

# ZECHARIAH

## Chapter 12

*The LORD Will Give Salvation*

**The oracle of the word of the LORD concerning Israel: Thus declares the LORD, who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and formed the spirit of man within him: 2 “Behold, I am about to make Jerusalem a cup of staggering to all the surrounding peoples. The siege of Jerusalem will also be against Judah. 3 On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples. All who lift it will surely hurt themselves. And all the nations of the earth will gather against it. 4 On that day, declares the LORD, I will strike every horse with panic, and its rider with madness. But for the sake of the house of Judah I will keep my eyes open, when I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. 5 Then the clans of Judah shall say to themselves, ‘The inhabitants of Jerusalem have strength through the LORD of hosts, their God.’ 6 “On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a blazing pot in the midst of wood, like a flaming torch among sheaves. And they shall devour to the right and to the left all the surrounding peoples, while Jerusalem shall again be inhabited in its place, in Jerusalem. 7 “And the LORD will give salvation to the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not surpass that of Judah. 8 On that day the LORD will protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them on that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the angel of the LORD, going before them. 9 And on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.**

**12:1–14:21** This second oracle in Part II of the book revolves around two scenes: the final siege of Jerusalem, and the Messiah’s return to defeat Israel’s enemies and establish his kingdom. (CSB)

**12:1** *the burden.* Cf 9:1. Here the burden of God’s Word is “concerning Israel,” promising salvation to His people. (TLSB)

*Israel.* The whole nation, not just the northern kingdom. Judah and Jerusalem, however, are the main focus of attention. (CSB)

*The LORD, who stretched out the heavens.* This description of the Lord’s creative power shows that he is able to perform what he predicts; it also strengthens the royal and sovereign authority of the message. (CSB)

The One who makes these promises is no earthly ruler but the Creator of heaven and earth, who gives life to humans. What He did in the beginning shows what He can do at the end. He has global power. (TLSB)

This is a favorite picture to show the unlimited power of Jehovah, Is. 42:5; 44:24. (Kretzmann)

**12:2** *cup that sends all ... reeling.* The cup’s contents often symbolize God’s wrath, here causing people to stagger (cf. Jer 25:15-31). Enemies attacking Jerusalem imagine an easy victory. Luther pictured the Lord saying, “Very well, come on, try your tricks, go on and drink. I will present you with a drink that will serve you well: you will stumble so that you will reel along very violently.” (TLSB)

*the siege day* – literally, “and also upon Judah shall it be in the siege of Jerusalem,” the entire country and its capital being involved in the severe trial which would come upon its neighbors. (Kretzmann)

**12:3** *that day*. The phrase is used often in chs. 12–14 (12:4, 6, 8–9, 11; 13:1–2, 4; 14:4, 6, 8–9, 13, 20–21). (CSB)

This expression occurs seven times in chapter 12 and 17 times in chapters 12-14. God is speaking of the end times, when He will destroy all enemies. On that day, the “holy city, new Jerusalem,” will come down from heaven (Rev 21:2). Jerusalem and Judah represent the Church. (TLSB)

*a heavy stone* – The Lord laid a stone in Zion (Is 28:16) that proves to be a “stone of stumbling” for those who disobey the Word (1 Pt 2:8) (TLSB)

*all the nations ... gather against her*. See 14:2, 12; Joel 3:9–16; cf. Rev 16:16–21. (CSB)

The worldwide gathering of enemies against Jerusalem points to the spiritual nature of what is being described here. (TLSB)

**12:4** *panic ... madness ... blindness*. Listed in Dt 28:28 among Israel’s curses for disobeying the stipulations of the covenant. Now these curses are turned against Israel’s enemies. (CSB)

*keep my eyes open*. See Ps 32:8; 33:18. (CSB)

**12:5** *strength...God* – The source of strength and victory for Judah and the Church is the Lord of hosts (9:15). Of Him we sing, “A mighty fortress is our God.” (TLSB)

**12:6** Like a fire destroying wood and sheaves of grain, Judah’s discerning leaders (see v. 5) will consume their enemies (cf. Jdg 15:3–5).

*I will make*. Also vv 2–3. All that happens is God’s doing. (TLSB)

*blazing pot ... flaming torch ... shall devour*. Further images of how the Lord will consume His enemies. (TLSB)

*Jerusalem shall again be inhabited* – This is so that the renewed people could fitly become the nucleus of the New Testament Jerusalem, the Church of Christ. (Kretzmann)

**12:7** *give salvation to the tents of Judah* – People who lived in Judah outside the capital city of Jerusalem, where the temple was located, may have considered themselves second-class citizens. But the Lord puts them first in line for salvation. (TLSB)

*glory*. Jesus was not born in Jerusalem but in the small Judean town of Bethlehem. Here the “glory of the Lord shone” (Lk 2:9). (TLSB)

*glory of the house of David* – The house of David being the royal family as continued in the descendants of Zerubbabel. The meaning evidently is this, that Jerusalem would have no preference before the rest of the country at the approach of the enemies, but the entire covenant people would in the same degree enjoy the protection of the Lord. (Kretzmann)

**12:8** *like David*. Like a great warrior. (CSB)

*like God.* Cf. Ex 4:16; 7:1. (CSB)

*like the Angel of the LORD.* The above are bold comparisons that assure believers of the eternal protection the Lord provides, even for the weak. (TLSB)

**12:9** *I will seek to destroy.* The Creator’s ultimate purpose “on that day” is to destroy all enemies of His Church (Rv 21:8). (TLSB)

This is the definite, energetic purpose of the Lord with regard to His people. It is a remarkable fact, one full of glorious comfort, that the Church of God has emerged from all its conflicts with renewed strength and power, that even in the worst persecutions, the blood of the Christians was the seed of the Church. (Kretzmann)

**12:1–9** The day is coming, declares the Lord, when the enemies of His people, represented here by Jerusalem and Judah, will be destroyed. When confronted by spiritual foes who cause us to feel weak and helpless, we must keep telling ourselves that our strength is in the One “who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth” (v 1). He will protect and save us. • Almighty Father, my refuge and strength, remove all fear from my heart, and make me confident of Your ultimate victory. Amen. (TLSB)

*Him Whom They Have Pierced*

**10 “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. 11 On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. 12 The land shall mourn, each 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 and all the families that are left, each by itself, and their wives by themselves.**

**12:10** *a spirit.* The Lord will pour out on His people spiritual gifts that will cause them to mourn and plead for mercy when they look on “Him whom they have pierced.” (TLSB)

*look on.* The emphasis seems to be on looking “to” the Messiah in faith (cf. Nu 21:9; Isa 45:22; Jn 3:14–15). (CSB)

*pierced.* Cf. Ps 22:16; Isa 53:5; Jn 19:34; partly fulfilled in Jn 19:37. (CSB)

The object of this piercing is God Himself, a prophecy of what happened to Jesus on the cross (Jn 19:34). (TLSB)

*mourns for an only child.* Cf. Jer 6:26. (CSB)

This grief is extremely intense, such as for an only child, a firstborn, or a fallen king. Luth: “To mourn for Christ’s sake is to imitate the crucifixion, death, and burial of Christ so that we mortify our flesh ... [and] say with the apostle Paul: ‘Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its ... lusts’ ” (AE 20:140). (TLSB)

*grieves for a firstborn son.* Cf. Ex 11:5–6. (CSB)

**12:11** *Hadad Rimmon*. The name of either (1) a place near Megiddo, where the people mourned the death of King Josiah (2Ch 35:20–27; see v. 22 there for the plain of Megiddo and vv. 24–25 for the mourning), or (2) a Semitic storm god (see 2Ki 5:18), whose name means “Hadad the thunderer” in Babylonian (as in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, 11:98; see also Eze 8:14 for an example of the practice of weeping for a Babylonian deity). (CSB)

Only occurrence of this name in the Bible; may refer to a small village located c 60 mi NW of Jerusalem, a place of great mourning. Though “Hadad” and “Rimmon” (2Ki 5:18) are names of a pagan god, the reference here is likely to mourning for the Judean king Josiah, who was killed on the Plain of Megiddo. (TLSB)

**12:12** *mourn each family* – This is a Hebrew word that means “alone,” separate, apart” and indicates the individual nature of this morning. No one can mourn in place of another. Special mention is made of wives to emphasize that in Israelite society it was the traditional role of women to mourn (cf Jer 9:17; Lk 23:27-29). (TLSB)

*Nathan*. David’s son (2Sa 5:14; cf. Lk 3:31). (CSB)

**12:13** *house of Levi*. Israelite priests were from the tribe of Levi, and Levites served in the temple. (TLSB)

*Shimeites*. Son of Gershon, the son of Levi (Nu 3:17–18, 21). The repentance and mourning are led, then, by the civil (royal) and religious leaders. (CSB)

Shimei was the son of Gershon, son of Levi (Ex 6:16-17). The four families of David, Nathan, Levi and Shimei represent the kingdom of holy priests (1 Pt 2:5; Rev 1:6) who lament their sin, which caused Jesus to be pierced. (TLSB)

**12:14** *all the families*. Universal mourning (cf Rv 1:7). (TLSB)

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to the entire nation, as representative of the Church of the New Testament, in whose members the fruit of Christ’s redemption is realized, for sin and for uncleanness. The blood of Christ, shed for the sins of the whole world, has prepared a water of sprinkling which thoroughly cleanses sinners from their uncleanness. Cp. 1 John 1, 7. It is the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost which is shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior, also in Holy Baptism. Titus 3:5. (Kretzmann)

**13:1** *On that day*. That day of fulfillment when all things will come to pass according to God’s plan of salvation. (TLSB)

**12:10–13:1** Zechariah prophesies intense mourning for all people. Can there be any sorrow greater than that of beholding the Son of God, His body pierced and bleeding, hanging on the cross? Such a sight produces contrition in the hearts of believers. The Lutheran Confessions define contrition as “the true terror of conscience, which feels that God is angry with sin and grieves that it has sinned” (Ap XIII 29). For the contrite sinner, the good news is that the death of Christ opened a fountain that cleanses us from sin and uncleanness. We have good reason to sing, “Glory be to Jesus, Who in bitter pains Poured for me the lifeblood From His sacred veins!” (LSB 433:1). • Lord Jesus Christ, grant that I may always know the grace and life eternal found in Your precious blood. Amen. (TLSB)