

# The Coming day of Complete Fulfilment – part 2

Text: Zechariah 14:16-21

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**Scriptures:** Zechariah 14:16-21, Revelation 19:6-16

<b>Series:</b>	<b>Zechariah.</b> Sermon 19 of 19 (part 2 of a two-part sermon)
<b>Theme:</b>	On the last day, all the promises of God come to complete fulfilment as the final battle is fought, peace is won, great numbers celebrate from all the nations and everyone and everything remaining is completely holy.
<b>FCF:</b>	At times we can feel like giving up in the Christian life
<b>Proposition:</b>	Persevere today in the certain hope that all God's promises will be completely fulfilled in Christ on the last day.

## 4. The final celebration

Are you looking forward to Christmas? A time to celebrate together as family and friends. Good food, fellowship, laughter, rest from work. Not all Christians celebrate Christmas. Those who don't celebrate this occasion know that the Scripture does not specify the year or date of Christ's birth.

They know that Roman pagans first introduced the holiday of Saturnalia, a week-long period of lawlessness celebrated between December 17-25. During this period, Roman courts were closed, and Roman law dictated that no one could be punished for damaging property or injuring people during the weeklong celebration. However, when Rome eventually instituted Christianity as the state religion in the fourth century, the Roman church converted Saturnalia to a Christian holiday in order to commemorate Jesus' birth. Christians have celebrated it as such ever since. On the matter of the celebration of Christmas we do have liberty of conscience and we must not judge one another in such things. Many Christians remember Jesus's birth at this time of the year understanding that the church can redeem celebrations with pagan origins for good.

Whilst Christmas may not be specifically prescribed in Scripture, celebration and festivities most certainly are! In fact, joyful feasting, with food and fellowship, is one of the themes of the Bible! One of the sad things I've seen with some Christians who do not celebrate Christmas is that they may miss out on a time of joyful feasting with family and friends!

In Leviticus 23 we have recorded seven feasts which God declared through Moses to the people of Israel: Passover (Pesach), unleavened bread (Chag Hamotzi), first fruits (Yom Habikkurim), Pentecost or weeks (Shavu'ot), trumpets (Rosh Hashanah), day of atonement (Yom Kippur) and booths or tabernacles (sukkot).

In our text from Zechariah there is a celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths (Lev 23:33-43). This was a joyful commemoration of the Lord's great work of redemption in the

events of the Exodus. It was the last and greatest festival of the Hebrew calendar – on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month. This was a week-long feast. It was to be an extended time of grateful rejoicing (Lev 23:40; Deut 16:13-15; Neh 8:17). A time of celebrating the ingathering of the harvest and of thanksgiving to the Lord for his gracious provision. “*Celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days after you have gathered the produce of your threshing floor and your winepress. Be joyful at your Feast-- you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, and the Levites, the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns*” (Deut 16:13-15)

In our text from Zechariah 14, we’ve seen the final battle, the final judgement, and the final home for God’s people being prophesied in symbolic language.

Now we see more! A great gathering for worship and celebration, not only of those who have been in Jerusalem, but which includes “*the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem*” will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. (v14b). Some of those who had been enemies will come to worship the King and to join in the feasting, fellowship, food and extended celebration! This is going to be bigger than any family Christmas.

This feast now celebrates not the harvesting of grain and wine, as with the Feast of Tabernacles, but of souls! All people who willingly respond to the call of God to come to worship and to celebrate. There is an ingathering of peoples from the nations. Remember the covenant promise to Abraham: “*In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed*” (Gen 12:3b). Here on the last day, the complete fulfilment of this promise is seen.

You’ll see there’s need for more explanation. Look at verses 17-19: “*If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, they will have no rain. If the Egyptian people do not go up and take part, they will have no rain. The LORD will bring on them the plague he inflicts on the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. This will be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles*”.

Egypt here stands as an example of those who are against God. In symbolic language the message is, all peoples of the earth are called to come and worship the Lord in joy and thankfulness. How are they called? How do they know to come? To us the language of Romans 10:14-15:

*How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in?*

*And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?*

*And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?*

*And how can they preach unless they are sent?*

*As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"*

Part of the minister’s role, on behalf of all the elders, is to call the gathered congregation to worship, but how are people who are not present here to be called? By individual Christians in their office of believer, as ambassadors for Christ, inviting the nations to come and worship the King, to join in our joyful celebration and fellowship each Lord’s Day. This is already happening, but the call today is to keep going! To persevere, to keep inviting people to come.

From the text you can see that the hearts of some will be transformed, but others will remain unchanged. There is a solemn reminder that not all will respond and worship the Lord. Upon them God's judgement will come – pictured symbolically as a plague. Our role is not to determine who will or will not respond to the invitation, simply to issue it on behalf of our King. Think about the parable of the wedding banquet in Matt 22 "For many are invited, but few are chosen"

There is an urgency, a vital importance, to our inviting people to come to Christ. God has chosen to give us the most important message there is: the gospel. The good news about salvation in Christ. *"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us"* (2 Cor 4:7).

When we celebrate Lord's Supper we remember our Lord's death and we look forward to his return. We experience a foretaste of the everlasting worship of God, of the greatest feast, the fullest festival, with food, and fellowship in the very presence of Christ! 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" (Rev 19:9b)

## **5. The final holiness**

The final few verses of the book of Zechariah may seem a little confusing at first, but the message is actually very simple! – perhaps more straightforward than Martin Luther imagined!

At the end of this age, when Christ returns, and all God's people dwell securely in the New Jerusalem, there will be complete, universal holiness: To be holy is to be set apart. God is set apart from natural man because he is Holy by nature and we are not. In Christ we are declared holy: a holy nation, but we continue to live a mixed life: holiness is evident, but so is unholiness.

The promise of God's Word in our text is that on the day of the Lord everything will become holy. Nothing in the New Heavens and New Earth will be set apart from anything else in the New Jerusalem, because everything will be Holy: *"On that day HOLY TO THE LORD will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, and the cooking pots in the LORD's house will be like the sacred bowls in front of the altar. Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the LORD Almighty, and all who come to sacrifice will take some of the pots and cook in them. And on that day there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD Almighty"* (Zech 14:20)

The words 'holy to the Lord' were inscribed on a plate of pure gold on the high priest's turban (Ex 28:36), a reminder of his consecration to the Lord's service. Here even the ordinary battle horses' bells are as holy as the high priest. The most mundane and ordinary items are holy. The kitchen ware, the cooking pots as holy as the temple worship bowls. Everything is equally sacred. The most common things have been transformed to be 'set apart'.

The word Canaanite also means 'trader'. The message is that no impure religion is to be found here. No extortionate profits are made out of the worshippers. The New Jerusalem is to be a holy city in which holy people live completely holy lives.

How could it be any other way? God Himself is going to be there with His people. Christ, the Lamb, the Holy One of Israel is going to be there. Our destiny, brothers and sisters is complete sanctification, complete holiness. Every single part of us, every word, every thought, every deed. 100% holy.

How is this possible? The key is again verse 9 *“The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name”*.

What is your experience of personal holiness on this earth? Paradoxical. The more holy we become the more we realise how unholy we are. The call of the gospel on our lives is to live as that which we have been declared in Christ to be: **1 Peter 2:9** *“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light”*

When the King is on the throne in our hearts, we desire live like the holy people we have been declared to be. **1 Peter 1:13** *“Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. <sup>14</sup> As obedient children do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. <sup>15</sup> But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do”*;

Which one of us suffers because we desire to be completely holy, but we are not? Every day/week we let ourselves down. We say, do, and think that which is unholy. Here is encouragement from God’s Word. The call is to persevere in striving to be holy today in the certain hope that all God’s promises will be completely fulfilled in Christ on the last day.

Our destiny is not **only to be declared** holy, as we are now, **but to be absolutely holy in our glorified bodies and fully sanctified souls**. From ‘top to toe’. From horse bell to cooking pot. The call is to persevere in joyful worship together in the certain hope that all God’s promises will be completely fulfilled in Christ on the last day.

Be encouraged by the prophecy of God through his servant Zechariah to persevere in sitting together under God’s Word explained, proclaimed and applied in the certain hope that all God’s promises will be completely fulfilled in Christ on the last day. Be encouraged by the prophecy of God through his servant Zechariah to persevere in the sacraments of the church in the certain hope that all God’s promises will be completely fulfilled in Christ on the last day.

When we celebrate Lord’s Supper we look forward to a greater celebration, to perfect worship from peoples of every tribe tongue and nation. Gathered together in complete unity and holiness.

Then, on that day, the Lamb and his Bride the church will feast together forever! Then, on that day, a voice will come from the throne of God saying: *“Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!”* Then will come what will sound like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

*“Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready”*. (Rev 19:4-7)

Until then, keep going, persevere, be encouraged by the certain future which awaits the church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

AMEN