

# The Unconquerable City

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Good morning, friends, brothers and sisters. It's great to be here with you this morning as we study God's Word. We do have a tricky passage to look at, but it's wonderful.

God is going to speak to us. So let's have listening ears. And you'll find an outline of what I'm going to say inside your bulletins as well, if that helps you follow along. I'll read Zechariah chapter 12 for us.

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.

Behold, I'm about to make Jerusalem a cup of staggering to all the surrounding peoples. The siege of Jerusalem will also be against Judah. 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. On that day, declares the Lord, I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness.

[ 1 : 1 0 ]     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. Then the clans of Judah shall say to themselves, the inhabitants of Jerusalem have strength through the Lord of hosts, their God.

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. 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.

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.

And on that day, I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. 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.

[ 2 : 3 6 ]     On that day, the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-rimon in the plain of Megiddo. 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. 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. and all the families that are left, each by itself and their wives by themselves. All right.

Well, this morning, we come to the last section of Zechariah. Remember the last two sections of this book begin with that word oracle. An oracle.

Zechariah says he has a message from God for us, a divine message. We saw it back in chapter 9, and it comes up again here in verse 1. This second oracle, what makes it a bit different from everything we've seen before, actually, in the book of Zechariah, is how future-focused it is.

[ 3 : 46 ] The rest of the book is sort of future-focused, but these last couple of chapters take it to a whole new level. In particular, you might have noticed the repetition of that little phrase, on that day.

So in verse 3, on that day. In verse 4, on that day. In verse 6, on that day. In verse 8, on that day twice.

In verses 9 and 11, on that day, on that day. So that's seven times in this chapter. And it's about 20 times in all, across chapters 12 to 14.

Which is so significant because we've only seen it about three or four times previously in the book. So it's a very kind of distinctive shift. What Zechariah wants us to focus on now is a future day.

Zechariah's no longer talking about his own day, as it were. He's not interested in what's happening in his own day anymore. He wants us to think about what's happening far into the future on that day.

[ 4 : 46 ] And as we're going to see, that's because a lot of stuff is going to happen on that day. Right? It's sort of like 9-11, October 7th, D-Day, V-Day, Australia Day.

I don't know. All rolled into one. Right? It's just a huge day with so much significance. Zechariah is looking forward to a day that is going to impact the entire world.

But in verse 1, before we get to that, notice how Zechariah introduces his oracle and the God who gave it to him. So first he says, this is the oracle of the word of the Lord concerning Israel.

It's an oracle about Israel. And then he says, thus declares the Lord, who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and formed the spirit of man within him.

Now if you're a curious Bible reader, I reckon an introduction like that might make you wonder. Why do you think God gets introduced like that?

[ 5 : 46 ] I mean, there are any number of ways that God is described in the Bible. He's the almighty one. He's the Lord of hosts. Zechariah loves that title. Right? The Lord of armies. He's glorious. He's gracious.

Zechariah could have picked from any number of options. Zechariah could have picked from any number of options. So why here, do you think, does he draw attention to God's creation of the world? And especially how he made human beings.

How he put his spirit within us. On the one hand, strangely, I think it immediately broadens the scope well beyond Israel, doesn't it? This is an oracle about Israel from the God who made absolutely everything.

And all mankind. So in a sense, this Israel-centered oracle isn't going to be restricted to Israel. It's going to have implications for the whole world.

Yahweh, the Lord, is not just the God of Israel, as some of the kind of nations used to think. But he is the only God. The rightful ruler for the world and of all people.

[ 6 : 51 ] He has determined what we are. What we all are. Who we are. Where we are. What we're for. Where we're going. God made all humanity.

And he made the world with a plan, with a purpose. God made you for something. And I think that's what Zechariah is getting at, too. As he looks far into the future, we're talking about the end for which God made the world.

God's big future plan, if you like. He begins by taking us back to the beginning. That God is the creator. To remind us that God is the architect over all creation and has always had a plan for this great project.

But the other thing to note here is that with this introduction, Zechariah is once again alluding to a couple of passages in the second half of the book of Isaiah.

Now, there are a lot of allusions to prophets that came before Zechariah in these chapters. Okay, so we're going to be going back quite a bit. This is really important.

[ 7 : 58 ] Zechariah wants to integrate and impress upon us how all of the prophets that have gone before him are being fulfilled or will come to their fulfillment on this great day.

It can be a bit overwhelming, but it's also part of what's so wonderful about the kind of tapestry that Zechariah is weaving here. He wants to show us how the whole Bible fits together, how all the prophets have been speaking about the same thing.

So Isaiah was a prophet who lived 100 or 150 years before Zechariah. And in the latter half of his book, Isaiah's book, it's all about how God is going to rescue his people and restore his people after the Babylonian exile.

Now, if you've been here throughout our series, then hopefully you can see why that's so important and of great interest to Zechariah and his generation. Because they are the generation living after the Babylonian exile, trying to rebuild the nation, resting all their hopes on the promises Isaiah made.

In many ways, they were the generation that Isaiah was looking forward to. So one of the reasons Zechariah keeps quoting from lots of these prophets, these former prophets, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, etc., is because he saw his own day as a day of fulfillment, a day when things were coming together, all of these things that the prophets had spoken about.

[ 9 : 19 ] And yet, he recognizes that Isaiah had promised too much, a much more spectacular vision restoration than anything that was happening in his own day, anything that was happening in Zechariah's day.

In particular, Isaiah promised the recreation of a new heavens and earth with a new Jerusalem at the center of it. And in this new heavens and earth, there would be no more sin, there would be no more sorrow or death.

The people of Israel and the nations would stream into this city, into Jerusalem, and this would all come about through a spirit-filled servant king in the line of David.

You'll never guess who it is. So, in Isaiah 42, for instance, listen to this. I think I've got it on the screen, don't I? I don't know. It might come up.

You know, it's like, maybe not. God says, you'll just have to listen, sorry. God says, Behold my servant whom I uphold, my chosen in whom my soul delights.

[ 10 : 29 ] I have put my spirit upon him. He will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice or make it heard in the street. A bruised reed he will not break and a faintly burning wick he will not quench.

He will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth and the coastlands wait for his law. Now, listen to this verse.

Thus says God the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives his breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it.

Now, do you see where Zechariah was getting his material from? He's riffing. He's mashing up the prophets that went before him. And we just keep reading for a moment.

Isaiah 42 verse 6 now. I am the Lord. I have called you in righteousness. I will take you by the hand and keep you. I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

[ 11 : 40 ] I am the Lord. That is my name. My glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols. Behold, the former things have come to pass and new things I now declare.

Before they spring forth, I tell you of them. So you hear what Isaiah was promising, or what God was promising through Isaiah. Isaiah 42, 1-9 is the first of the servant songs in Isaiah.

And this is one of the passages that Zechariah is alluding to right at the beginning of this chapter. Because he wants people to revive their hopes in this man. And he's coming.

This servant will come. Zechariah, or rather God, didn't want this generation to lose heart, to be discouraged because they're in this day of small things, of pathetic things, and disappointing, half-baked reformation.

So instead, he says, keep looking forward. It's still coming. Keep trusting God. The servant will come. The man who would be filled with the Spirit and bring justice to the ends of the earth and establish a covenant between God and all the nations and open the eyes of the blind and so on.

[ 12 : 50 ] Indeed, the man who would complete the restoration and renovation of the entire universe, he's still coming. Now, I said Zechariah is alluding to a couple of passages in Isaiah.

The second one is Isaiah 51. And if we don't have it up on the screen, you might want to go there with me. So Isaiah 51, it's a few pages back from Zechariah.

If you've got one of the visitors' Bibles, it's on page 611. No, 612, because I want to pick it up in verse 17. So Isaiah 51, verse 17.

Now, actually, the verse that will sound familiar is verse 13, where the Lord is described as our maker and the one who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth and so on.

And I want to pick it up in verse 17 just to see what Isaiah adds differently that's here. So in verse 17, the Lord says, Wake yourself, wake yourself, stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the Lord the cup of his wrath, who have drunk to the dregs the bowl, the cup of staggering.

[ 14 : 06 ] There is none to guide her among all the sons she has borne. There is none to take her by the hand among all the sons she has brought up. These two things have happened to you. Who will console you?

Devastation and destruction, famine and sword. Who will comfort you? Your sons have fainted. They lie at the head of every street like an antelope in a net. They are full of the wrath of the Lord, the rebuke of your God.

Therefore, hear this, you who are afflicted, who are drunk, but not with wine. Thus says your Lord, the Lord, your God, who pleads the cause of his people. Behold, I have taken from your hand the cup of staggering, the bowl of my wrath.

You shall drink no more. And I will put it into the hand of your tormentors, who have said to you, bow down, that we may pass over you. And you have made your back like the ground and like the street for them to pass over.

So you see what Isaiah is saying. The exile was a time when God forced his people, people of Israel, to drink his wrath. Devastation and destruction and famine and so on.

[ 15 : 17 ] The people of Israel had to drink the cup of God's wrath to the dregs. But now, in verse 21, because the second half of Isaiah is about hope and restoration, Isaiah 40 to 66, now what Isaiah is saying is that God is going to take the cup of God's wrath away from his people and he's going to give it to the nations that oppress them.

So the tables will turn. All right? Now with Isaiah firmly in our minds then, let's go back to Zechariah and into verse 2. And God says to Zechariah, 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. So notice how Zechariah is developing Isaiah's image. And again, it's like he's riffing on it.

Or one scholar I know described it as doing a mash-up. You know, he's adding a backing track, he's doing a cover version, and he's playing with some things.

Right? So this time, God is not just going to redirect his wrath, you notice, from his people to the nations. But he's actually going to turn Jerusalem into the cup of staggering.

[ 16 : 36 ] The cup of his wrath. And notice it's all going to happen when Jerusalem and Judah are under siege. So it's as if the nations will take Jerusalem in their hand.

They will, they'll think, they've got her right where they want her. You might know this feeling if you've ever played a game of risk. Okay? Or world domination.

You've got your enemy surrounded. Right? The game is over. Well, that's how the nations, the oppressors, are going to feel about Jerusalem. Like a cup in their hand.

Or a sitting duck. Except that what they don't know is that actually, they are right where God wants them. It's like something out of Sun Tzu. Or, you know, the art of war.

Right? It's almost as if, in Zechariah, we're being told about how God is going to lay a trap. There will come a time when Jerusalem will be under siege and will look weak and vulnerable.

[ 17 : 37 ] But in fact, on that day, the tables will turn and Jerusalem will be unconquerable and the nations will feel God's wrath unleashed upon them through her.

Now, if you're familiar with your Old Testament, then I expect this kind of thing will ring lots of bells. I mean, the same kind of pattern happens a number of times.

One of my favorites and probably one of the most significant occasions is in 2 Kings chapter 19. Do you remember? When Sennacherib and the Assyrians surrounded Jerusalem in about 701 BC and Jerusalem seemingly had no hope.

The Assyrians had wiped out the nations that had tried to resist them and the Assyrians mocked them relentlessly and they mocked the Lord. And then Hezekiah prayed.

And about 185,000 Assyrian soldiers died in one night. The angel of the Lord destroyed them. Right, so here's Zechariah saying that something similar is going to happen again, you see.

[ 18 : 42 ] One day, in a day of apparent weakness and vulnerability, God is going to win a far more glorious and permanent victory than Israel had ever seen before.

So, in verse 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.

Again, the background here is the prophet Isaiah. In Isaiah chapter 8, God is described as a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling. But interestingly, because it's in the first half of Isaiah, which primarily is a book about judgment, in the first half of Isaiah, it's the people of Israel who are going to stumble over God and hurt themselves on Him as the rock of offense and the stone of stumbling.

In Isaiah chapter 8. It's the people of Israel and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. So, listen to Isaiah 8. Speaking of God, Isaiah says, God will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken. They shall be snared and taken. You see what Zechariah is doing here then? He is reversing the image. No longer will Israel stumble over God and hurt themselves, but Jerusalem will become a heavy stone herself and all the nations will be broken on her.

[ 20 : 20 ] In verse 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.

Then the clans of Judah shall say to themselves, the inhabitants of Jerusalem have strength through the Lord of hosts, their God. So this time, panic, madness, and blindness are the key words to pay attention to.

This exact vocabulary only occurs elsewhere kind of altogether in Deuteronomy chapter 28, verse 28. And again, what Zechariah is promising is a great reversal.

So in the book of Deuteronomy, the people of Israel were on the edge of the promised land. They were about to enter it and Moses is preaching to them. And in chapter 28, he outlines blessings and curses depending on obedience or disobedience.

The disobedience section is much longer than the obedience section, so they won't be needing that one. Anyway, he outlines the horrible plagues and curses that God will send upon his people if they don't obey his covenant.

[ 21 : 30 ] And he says, Deuteronomy 28, verse 28, The Lord will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of mind or panic.

In Hebrew, those are the exact three words that come up in Zechariah 12. The Lord will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of mind and you shall grope at noonday as the blind grope in darkness and you shall not prosper in your ways and you shall be only oppressed and robbed continually and there shall be no one to help you.

And that's exactly what happened to Israel when the Assyrians and the Babylonians invaded but now Zechariah is promising a reversal.

He's flipping the language on its head again. He's saying that Israel will no longer be cursed but all the nations who attacked them will be thrown into madness and blindness and panic. And notice how Zechariah specifically targets the horse and its rider here.

Every horse and its rider. Now this is not from Deuteronomy 28. Instead it's a reference to the book of Exodus. So if you go back to Exodus 14 and 15 which again you don't have to go back there now but when the people of Israel are fleeing Egypt and Pharaoh is chasing after them and they've got across the Red Sea we're told a number of times that Pharaoh was chasing them with horses and chariots and that God drowned all the horsemen and their chariots so that in chapter 15 when Moses and Miriam sing their victory songs they both say I will sing to the Lord for he has triumphed gloriously the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.

[ 23 : 12 ] Sing to the Lord for he has triumphed gloriously the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. In other words in Zechariah we are being promised another exodus aren't we?

Another exodus like victory over God's enemies God the warrior will overthrow the horse and his rider he will strike them with madness and blindness and panic. Alright but into verse 6 on that day I told you it was going to be a big day 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 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.

So first here the image of the blazing pot and the flaming torch might conjure up a few things from Israel's past but I think probably the most striking parallel is in Genesis chapter 15 where Abraham has a weird vision of a smoking pot a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passing between animal carcasses that Abraham has prepared and on that occasion both the pot and the torch symbolize the presence of God.

Okay? It's about God himself committing to his covenant with Abraham and that's the symbols that were used and after that the metaphor of fire of God as fire continues to pop up throughout the Old Testament and even into the New Testament.

Think of the burning bush the fiery pillar the black smoke covering Mount Sinai the glowing tabernacle or the comment in the book of Hebrews our God is a consuming fire. So like the heavy stone earlier what we're being told here is that Judah in a sense will become like God.

[ 25 : 24 ] A fiery dangerous torch among the nations left and right burning up her enemies like God. This understanding I think then is confirmed in verse 8 when we're told 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.

In other words God's people will be unconquerable. Every one of them even the weediest nerdiest little string bean will be like a mighty warrior like David.

The most delicate little flower will be a heroic champion and the house of David shall be like God which is to say that David's house the monarchy of Israel will be so strong so unconquerable on that day that they will be invincible there will be no stopping them they'll be like God.

And finally verse 9 on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. So verse 9 is the climactic summary of this first section and everything that we've seen has been building to this.

On that day there is a day coming when Jerusalem will be besieged again and the nations will think that they have her right where they want her again but on that day God will transform Jerusalem into a cup of staggering and a heavy stone he will cause the invading armies to go mad and panic and he will win a mighty victory like when Israel first came out of Egypt he will turn Jerusalem into a blazing pot filled as it were with his own powerful presence and even the weakest among them will become as strong as God himself on that day God's plan is to destroy all the nations that come against his people but as we head into verse 10 and into the second half of the chapter the scene if you like takes a surprising turn I don't know what you would expect verse 10 to look like after verse 9 if you were writing this book it's never a good idea but if you were what would you expect now surely a scene of great rejoicing and celebration wouldn't you

[ 28 : 04 ] Jerusalem has won a great victory snatched from the jaws of defeat but the Lord says and I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and please 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 on that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-Rimon in the plain of Megiddo now first of all have a think about verse 11 with me I just want to work backwards for a moment what happened in the plain of Megiddo does anyone know in Israel's history why was Megiddo a place associated with terrible mourning well I don't know if you don't know

I didn't know either until I looked it up I had to discover this one let me quote one of the commentators that I read because he just nails it and so helpful helped me a lot now this is Michael Stead he says to Zachariah's first hearers that location would be as evocative to them as the phrase the hill of Calvary is to the Christian right that's good enough isn't it Megiddo was the location of the death of King Josiah one of the greatest kings of Judah this was the same King Josiah who led God's people back to the right worship of God in Jeremiah's day and on whom the hopes of the nation rested 2 Chronicles chapter 35 verse 22 tells us that Josiah went to the plain of Megiddo to fight with Pharaoh Necho of Egypt it was there that Josiah was fatally wounded pierced by an arrow and according to 2 Chronicles 35 verse 24 to 25 all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for him

Jeremiah composed laments for Josiah and to this day all male and female singers commemorate Josiah in the laments sorry that's in 2 Chronicles 35 that's not to this day so the death of this mysterious figure in Zechariah 12 will be another national catastrophe as terrible as the day that good King Josiah died that is this pierced figure from the nation this pierced figure whom the nation mourns is God's anointed king a king on whom the hopes of the nation rested isn't that helpful so then the big point of this final section of chapter 12 is that on that day all Israel is going to mourn because of the piercing of their beloved king now let's just take a let's work backwards and take a look at verse 10 then for a moment because there are a couple of things that are going to make this tragedy even more horrendous than the day

King Josiah died you see in the middle of verse 10 and we're up to on your outline the significance of pronouns here which is not a political statement just a grammatical one God says when the people are going to mourn in verse 10 God says it's when they look on me now when you think about it that little word is extraordinary isn't it God says me in other words he is the pierced one that is far more serious than a mere human king isn't it on that day God himself is going to be pierced in what sense how could that be Zachariah's original readers didn't know what we all know did they the second thing though that makes this tragedy so horrendous is an equally insignificant sort of word but what it means is massive it's the word they see the people of

Israel are going to mourn when they look on me on him whom they have pierced in other words it's not just that Josiah or another Josiah type king will be killed now in some sense Zachariah is foretelling the death of God and furthermore it's not just that someone like Pharaoh or the other nations are going to kill him no his own people are going to kill him it's really an unbelievable thought except of course for the fact that we all live this side of the cross so we can see how it all came together can't we but then notice after the inhabitants of Jerusalem did pierce their very own God King Jesus what did God do again exactly what Zachariah foretold God said he would pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy so that when they looked upon the one whom they had pierced they would mourn for him and they did mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and we weep bitterly over him as one weeps over a firstborn surely this is exactly what's happening in Acts chapter 2 isn't it when the



[ 33 : 54 ] Jews who were gathered in Jerusalem at that time heard the momentous good news from the apostle Peter let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ this Jesus whom you crucified and Luke tells us when they heard this they were cut to the heart and they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles brothers what shall we do now in verses 12 to 14 Zechariah wants to stress that this national mourning will affect every single household every family no one will go untouched again it sounds a bit like a riff on the mourning of the Egyptians after the Passover and every family mourning the death of the firstborn son but also Zechariah names some specific households representing the prophets priests and kings in other words God will pour out his spirit this spirit of mourning on a whole new class of prophets priests and kings which again

I think is exactly what's happening in Acts 2 isn't it alright so we've already begun to drift into the New Testament and it's time to wrap up what's the take home from Zechariah chapter 12 Zechariah was written to prepare the way for Jesus the God who would be pierced by his very own people so it's not really surprising is it that Zechariah 9 to 14 is the most quoted part of the Old Testament in all the passion narratives in the Gospels for instance in John chapter 19 John says again another scripture says they will look on him whom they have pierced

Zechariah chapter 12 verse 10 so the wonderful news of the New Testament is that Jesus is the long awaited king even more wonderful than Josiah he is God himself he was pierced for our transgressions and his death even though it was a great tragedy or rather because it was a great tragedy it also in God's kindness and by God's spirit began a proper national day of mourning and repentance over sin which as we'll see next week will ultimately lead to the cleansing of the nation you might remember if you've been here throughout our series in Zechariah that Zechariah is a book all about repentance it's all about turning returning repenting if you turn back to God he will turn back to you and of course it's the cross that finally has the power to bring people to repentance it's the cross proclaimed in a sense before people's eyes that's what

Paul how Paul describes it in Galatians it's the cross that brings people to repentance when they look on him whom they have pierced and they themselves are cut to the heart but what I want to leave you with this morning is something slightly less straightforward in fact maybe a little bit even a little bit weird that you might not have considered and that is that Jesus as well as being the pierced king is also I think the unconquerable city I think this is what Mark is getting at in chapter 13 and Luke is getting at in chapter 21 before we many people sort of apply those passages to AD 70 or the end of the world and in some ways I think that's totally legitimate all well and good but before we apply those apocalyptic passages to AD 70 or something that's happening in the second coming

I think what we're meant to see again is the significance of the cross because you see the cross is really and truly the moment when the people of God were under siege in fact the one and only person of God he was surrounded by his enemies it looked like they had him right where they wanted him didn't it and yet he conquered the cross you see was the trap God laid to destroy all the forces of evil the rulers of this age had no idea or they would not have crucified the Lord of glory Jesus became the heavy stone that broke the enemies of God he's the blazing pot that always sounded suspiciously like God he's the wimp that turned out to be a mighty hero like David God now once we understand that I think then it's time to start talking about ourselves but only after we understand that you see after we understand that Jesus is the unconquerable city then we start to understand that we need to take refuge in him we can only become the unconquerable city by faith in him by being joined to him by the

[ 39 : 45 ] Holy Spirit this is the only way we will survive in this evil day each day as we wrestle the principalities and powers of the world as we fight for faith it's the only way we'll survive it's the only way we'll survive ultimately on the last day so the upshot of this passage then the take home if you like is if you want to survive the judgment day if you want to survive on that day you must hide in the Lord Jesus take refuge in the unconquerable city and if you are already hiding in the Lord Jesus like most of us are we're safe we're safe even if the world looks frightening even if we look vulnerable even in the most terrifying of days and moments we're safe because Jesus is unconquerable let's pray oh Lord our God we thank you for this glorious passage thank you that we get to see all the fulfillment of all of your promises over centuries that were coming to fulfillment in

Zachariah's day but much more importantly in our day through our Lord Jesus Christ thank you that he suffered and died that he was willing to bear the mockery and the scorn and the hatred of all of your enemies and thank you that by your mighty power and by his righteousness he conquered we do pray that you would keep us safe in him and that more and more people would join themselves to the Lord Jesus in our day so that they might be saved in the day to come we pray in Jesus name Amen