms of this world from Satan’s tyranny. That means that he will change everything.

C. He will change everything. (6-8)

Verses 6-7 describes a time that the world has never seen before. Zechariah does not know how to explain it meteorologically. There will be no light, but it won’t be cold. It won’t like it is day or night, but in the evening there will be light. I cannot say for certain what this, other than speculate. It seems to me that this refers to the time when some of the massive environmental changes take place on this earth in preparation for the Kingdom of Christ.

You see in verse 8, Jerusalem is described as being the source of a river that flows into the Mediterranean Sea on the west and the Dead Sea on the east. Verse 10 describes how the city will be elevated while everything else around it will be made into a plain. All of this takes place because Christ is actually going to set up his throne in the city of Jerusalem. My God will come and he will bring salvation and he will reign in power and glory.

D. He will reign. (9-11)

Jerusalem, during the time of Zechariah was a shadow of her former glory, and was reduced by about 75% in size. Verse 10 describes her as not only being enlarged back to her glorious size, but now being elevated while the land around her is turned into a plain. You possibly know that Jerusalem sits on a mountain (affectionately called Zion), but is lower in elevation than the Mount of Olives, to her east. The result of the topography actually being changed is that Jerusalem will be the city of cities and the light that shines on the hill. Verse 11 concludes with a promise of indescribable hope. Jerusalem shall never be destroyed again, but shall dwell in security.

At this point, Zechariah returns back to what happens to the enemies who had marched on the city and were intent on destroying her.

2. My God will come with judgment. (12-15)

The return of Christ is a hope beyond description for those who trust in him. It is also a terror without hope for those who do not. Verse 3 says that the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. Verse 12 now describes what happens.

A. God will aggressively attack the wicked. (12)

Like leprosy on steroids, the enemies of God will be terrified to discover their flesh rotting on their bones. Psalm 1 says that the wicked will not stand in the judgment. They will not and there will be no place to hide. The destruction is horrific and enormous. And they will panic. They will panic because they believed lies. They believed the lie that this world was not created by God and for God. They believed the lie that Christ was not the eternal Son of God and rightful King of the Universe. They believed the lie that they could live their own lies and make their own laws and do whatever they wanted. They believed the lies that they could determine their own fate and rule this earth however they saw fit. They believed the lies that they could band together, as at the Tower of Babel and build their own kingdom that would. In short, they believed the lie that they were god. And now, their lies are crumbling around them and they have no where else to run. So, what do they do? What do people do who are dead wrong, but who refuse to admit it? They blame and attack others.

B. The wicked will attack one another. (13)

You get the sense that at this point in the battle, that all that Christ has to do is now sit back and watch. What we witness in verse 13, is the apex of sin and following Satan. The enemies of God do not have a true eternal bond with one another. Do you remember what Satan said about us in Job 2.4? *“Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face.”* Satan believes that because for most people it is true. For most people, when you get to the core of their being, the only thing they care about is themselves and they will sell you out, and anyone else to protect themselves. God used Job as a means to expose Satan’s lie. Satan was right about most people but not right about all because he was ultimately not right about Christ.

The Father stretched out his hand and poured out his judgment against our sin by pouring it upon Christ when Christ died on the cross. Not only did Christ not curse God, Christ entrusted himself into the care of the Father. And every person who follows Christ, can live with the same hope that Job had. Even though he slays me, yet will I trust him. But, for the wicked, it is a different story. For the wicked, they will turn on one another so fast because their bond is not very sticky. Beloved, our bond in Christ is sticky. We may be messy, and we are, but our bond is sticky and will not dry out.

C. The weak will win. (14-15)

The Jews in the surrounding area join in the battle. Verses 14 and 15 make it sound as if they are involved more in the cleaning up and gathering of the spoils process. But, the

picture is amazing, isn't it? When Christ came to this earth the first time, his own people fought against him and now, they fight with him. This will be glorious. The ones who were defenseless are now perfectly defended while the ones who were assured of certain victory are now utterly defeated.

And just as Israel was formed as a nation by coming out of Egypt after plundering that land, so Israel will once again gather the spoils of war. But, how many armies were victorious in battle but incompetent in power? That is not the case with our King. My God will come with salvation, with judgment and will bring righteousness.

3. **My God will bring righteousness.** (16-21)

We say that one day, it will be made right. One day, it will be taken care of. One day, it will get straightened out. Well, this is that day. I take these verses to refer to the 1,000-year reign of Christ spoken about in Revelation 20.1-6. This is my understanding of how the promises given to Israel in the OT, including Zechariah 14 are fulfilled. Christ returns and establishes his kingdom in Jerusalem for 1,000 years. The nations of the world live in submission to Christ. There is actual peace and safety on the earth. Nations are not rising against nations anymore. West Point, the Naval Academy and Air Force Academy are now museums that tell children and grandchildren and great grand children of a time on the earth when there were these events called wars. Children will not learn how to fight. There will be no draft, no defense budgets and no terrorist activity. The world will finally be at peace.

A. **Justice for all** (16-19)

Verses 16-19 describe life in the kingdom. Three times a year people will gather in Jerusalem for world-wide celebrations for Christ. Those who do not will be punished, because even though the kingdom of Christ is incredible in its effect, there will still be people who, like Adam and Eve will want to be their own god and rule their own world. But, for these 1,000 years, that will all be underground and will be dealt with later.

B. **Holiness in the streets** (20-21)

I was struck with how different this chapter ends than how it began. Jerusalem will go from being the most hated, dangerous and awful places on the earth to being the holiest, loveliest, safest and glorious places. These verses describe how the people go to great lengths to depict how deeply devoted they are to God. Finally, here is a scene that is beautiful. Here are a people who are lovingly ruled by a King who has paid the ultimate price for them. Here are a people who are ruled by a King who is exceedingly kind, merciful, patient and happy. And here are a people who finally, after all these years, believe it.

The end is coming. The Day of the Lord is a day of salvation and a day of judgment. Where you are, on that day is determined by whether or not you truly trust in Christ. Your joy and eternal security is safe and only safe in Christ. Will you trust him

completely with your life or are you holding out for a different offer? Are you keeping your options open? All other options will rot on that day. Your safety in life is never determined by your distance from danger, but by your nearness to Christ.

Conclusion:

Some (maybe many) of you live as if your greatest enemy is discomfort. Your primary goal in life is to avoid any sort of pain at all costs. That can be physical pain or emotional pain. You are tempted to view God as a rabbit's foot whose job is to protect you from pain, and when he doesn't, you are ready to throw away the rabbit's foot and find another. Your greatest enemy is not pain, it is unbelief. I know that it takes faith to embrace this, and that is why the vast majority will not. But, this life is not all that there is. This life is so short and what is in store for us, is beyond huge. Do not, for any reason, ever, ever, ever trade away eternal, overwhelming joy for a blip of comfort, relief, or pleasure.

God tells us things about the future so that we will live passionately, intentionally and strategically now. Christ is returning and that changes everything. We are in the valley now. We are not home yet. The hours that a mom spends in labor are overwhelmed with joy the instant her baby is placed into her arms. Your life, perhaps marked more by suffering, than by joy, will too be overwhelmed with joy the instant you are with Christ. In Romans 8, we read that the entire creation has been in labor ever since it was subjected to sin. But creation's labor is going to give birth to Christ's kingdom and these thousands of years of labor are, in that moment going to be overwhelmed with a glory that is so deliriously amazing that the text says that it is not even worth comparing to our present sufferings. That does not minimize our sufferings, it magnifies the joy that is ours. Don't bother trying to compare them because it's not even close.

You live with your joy safely secured in the safe-deposit box of Christ. If you know that there is a joy that is eternal, overwhelming, satisfying and intensifying and that this joy can be yours, what could ever come along in your life that would compete with that? Eternal joy is yours in Christ. Eternal joy is yours, only in Christ. You will not find eternal joy by living for yourself and demanding that from everyone else. You will not find eternal joy in this world. You will find a lot of very cheap substitutes. You will find some blips of thrill, but this world is woefully incapable of giving you eternal joy.