

**The Big Picture
The Return Of Christ From 20,000 Feet
Revelation 19:11 – 21**

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The next event to be reported by John is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the final battle of a very long war.

The battle, also known as Armageddon, has itself several facets as well as you investigate the scriptures.

What events have taken place leading up to this point and what is going on now that we are hear at the apex of all history.

Before we unpack these verses in chapter 19, we need to become acquainted with all that is going on at this point. There is a lot to be aware of and to keep top of mind as we move forward.

At the mid-point of the Tribulation, 3 ½ years into the peace treaty with the Beast, he does something that is upsetting to those Jews who are observant and participating in Temple worship, he enters into the Temple complex into the Holy Place and demands that he be worshipped.

The timing of the event is shortly after his recovery from the allegedly fatal wound and kicks off the final 3 ½ years of what is called the Great Tribulation. A hallmark of this time period is referred to by Jesus.

Mark 13:19–20

“For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be. And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days.” (ESV)

This period will be so destructive, that only the personal intervention of Jesus Christ will prevent man from successfully killing everything on the planet.

A warning was provided by Jesus about this time.

Matthew 24:15–27

“So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. So, if they say to you, ‘Look, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.” (ESV)

Not everyone who lives in Israel when this event takes place will heed the advice that Jesus provides. Many will because we see...

Revelation 12:14–17

“But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth. So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.” (NASB95)

But it appears that there is a significant group that remains in Jerusalem and becomes part of the Beast system to the point that some provide labor in Babylon itself.

The continuation of the Jews is a bit of a problem for Satan and his unholy trinity as he wants Mount Zion for himself and he knows the time is very short indeed, so he drives the nations of the world to move on Jerusalem to get rid of them and prevent Jesus from returning.

Not all the Jews are believing Jews or will become believers.

Ezekiel 20:33–38

“As I live, declares the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out I will be king over you. I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face. As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you, declares the Lord GOD. I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. I will purge out the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against

me. I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD.” (ESV)

Even as a result of the Tribulation, there are still those who will not believe.

Psalms 2 addresses the viewpoint of the Trinity regarding the futility of man during this time period.

Psalm 2:1–6

“Why do the nations rebel? Why are the countries devising plots that will fail? The kings of the earth form a united front; the rulers collaborate against the LORD and his anointed king. They say, “Let’s tear off the shackles they’ve put on us! Let’s free ourselves from their ropes!” The one enthroned in heaven laughs in disgust; the Lord taunts them. Then he angrily speaks to them and terrifies them in his rage, saying, “I myself have installed my king on Zion, my holy hill.”” (NET)

The essence of Satan's campaign, according to Psalm 2, is that if there is no Israel, there are no people of the promise to rule. If there is no kingdom, the King will have nothing to return to rule. The destruction of Israel is seen as a means to rid the world of God’s interest and to break the cords that hold him in the world. (Kluttz 1992, 192)

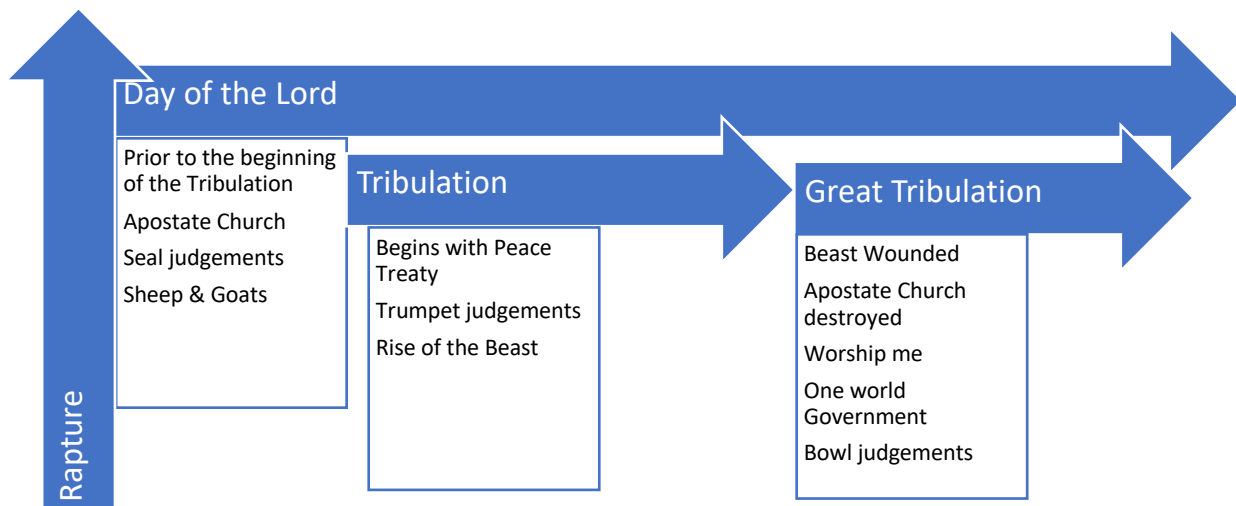
Those who escaped from Babylon back to Jerusalem may have jumped from one problem to another.

Revelation 18:4–5

“I heard another voice from heaven, saying, “Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.” (NASB95)

We are at the point in the book of Revelation where Jesus Christ will return in force, but before that moment, understanding that there are many who remained in Jerusalem, what is going on.

The High Level Picture

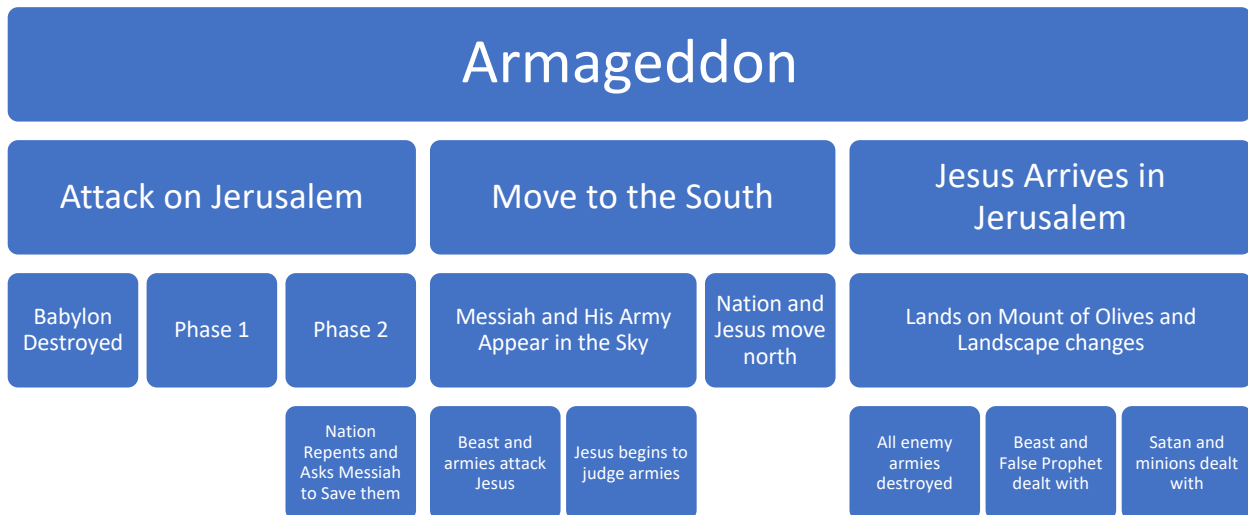


The Day of the Lord begins when the church leaves at the Rapture and the Great Tribulation Period begins, and then it will continue right on through the millennial kingdom, to the time when all rebellion is put down and the eternal kingdom begins. (McGee 1997, 977)

Recent Events



Revelation 9:11 – 21



We know that Jesus will destroy the armies of the world in the final battle. But there are several phases to this final battle even prior to Jesus arriving on the scene.

The troops of all of the armies of the world have amassed in Israel.

Revelation 16:16

“And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.” (NASB95)

Joel 3:9–17

“Proclaim this among the nations: “Prepare for a holy war! Call out the warriors! Let all these fighting men approach and attack! Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears! Let the weak say, ‘I too am a warrior!’ Lend your aid and come, all you surrounding nations, and gather yourselves to that place.” Bring down, O LORD, your warriors! Let the nations be roused and let them go up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit in judgment on all the surrounding nations. Rush forth with the sickle, for the harvest is ripe! Come, stomp the grapes, for the winepress is full! The vats

overflow. Indeed, their evil is great! Crowds, great crowds are in the valley of decision, for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision! The sun and moon are darkened; the stars withhold their brightness. The LORD roars from Zion; from Jerusalem his voice bellows out. The heavens and the earth shake. But the LORD is a refuge for his people; he is a stronghold for the citizens of Israel. You will be convinced that I the LORD am your God, dwelling on Zion, my holy mountain. Jerusalem will be holy—conquering armies will no longer pass through it.” (NET)

The prophet Zechariah saw this day we see described by John in chapter 19. Zechariah provides much of the detail that John assumes you already know.

Zechariah 12:1–14

“The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him: “Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. In that day,” says the LORD, “I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, ‘The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in the LORD of hosts, their God.’ In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a firepan in the woodpile, and like a fiery torch in the sheaves; they shall devour all the surrounding peoples on the right hand and on the left, but Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place—Jerusalem. “The LORD will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not become greater than that of Judah. In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them. It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. “And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. And the land shall mourn, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of Shimei by itself, and their wives by themselves; all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves.” (NKJV)

Looking once more at the larger context, we see that chapter 12 describes a final conflict between Jerusalem and the nations, one in which God delivers his people from their enemies. Yet the chapter ends with deep, national mourning, like the mourning over the death of a firstborn or only son, which leads to the first verse of chapter 13, “On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.” On that day—the day of Jerusalem’s deliverance and the day of her people’s deep mourning—national atonement comes to Israel. Why? Because on that day, in their hour of greatest crisis, with all the world seemingly against them, the Jewish people will turn to God and cry out for salvation, realizing at that time that the one whom they thought was the cause of so many of their problems through the centuries (this despised Jesus Christ) was actually their Messiah, Yeshua, their only true hope, their deliverer. What a day that will be! How bitterly our people will mourn and grieve, and how wonderfully God will respond, cleansing his beleaguered people from all sin and guilt. (Brown 2003, 151)

Zechariah is describing for us an attack on Jerusalem during the Day of the Lord. This is the same attack that John tells us about in Revelation 16. All the armies of the world being are being gathered against Jerusalem in the unholy trinity’s attempt to eliminate all of the Jews on planet earth.

He starts off by letting us know that it is God who makes Jerusalem into a “cup that causes reeling.”

This image is “bound up with Yahweh’s judgment, and ... the drinking from this cup brings about either a situation of unpleasant intoxication (tottering, vomiting, shame) or of destruction.” (Boda 2016, 700)

In verse 3 we see that Jerusalem is the equivalent of a heavy stone that injures the one who is trying to pick it up.

The armies of the world have indeed gathered against the city, the nation has not yet repented but we see that God is already making the nations pay for what they are doing.

In verse 4, it gets worse for all of the nations of the world. This begins before Jesus shows up on the scene but also includes the ultimate “end” reference.

The covenant curses which were to fall on Israel if it disobeyed Yahweh in Deuteronomy 28 are now directed at the nations who would dare attack Yahweh’s capital city and its people. (Boda 2016, 703)

Zechariah 12:4

“In that day,” says the LORD, “I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness.” (NKJV)

With an army, operating in the dark, if the 5th bowl impact is still being felt, the loss of the ability to know where you are on the battlefield, the failure of all your night vision devices as well as GPS, radar, and anything else to identify location, will indeed cause bewilderment. It effectively means the fighting force is blind operating in the dark. Is it dark? From Jesus.

Mark 13:24–25

“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.” (ESV)

Jesus is referring to the 5th bowl being poured out. He also refers to a shaken state among the “powers” as well.

Isaiah 13:10

“For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light.” (NRSV)

Ezekiel 32:7–8

“When I blot you out, I will cover the heavens, and make their stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light. All the shining lights of the heavens I will darken above you, and put darkness on your land, says the Lord GOD.” (NRSV)

Joel 2:10

“The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.” (NRSV)

This final battle is in the dark and it is vastly clear based on Zechariah that the beast’s forces no longer own the night.

Those of Israel who are in Jerusalem will be enabled by God to be mighty warriors with language recalling how God provided victory for Israel in the past.

But this is a small number versus one that is much larger. This is being used of God to further sift His people and remove those who do not believe.

The losses are heavy, and it drives the nation finally to repentance.

All the Israelites would mourn; this would be a national repentance. The repeated phrases “every family by itself” and “their wives by themselves” solemnize the mourning and underline its genuineness. (Constable 2003, Zec 12:12)

The Scriptures make it clear, not only here but also in Joel, that God is going to pour out upon them the Spirit of Grace, that is, the Holy Spirit. He will pour out the Holy Spirit upon these people during this period. (McGee 1997, 976)

Zechariah 12:10

“And I will pour out a spirit of compassion and supplication on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that, when they look on the one 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.” (NRSV)

Joel 2:28–32

“Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit. I will show portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. Then everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls.” (NRSV)

Zechariah provides detail about the battle taking place for Jerusalem and how the nation is doing with the first overall assault. It is going ok, but not so much that the nation can continue to remain confident in their own abilities. There is a realization that the Messiah that they have been looking for, was the one who was here over 2000 years ago. And the realization of that fact brings the nation into a state of mourning.

So far, the nation has stood, but barely, in the assault from the forces of the beast, but there will be another attack and losses have already been heavy.

Zechariah 13:1–2

“In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. “It shall be in that day,” says the LORD of hosts, “that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land.” (NKJV)

The veil that has been there all these years (2 Corinthians 3:13-16) is now removed. They see as a nation and individually. The condition in Hosea 5:15 has been met.

The nation will repent, but there has already been a severe loss.

Hosea 5:15

“I will return again to My place Till they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek My face; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.” (NKJV)

When the nation repents, everything changes. The city is under siege at this point in the battle and losses up to this point in the Great Tribulation have been very heavy, and this battle does not make things any better.

Zechariah 13:8–9

“In the whole land, says the LORD, two-thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one-third shall be left alive. And I will put this third into the fire, refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, “They are my people”; and they will say, “The LORD is our God.”” (NRSV)

Zechariah 14:1–2

“See, a day is coming for the LORD, when the plunder taken from you will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses looted and the women raped; half the city shall go into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city.” (NRSV)

We see the results of the siege of Jerusalem. YAHWEH is the one who has brought all the armies of the world to Jerusalem, He says so. He is judging the nations, but He is also judging His people Israel.

God also says the same in Joel

Joel 3:2

“Then I will gather all the nations, and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. I will enter into judgment against them there concerning my people Israel who are my inheritance, whom they scattered among the nations. They partitioned my land,” (NET)

The nation repents knowing that losses such as this are not sustainable. There is a realization, in Jerusalem, which has not fallen, that only Messiah can save them as well as those who followed the instructions left by Jesus and fled 3 ½ years prior to a place in the desert. Just as they confess and believe...

Revelation 19:11–16

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”” (NASB95)

When we last saw heaven opened in Revelation 4, it was to allow John access. Now we see heaven opened and it is to let Jesus, the avenger of blood, the King, the leader of all the Armies of God, out.

Isaiah 61:1–2

“The spirit of the sovereign LORD is upon me, because the LORD has chosen me. He has commissioned me to encourage the poor, to help the brokenhearted, to decree the release of captives, and the freeing of prisoners, to announce the year when the LORD will show his favor, the day when our God will seek vengeance, to console all who mourn,” (NET)

Deuteronomy 32:35–36

“Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; Their foot shall slip in due time; For the day of their calamity is at hand, And the things to come hasten upon them.’ “For the LORD will judge His people And have compassion on His servants, When He sees that their power is gone, And there is no one remaining, bond or free.” (NKJV)

Romans 12:19

“Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.” (NKJV)

Hebrews 10:31

“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” (ESV)

For the earth dwellers, especially those who are part of the forces of the beast, this statement from Hebrews 10 is now their reality. This is now what their world looks like.

Isaiah 34:2–6

“For the LORD is enraged against all the nations, and furious against all their host; he has devoted them to destruction, has given them over for slaughter. Their slain shall be cast out, and the stench of their corpses shall rise; the mountains shall flow with their blood. All the host of heaven shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll. All their host shall fall, as leaves fall from the vine, like leaves falling from the fig tree. For my sword has drunk its fill in the heavens; behold, it descends for judgment upon Edom, upon the people I have devoted to destruction. The LORD has a sword; it is sated with blood; it is gorged with fat, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams. For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah, a great slaughter in the land of Edom.” (ESV)

The armies that had moved south of Jerusalem to the hiding place of the nation are those who are among the first to be dealt with by the King as He returns to earth.

He goes first to what used to be known as Edom, south and east of the Dead Sea in the Jordanian desert. This is where much of the nation went to as a result of events in the middle of the Tribulation. Isaiah picks up the discussion as he sees Jesus coming north and west towards Jerusalem.

Isaiah 63:1–6

“Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah, he who is splendid in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? “It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save.” Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his who treads in the winepress? “I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption had come. I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me salvation, and my wrath upheld me. I trampled down the peoples in my anger; I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.”” (ESV)

Jesus first arrived to save His people who had listened to Him and escaped to the desert. They went to Bozrah, the old capital city of Edom and there they were protected. As the Beast’s forces move in, Jesus moves as well.

The earth has not been left in great shape by the reign of the beast and the unholy trinity. We get a report of the condition of the planet. We also get a hint of upcoming actions once the battle is over.

Isaiah 24:19–23

“The earth is utterly broken, the earth is split apart, the earth is violently shaken. The earth staggers like a drunken man; it sways like a hut; its transgression lies heavy upon it, and it falls, and will not rise again. On that day the LORD will punish the host of heaven, in heaven, and the kings of the earth, on the earth. They will be gathered together as prisoners in a pit; they will be shut up in a prison, and after many days they will be punished. Then the moon will be confounded and the sun ashamed, for the LORD of hosts reigns on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and his glory will be before his elders.” (ESV)

Jesus and the armies of heaven move north to Jerusalem after dealing with the armies of the world. He sets down on the Mount of Olives.

Zechariah 14 provides “a more intense depiction of a cataclysmic battle involving Jerusalem and the nations than that which is depicted in 12:1–13:6.” (Boda 2016, 746)

Zechariah 14:3–9

“Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he has fought in times past. At that time he will stand on the Mount of Olives, to the east of Jerusalem. Then the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west by a large valley. Half the mountain will move northwards and half of it southwards. You will escape through this valley that divides the mountain in two. You will flee as your ancestors did when the earthquake struck in the time of King Uzziah of Judah. The LORD my God will come, bringing all the

angels with him. When that time comes, there will no longer be cold or frost, nor any darkness. There will always be daylight, even at night-time. When this will happen is known only to the LORD. When that day comes, fresh water will flow from Jerusalem, half of it to the Dead Sea and the other half to the Mediterranean. It will flow all the year round, in the dry season as well as the wet. Then the LORD will be king over all the earth; everyone will worship him as God and know him by the same name.” (GNB)

Just when it seems that all hope is gone for Jerusalem and the people of Israel, then the Lord will fight for His people. (Guzik 2013, Zec 14:3-5)

Bear in mind that this “day” is an extended period of time, not just a 12-hour or 24-hour period. Here the end of the Tribulation is in view all of which the prophets spoke of as the Day of the Lord along with the Millennium. (Constable 2003, Zec 14:7)

When all appears lost, Jesus arrives. His arrival is punctuated with a massive earthquake that splits the Mount of Olives in two and creates a massive valley that runs towards the Dead Sea from Jerusalem. When that occurs, a river is formed going east and west.

The rule of Messiah will change the earth in more than a few ways. His goal is to reestablish Eden here on earth. That will take some major terraforming by the King.

There are other events yet to take place.

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