



**World Events Going Biblical  
Prophets Become Relevant...Again  
Obadiah 17 – 21  
Zephaniah 2  
Joel 2  
Zechariah 12:1-6**

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**Ronald Reagan (1971)**

“For the first time ever, everything is in place for the battle of Armageddon and the second coming of Christ.” (Schorr 1988)

World events seem to have pivoted solidly towards going Biblical. Not in just one arena, but multiple. Just last time we were talking about the future for Jerusalem and how they are becoming a heavy stone for the nations. Then in just the past week, events took huge steps solidly in that direction.

Those prophetic events that looked like they were aways off, now are suddenly in play and are possibly in the process of being fulfilled.



Yes, we are going to cover some of Zechariah 12, but we will also review where we are on the prophetic clock.

Matthew 24:6–8

“And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.” (ESV)

Jesus gave that word to His disciples prior to going to the cross. For centuries, the church has vacillated between two points, literal, or allegorical.

Here at Calvary, we believe He is being literal.

But we are not into sensationalism tacking “sign” on every event taking place. There are many who already do that.

When considering signs of the times, we must make sure that we view current events in light of the Bible and not the other way around. (Hitchcock 2012, 106)

We are in the last seconds of the last hour of the age. Jesus is coming back for His church at any second and the convergence of events makes that clear.

If you have been monitoring the news, you know that Israel is at war now with Hamas. The question, of course, “does the Bible talk about this?” I thought it would be worthwhile for us to look at potential answers to that question since we are now in that part of Zechariah. Because this is not an operation, as in the past, to stop actions by Hamas in the Gaza Strip, this time it is war.

In a briefing last Saturday afternoon, Major General Nadav Padan made it clear as did the spokeswoman for the IDF, that this is going to be very different this time. As he bluntly put it, the nation of Israel and the IDF is in a state of war.

In fact, a formal declaration of war took place this past Sunday.

The reserves have been recalled and the nation’s government is in the process of mobilizing just like it did 50 years ago for the Yom Kippur War.

When Hamas attacked, they infiltrated at 22 different points into Israel and then went into neighborhoods going door to door killing whoever was home. They did not attack hard targets, they attacked homes and families and did so intentionally. They have also taken hostages, as well.

The Kfar Aza kibbutz was founded in 1951 by Egyptian and Moroccan refugees. It has now been decimated. 70 Hamas terrorists infiltrated the kibbutz going into each home, killing every man, woman and child they saw. They went as far as killing babies in their cribs.

The IDF has already reclaimed those communities. With the recall, Israel now has more forces on active duty than the United States does. Then comes the next phase. Gaza has been placed under siege by Israel and yes, the Bible does talk about Gaza.

Israel’s defence minister Yoav Gallant on Monday ordered a “complete siege” of the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip, two days after shock attacks by the militant group killed more than 700 Israeli civilians. Gallant is currently conducting an operational assessment at IDF (Israel Defence Forces) Southern Command, together with the Head of Southern Command Maj.-Gen. Yaron Finkelman.



“I have given an order – Gaza will be under complete siege. There will be no electricity, food or fuel [delivered to Gaza]. We are fighting barbaric [terrorists] and will respond accordingly,” Gallant was quoted in a statement as saying. (PTI 2023)

The Bible talks about several wars yet to come in Israel, ones that in some cases appear to take place prior to the rapture, and then others which take place after the rapture. This is now beginning to look like either the beginning of the war referenced in Psalm 83, or what is discussed in Obadiah 17.

#### Obadiah 17–18

““But on Mount Zion there will be those who escape, And it will be holy. And the house of Jacob will possess their property. Then the house of Jacob will be a fire, And the house of Joseph a flame; But the house of Esau will be like stubble. And they will set them on fire and consume them, So that there will be no survivor of the house of Esau,” For the LORD has spoken.”” (NASB 2020)

Verses 17-18 say that there will be a time when Israel returns to their land. The remnant of the house of Esau would be still living in the land; today we would refer to them as Palestinians.

How do we know today is the time period being discussed? The terms used for the people tell us. The house of Jacob ties verse 17 and 18 together and is a contrast to the house of Esau. But the house of Jacob infers both the northern and southern kingdoms reunited. This is seriously the case as “the house of Joseph is apparently mentioned so as to include the northern ten tribes, a designation so used repeatedly by the Old Testament prophets elsewhere. Even though the northern tribes had been removed from the land by the

Assyrians (722 BC), they too will be returned to the land. Together once again, the twelve tribes of Israel will collectively subdue the house of Esau.” This event has not happened yet, but we may be watching the beginnings of it. (Busenitz 2003, 276)

Israel will be like a fire is to kindling, which means it will be highly successful. This is exactly what happened. In 1948, Israel was reborn as a nation. Within hours many Muslim nations attacked. The attacking nations told the Muslim inhabitants in the land that they should flee until they had wiped out all the Jews, then they could return to life as normal. However, by the war’s end the Jews had won and gained even more of their ancient territory back. Those who fled were displaced. Obadiah correctly reveals the result of the 1948 war.” (Johnson 2021)

A remnant of Judah will be restored on Mount Zion. Israel regained full control of Jerusalem in 1967 so this is in the process of being fulfilled. Once Messiah returns, it will indeed be holy, but currently, on Mount Zion, are those who escaped. The land is once again possessed by Israel. Some of the remnant who had been previously threatened by Edom, now are back in the land.

At some point in the future, those who remain from what was once Edom, will be eliminated. Edom physically was in what is today, southern Jordan. Another area of concern for Israel today due to the large numbers of so-called Palestinians who live there.

#### Obadiah 19–21

“Then those of the Negev will possess the mountain of Esau, And those of the Shephelah the Philistine plain; Also, they will possess the territory of Ephraim and the territory of Samaria, And Benjamin the territory of Gilead. And the exiles of this army of the sons of Israel, Who are among the Canaanites as far as Zarephath, And the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad, Will possess the cities of the Negev. The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion To judge the mountain of Esau, And the kingdom will be the LORD’S.” (NASB 2020)



In the process of Israel returning to the land though, we are told where those of the nations run to as Israel returns.

Israel became a nation in 1948 in the middle of the land. Those who left as “refugees,” later to be referred to as Palestinians, went to three locations.

Obadiah 19a

“Then those of the Negev will possess the mountain of Esau (southern Jordan), And those of the Shephelah the Philistine plain (Gaza strip); Also, they will possess the territory of Ephraim and the territory of Samaria (west bank)...” (NASB 2020)

This is all in the process of being fulfilled right now with the focus being on Gaza, however the IDF is monitoring Samaria the north which is the territory of Ephraim, as well as the portion of Ephraim that was in what is today called Jordan.

“Yahweh will empower his remnant to repossess the former territories once held by David and Solomon. Expansion will be effected in all directions, fulfilling the promises made to Jacob in his ladder dream at Bethel (Gen 28:14).” And that is also in the process of being fulfilled. (Busenitz 2003, 278)

Those areas will, prior to the beginning of the Day of the Lord, once again become part of Israel. At some point in the near future, Israel will finish the incorporation of the west bank into the nation. They will also deal with the Gaza Strip and that is what we are seeing unfold right now.

And since we see that Gilead is in the area we see today as northwest Jordan. The south of Jordan, in other words Jordan, will also become part of the nation too.

What we are seeing here is a yet future event or events. This could be the results of different actions or the same one. Right now, we do not know what the outcome of the current war will be. But it will impact middle eastern geopolitics dramatically. “Israel’s remnant would become a mighty army that would humiliate its former oppressors. The destruction of Edom and other enemy nations would enable the dispossessed Israelites to regain their lands. Some form of the root word “to possess” (yarash) appears five times in verses 17–21. Obadiah’s prophecy echoes the earlier oracle of Balaam that Edom would become an Israelite “possession” (yereshah) (Num 24:18).” (Fuhr and Yates 2016, 156)

Gilead, Moab and Edom (Jordan) will be possessed by Israel.

And this is to take place while the Day of the Lord is near, in other words, before the Tribulation begins. And there is more.

Obadiah 20

“And the exiles of this army of the sons of Israel, Who are among the Canaanites as far as Zarephath, And the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad, Will possess the cities of the Negev.” (NASB 2020)

Zarephath is between Tyre and Sidon on the coast of Lebanon.

Seeing that Israel is to become vastly larger nation, we now learn that even those who are still outside the land, referred to as exiles here, will also return. “It is a promise of the territorial expansion of God’s people in all directions until they regain their ancient territory. The old promise of the land is reaffirmed as the implicit corollary of the restored covenant and God’s renewed blessing.” (Allen 1976, 168)

What we see is an assurance here from YAHWEH that no matter how far away His people may be from the land, they are not too far away for God to restore them to the land.



Obadiah 21 “The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion To judge the mountain of Esau, And the kingdom will be the LORD’S.” (NASB 2020)

God is moving forward today undeviatingly, unhesitatingly toward the accomplishment of His purpose; that is, of putting His King on Mount Zion. He says that He will turn and turn and overturn the nations until He comes whose right it is to rule (see Ezek. 21:27).

Nothing can deter or detour or defer God in His plan and in His program. No son of Esau, no animal, can stop Him. No proud man walking this earth can cause God to relinquish or retreat one inch. He is moving today to victory. The kingdom is the Lord's! (McGee 1997, 736)

Obadiah is not the only scripture we see in play right now.

There are some who look at Psalm 83 and believe it to just be an imprecatory psalm, but it may also be much more. It could be prophetic of a future war involving Israel. If Israel moves in to stay, and at present, they might be doing that, then may be seeing the beginnings of the Psalm 83 war being fulfilled.

Suffice it to say, we are potentially seeing, prophecy being fulfilled right in front of us. Some, but not all items in play may include the following:

- Psalm 83 (Palestinians)
- Isaiah 15 (Jordan) & 17 (Damascus)
- Jeremiah 49:35 (Elam)
- Amos 1:6-7 (Gaza)
- Ezekiel 25:1-14 (Jordan)
- Ezekiel 29:9-12 (Egypt and the Nile River Valley)
- Ezekiel 37-38 (Gog/Magog War)
- Obadiah 17 (Gaza, West Bank, Lebanon)

Before we go to Zechariah 12, there is one more scripture we need to look at and that is in Zephaniah. Zephaniah 2:3 is a message for the humble, the remnant of Israel. The remnant of Zephaniah’s time, as well as for today. The call is still to repent, if that takes place prior to the beginning of the day of the Lord, then they will indeed be hidden through the rapture. But a pre-day of the Lord event is discussed.

Zephaniah moves from this point and moves to reasons why repentance must be a consideration to take advantage of, because God will judge the nations around them. A topic of Zechariah 12-14.

Zephaniah 2:4–7

“For Gaza will be abandoned, And Ashkelon will become a desolation; The inhabitants of Ashdod will be driven out at noon, And Ekron will be uprooted. Woe to the inhabitants of the seacoast, The nation of the Cherethites! The word of the LORD is against you, Canaan, land of the Philistines; And I will eliminate you So that there will be no inhabitant. So the seacoast will become grazing places, With pastures for shepherds and folds for flocks. And the coast will be For the remnant of the house of Judah, They will drive sheep to pasture on it. In the houses of Ashkelon they will lie down at evening; For the LORD their God will care for them And restore their fortunes.” (NASB 2020)

Judgement is coming for the area that was once home to Philistia but is today a center of activity for Hamas. This includes Gaza, the center of operations for Hamas, now also being referred to as part of the Shia Caliphate by the IDF and is a promise from YAHWEH to destroy them and the coastal plain.

Unexpected, unsuspected removal and expulsion of the residents of the four cities is coming. Specifically, the tract of land along the Mediterranean. Yahweh’s powerful word was all it took to afflict



them, and it would come against them. He promised to destroy them and their land, the coastal plain of Canaan, so no one would live there any longer. Pharaoh Neco II of Egypt (609–594 B.C.) initially fulfilled this prophecy (cf. Jer. 47). But people live there today, so final fulfillment must be in the future. (Constable 2003, Zep 2:5)

The scripture is pointing to the near future as well as a future to take place just prior to the Day of the Lord, like where we find ourselves today. This may be in reference to events now taking place. Gaza is not abandoned, that can be seen with the rockets and mortars that fire upon Israel from time to time from there.

A line has now been crossed by Hamas, and Israel is currently preparing to invade Gaza by land. It appears they intend to take the entire area over. The conditions are beginning to appear there now. Judgement is coming as the scripture says this area is “for the remnant of the house of Israel.”

Zephaniah links what is going on in what was Philistia with areas to the north of Israel and west of the Jordan. In other words, the world of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah. “The term “Canaan,” which designates the land west of the Jordan River (including Philistia) northward through Syria to Lebo Hamath (modern Lebweh), is probably used with the further implication “that Philistia is to share the lot of Canaan, and lose its inhabitants by extermination” (Keil 1954:141).” (Patterson and Hill 2008, 469)

The linking together of Gaza as well as Lebanon and Syria would not make sense then, but it does today.

Zephaniah 2:6–7

“So the seacoast will become grazing places, With pastures for shepherds and folds for flocks. And the coast will be For the remnant of the house of Judah, They will drive sheep to pasture on it. In the houses of Ashkelon they will lie down at evening; For the LORD their God will care for them And restore their fortunes.” (NASB 2020)

That is not the condition there currently. “At some point, however, the prophecy of Zephaniah will take place, Gaza will be deserted, and the houses of Ashkelon will be where the remnant of the house of Judah will lie down at evening time.” (Salus 2013, Kinlde Location 3709)

The verse hints at a still-future disaster to fall upon the Philistines. The instrument by which YHWH, who must be seen as the ultimate source of the ruin, would make these cities desolate remains unspecified. (Renz 2021, 533-534)

The still future event may be what we are seeing taking place right now.

I did not set up the geopolitical situation in the middle east to coincide with our study of Zechariah. We are arriving at Zechariah 12 with the current backdrop only because of the Lord and His work, I couldn't have planned this if I wanted to.

Our homegoing is that close.

The study of prophecy is amazing, especially as we see other prophecy being fulfilled around us. The temptation is to do newspaper fulfillment, which I am sure you have seen some ministries turn to doing as a way of maintaining traffic on websites and You Tube, but there are times it just is the lowest hanging fruit as well.

We are in Zechariah 12. We have talked about the two shepherds who will be presented to Israel. One who would be rejected, and that was Jesus Christ at His first coming, and a second who is a counterfeit and will be accepted. The antichrist.



Now we move to today and the future. Last time we were together we began our discussion of Zechariah 12 noting the overlap between what it is Zechariah writes here in the the first 3 verses and the reality we see happening in Israel today.

Zechariah 12:1–3

“The pronouncement of the word of the LORD concerning Israel: The LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of a person within him, declares: “Behold, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes staggering to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah. It will come about on that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will injure themselves severely. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it.” (NASB 2020)

The events of the past week have pretty much proven the point. Jerusalem is becoming a cup that causes staggering. Here, YAHWEH lets us know that on that day, the day of the Lord, He will make Israel a heavy stone for all peoples, all the nations of the world. He is also doing so as we move towards the day of the Lord, which does not begin until the church is removed in the rapture.

The Lord is taking us beyond our present day, to that day when the nations of the world have all come into the land.

The beast wants to destroy what is left of the Jewish nation and that has begun with the armies of the world arrayed against Jerusalem as well as the area to the southeast where many have been hiding for 3 1/2 years.

He has not been successful in penetrating their hiding place to the south of Jordan because they are being supernaturally protected by the Lord. “and the woman (Israel) fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.” (Revelation 12:6, ESV)

A large number fled to the south at the midpoint of the Tribulation when an event warned by Daniel and Jesus takes place.

Matthew 24:15–22

““You will see ‘The Awful Horror’ of which the prophet Daniel spoke. It will be standing in the holy place.” (Note to the reader: be sure to understand what this means!) “Then those who are in Judea must run away to the hills. Someone who is on the roof of his house must not take the time to go down and get his belongings from the house. Someone who is in the field must not go back to get his cloak. How terrible it will be in those days for women who are pregnant and for mothers with little babies! Pray to God that you will not have to run away during the winter or on a Sabbath! For the trouble at that time will be far more terrible than any there has ever been, from the beginning of the world to this very day. Nor will there ever be anything like it again. But God has already reduced the number of days; had he not done so, nobody would survive. For the sake of his chosen people, however, God will reduce the days.” (GNB)

When that event occurs and refugees flood south, they will come under the protection of YAHWEH. He has a place set apart for them to be protected. Many believe it is Petra and since Isaiah speaks of the returning King coming from Bozrah (Isaiah 34:6, 63:1), that may indeed be the case.

From a timing perspective, that event takes place immediately after Satan and his followers are cast out of the heavenlies and confined to earth only, and the assassination attempt of the beast takes place. Satan enters the beast, who accepts the same deal that Jesus rejected (Matthew 4:8-9).

As His people head for the hills, the Lord uses all means to protect them, including the land swallowing up opposing troops (Numbers 16:30-35).



#### Revelation 12:16–17

“But the earth helped the woman; it opened its mouth and swallowed the water that had come from the dragon’s mouth. The dragon was furious with the woman and went off to fight against the rest of her descendants, all those who obey God’s commandments and are faithful to the truth revealed by Jesus.” (GNB)

At the end of the Tribulation, the beast has brought all of the armies of the world to eliminate the Jewish nation and people once and for all. This is the background as Zechariah 12 begins to come into play. This time the cup being poured out is not on the people, but the nations.

In the past, this cup was one which the people of Israel drank from (Isaiah 51:17, Jeremiah 25:17-18). Now this cup is for all of the nations of the world. Judgment is coming to all who stand against Israel. In Joel 3:11-12, God called for the nations of the world to come to Valley of Jehoshaphat to be judged. Part of that is the sheep and goats judgment, but part of it is also Armageddon and the actions connected to it. If you think Jerusalem is the center of everything today, it is going to become the center of global attention and action by the end of the Tribulation.

#### Zechariah 12:3

“It will come about on that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will injure themselves severely. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it.” (NASB 2020) This is not a code for some other city, it is Jerusalem. Yes, it is a stone today, just study history and all who have tried to take it over. The stone is still there, and the curse referred to back in Genesis 12 is still in place as well. BY the end of the age, Jerusalem is the stated location, elsewhere in prophecy, the world will be ruled from (Psalm 110).

At some point in the not too distant future, as the nations of the world put, what they think, is the final noose around the Jewish nation, God steps in. They will attack but will bring catastrophe on themselves instead.

#### Zechariah 12:3

“It will come about on that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will injure themselves severely. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it.” (NASB 2020)

This sounds a lot like old history, but it isn’t.

The intent is to get the reading thinking about how the Lord has stepped in and saved His people once before, as a type of what He will do at the end of the Tribulation. The Assyrian military was running amok in Judah at the time, and was in the process of finishing off Lachish.

On behalf of Sennacherib, the military leadership had already provided a warning to Jerusalem, twice, that their number was up. King Hezekiah prayed and God intervened. Just like He will here in Zechariah

#### Isaiah 37:33–36

“So this is what the LORD says about the king of Assyria: “ ‘He will not enter this city, nor will he shoot an arrow here. He will not attack it with his shielded warriors, nor will he build siege works against it. He will go back the way he came— he will not enter this city,’ says the LORD. ‘I will shield this city and rescue it for the sake of my reputation and because of my promise to David my servant.’ ” The LORD’s messenger went out and killed 185,000 troops in the Assyrian camp. When they got up early the next morning, there were all the corpses!” (NET 2nd ed.)

This is future history pointing back to an old event for context.





Once again, just like with Alexander the Great being a picture of how Rome would move against the nation, and also the antichrist, we now have history pointing to prophecy once again. “The Lord will indeed save his people, but it will involve a process of conflict and bloodshed, and his people will need to trust him in the face of an apparently overwhelming enemy.” (Stead 2015, 188)

Zechariah 12:4–5

“On that day,” declares the LORD, “I will strike every horse with confusion and its rider with insanity. But I will watch over the house of Judah, while I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. Then the clans of Judah will say in their hearts, ‘The inhabitants of Jerusalem are a strong support for us through the LORD of armies, their God.’” (NASB 2020)

On that day tells us we are at the very end of the Tribulation. Jerusalem has been surrounded. This overwhelming enemy is everywhere, and the situation looks incredibly grim for Israel, shades of Hezekiah and Assyria.

Zechariah is describing the events in language that would be understood in his time. Now it is possible that they will be relying on mounted cavalry at the time of the end, but more likely we are talking about a highly mechanized military force operating in combination with drones, cybernetically enhanced humans, demonically possessed humans as well as those who have been changed genetically. For a force like that to operate in the future, the emphasis will be, as it is today, to have C3 and most likely this is done via computer up and down links using the same computer technology that is running the image of the beast in the Temple and elsewhere on the planet.

We know that a true satellite-based internet is being built at the present, and that thanks to quantum computers, the coordinated control for a massive force operating in several locations at once will be possible. Especially if you have troops who are cybernetically uplinked to the control unit as a hive mind in order to operate as one.

Joel talks about this in Joel 2 as he takes us to the same battlefield for an up close and personal look.

Judah is warned by Joel of a day to come which will see not locusts, but a vast army attack from the north. As we consider this, and the history we know of the land, it is easy to begin to see this as a picture of what would happen when the Assyrian army attacks and God delivers.

Joel 2:2

“A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness. As dawn is spread over the mountains, So there is a great and mighty people; There has never been anything like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations.” (NASB 2020)

Here in verse 2 we are told “...there is a great and mighty people; There has never been anything like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations.” (Joel 2:2b, NASB 2020). This language makes it hard to think of locusts and moves us to the future and an invasion force yet to come.

Joel provides a description of what happens as this invasion force moves across the land. Similar to locusts, locust like in behavior, but not exactly locusts.

In fact, the description sounds similar to modern state of the art combat operations involving conventional and unconventional weapon systems; to include swarming drones, autonomous AI enabled robots, cybernetically and genetically enhanced humans, directed energy weapon systems and tactical nuclear weapons. Joel wrote this in 835 BC and Zechariah is picking up on it around 500 BC.



Joel 2:3–5

“A fire consumes before them, And behind them a flame devours. The land is like the Garden of Eden before them, But a desolate wilderness behind them, And nothing at all escapes them. Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; And like war horses, so they run. With a noise as of chariots They leap about on the tops of the mountains, Like the crackling of a flame of fire consuming the stubble, Like a mighty people drawn up for battle.” (NASB 2020)

The Assyrian (721) and Babylonian (605–586) sieges would wreak awesome ruin. But in the present case God’s blessing, which follows the invasion, delivers Israel so that it is free from suffering reproach or shame (2:19, 27). This has not realistically happened in the past. Rather it suggests a time during the future tribulation period. (Rosscup 2008, 1320)

Warfare as done by the Assyrians, Babylonians or even the Roman did not leave destruction in front of them, but only behind them. The same with locusts. Behind them is the destruction. This army that is invading has fire consuming in front of them before they even arrive.

This is a look into the future. A common tactic in 21st century warfare is the use of missiles, rockets, artillery, mortars and air power all integrated and operating in advance of troop movements. Shades of shock and awe which we saw on CNN at the beginning of Desert Storm in 1991.

Targets are first “softened up” in advance of troop movement. The emphasis is to compromise the command and control of enemy troops and enhance the performance of your own forces. Fire consuming before them could be the usage of conventional weaponry in advance of invasion, and it could also be the use of other types of unconventional weaponry as well.

Space based directed energy weapons, laser, microwave, particle beams or sound, could also be used in advance of ground troops. The description could also be descriptive of defensive weapons being used against these such as Israel has recently tested. “Israel’s new laser missile defense system has successfully intercepted mortars, rockets and anti-tank missiles in recent tests.” All of this results in fire consuming the land prior to the enemy physically arriving on the scene. (Kellman 2022)

Joel 2:3

“A fire consumes before them, And behind them a flame devours. The land is like the Garden of Eden before them, But a desolate wilderness behind them, And nothing at all escapes them.” (NASB 2020)

Genetically or cybernetically enhanced soldiers, or ones wearing modern battle suits could be operating in a radioactive battlefield environment. Fire before speaks to the initial assault, fire behind speaks to what is left behind as a scorched earth strategy is being used. A desolate wilderness could also speak of a nuclear battlefield with tactical weapons being used. The intent is not leaving anything for the enemy to use.

Joel 2:4–5

“Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; And like war horses, so they run. With a noise as of chariots They leap about on the tops of the mountains, Like the crackling of a flame of fire consuming the stubble, Like a mighty people drawn up for battle.” (NASB 2020)

Joel starts off talking about locusts and uses them as a point of departure. We see they have an appearance as horse. This is the same battlefield Zechariah is describing will see every “horse with confusion and its rider with insanity.”

Leaping from mountain top to mountain top is not a picture of 9th century BC warfare, but it is a picture of 21st century warfare.



The picture being drawn is the use of modern battlefield air assets delivering mortar and artillery to hilltop emplacements to include the use of drones. The noise of chariots leaping about on the tops of mountains like the crackling of fire. Joel is doing his best to describe what it is he is seeing take place.

It is a frightening picture of an integrated modern AI assisted assault force moving across the battlefield leaving nothing behind them but destruction and laying fire down in front of them as they advance from hill to hill. This advancing army, most likely the forces of the beast, appear to be invincible.

But Zechariah tells us they have this problem with command, control, and coordination; are we talking about a computer virus? Suddenly the commands are jumbled and make no sense, so each unit begins to operate autonomously, and they are not supposed to do so.

It was recently reported that an Air Force officer, who provided an insight into the benefits and hazards in more autonomous weapon systems...He notes that one simulated test saw an AI-enabled drone tasked with a SEAD mission to identify and destroy SAM sites, with the final go/no go given by the human. However, having been 'reinforced' in training that destruction of the SAM was the preferred option, the AI then decided that 'no-go' decisions from the human were interfering with its higher mission – killing SAMs – and then attacked the operator in the simulation. Said the officer: "We were training it in simulation to identify and target a SAM threat. And then the operator would say yes, kill that threat. The system started realising that while they did identify the threat at times the human operator would tell it not to kill that threat, but it got its points by killing that threat. So what did it do? It killed the operator. It killed the operator because that person was keeping it from accomplishing its objective." (Robinson and Bridgewater 2023)

Zechariah is explaining to us what that looks like to someone looking on from an agrarian Jewish background circa 500BC. They are confused, auto drive ceases to function, coordination evaporates, units begin to attack each other and those who are troops in this environment act insane since they have no idea what to do.

One of the strengths of industry in Israel today is what they are able to do with computer systems and software. For example, Waze, which is used as a GPS by many, came from Israel. We read the following and then wonder why this would be said of horses going crazy? They aren't horses.

TP make the situation even worse for those on the battlefield, their radar, lidar and other systems they must have in order to operate in this AI fueled environment, don't work. They are blinded. None of the armored vehicle's, aircraft, or any associated battlefield asset systems show where they are, and they are "blind" on the battlefield.

No action has taken place, yet we hear what is being said about the clans of Judah, gathered in military support of the operations in Jerusalem say about what those in Jerusalem have done.

Zechariah 12:5

"Then the clans of Judah will say in their hearts, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem are a strong support for us through the LORD of armies, their God.'" (NASB 2020)

The Lord has either provided them the wisdom and knowledge to develop and deploy a virus impacting all of the beasts' systems, or the Lord has done this miraculously and the IT folks in Jerusalem may have jumped in on the weakness exposed by the Lord and exploited it to help add to the cause of what is being seen. Disoriented forces on the battlefield. Back to Joel.



Joel 2:6–9

“Before them the people are in anguish; All faces turn pale. They run like warriors, They climb the wall like soldiers; And each of them marches in line, Nor do they lose their way. They do not crowd each other, Every warrior of them marches in his path; When they burst through the defenses, They do not break ranks. They storm the city, They run on the wall; They climb into the houses, They enter through the windows like a thief.” (NASB 2020)

Shock and awe. Cognitive dissonance on steroids. How do you stop hundreds of thousands of robots operating on their own tied in cybernetically to ground troops?

Their relentlessness and fearlessness renders useless any attempt to withstand them, and fortresses offer no protection because of their ability to scale walls and climb through windows with ease. (Fuhr and Yates 2016, 101-102)

This military force is highly disciplined, thinking and operating as if they are of one mind. That is only possible with the utilization of implants allowing for the direction of the troops to be computer guided. It implies an integrated force of genetically or cybernetically enhanced troops with fully autonomous AI led drones and robots.

This is not science fiction but is in development today.

Fighting together, a drone swarm could be far more effective than the same number of drones fighting individually. No one yet knows what the best tactics will be for swarm combat, but experiments such as these are working to tease them out. New tactics might even be evolved by the machines themselves through machine learning or evolutionary approaches. (Scharre 2018, 21)

According to many of the world’s most recognized scientists, artificial intelligence used to produce Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems will lead to a third military revolution in warfare following gunpowder and nuclear arms. The military application of artificial intelligence is unmistakable: It will result in autonomous weapons becoming the Kalashnikovs of tomorrow. (Brock II 2017, Kindle Location 388)

But the Lord will do a miracle as powerful as the one He did to defeat the Assyrian army. “The ‘clans of Judah’ see the Lord fighting on their behalf, and respond ‘The people of Jerusalem are strong, because the LORD Almighty is their God’ (12:5). They recognise that their strength is not their own.” (Stead 2015, 189)

We will pick up next time here in Zechariah.

We live in interesting times here at the end of the age. All of the signs Jesus said to look for, we can see and just as He warned with His comparison to birth pangs, they are indeed coming closer and closer together these days.

What that means is we need to be ready for Him to call our name and say come up here. To be ready, and not be fearful of what is going on around us, is simple, it means becoming a believer.

Romans 3:21–24

“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)



How do we do that?

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

Let’s recap what we just learned.

### ABC’s of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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