

## Zechariah 14:8-15 – Pictures of Prosperity and Plagues

Calvin, JFB, Poole, TSK, HebrewLexicon, Geneva, Delitzsch, Moore, Phillips, Clarke, Henry, Spurgeon, Barnes, INT Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: God often used wonderful pictures to teach us. He knows how much we need pictures. I remember once when I went to see my cardiologist (心脏病医生) he checked my blood pressure. Being strangely high, he asked the nurse to take me in a room and show me some pictures of a beautiful Caribbean beach with swaying coconut trees and a stunning blue sea... My systolic pressure (心脏收缩压) dropped 40 points in 5 minutes. The pictures did the job. I was just stressed out about getting my blood pressure taken, suffering from the white coat syndrome. Similarly, God painted a picture of a beautiful flowing river of prosperity (富裕, 丰盛) ...and a picture of a wasting disease-a plague (瘟疫, 灾殃) to encourage his people, even as they faced the prospect of annihilation at the hands of ruthless Jews and brutal Romans. You will hear about these pictures today.

Our headings are:

A Picture of Prosperity in the New Jerusalem

A Picture of Plagues on New Jerusalem's Enemies

Our goals are: That seeing the promise of prosperity on you and plagues on your enemies, you will confidently live and work as a Christian for your Redeemer.

### A Picture of Prosperity in the New Jerusalem

8 And in that day it shall be That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, Half of them toward the eastern sea And half of them toward the western sea; In both summer and winter it shall occur.

1. This living water is flowing from the New Jerusalem so that the nations might drink of it and be inwardly satisfied.

2. This living water is nourishing to the trees that are planted on either side. ("Trees" constantly picture believers.)

Brackish water (咸水) symbolized death and disease, but flowing water shows richness and health.

Ezekiel 47:1 Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east... 3 And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water came up to my ankles. 4 Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water came up to my knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water came up to my waist. 5 Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed. 7 When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and the other. 8 Then he said to me: "This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed. 9 "And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes.

The flowing water, the Gospel, brings healing properties to all nations.

3. This living water is available in abundant quantities; it was not a trickle (点滴, 细流).

Isaiah 44:3 For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, And floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, And My blessing on your offspring;

This meant that there are many conversions. It was like in the days of Adam in the Eden with waters from 4 rivers.

In fact, this water does not dry up in summer and it doesn't freeze over in winter!

Is there evidence of these blessings? Yes.

Revelation 22:1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Contrary to popular belief, John was not referring to heaven. There would be no sick ones in heaven...but he describes what will take place on earth. This is the same prophetic language of Israel, Joel, Ezekiel, and Jesus! You can read details of this in Ezekiel 47:8-12. Since there will be no sick ones in heaven, there will be no healing in heaven!

9 And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be — "The LORD is one," And His name one.

4. Universal kingdom. With abundant healing, God's kingdom will become universal. Christ will rule everywhere.

Revelation 11:15 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the **kingdoms of our Lord** and of His Christ, and **He shall reign forever and ever!**"

There will be one God...and one faith!

10 All the land shall be **turned into a plain** from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be raised up and **inhabited in her place** from Benjamin's Gate to the place of the First Gate and the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananeel to the king's winepresses.

**5. Unhindered ( 不被阻碍的 ) kingdom. The kingdom will be unhindered because obstacles ( 障碍物 ) will be removed for development.**

The uneven land will be leveled...much like you clear the land of obstacles if you want to build on it. Furthermore, Benjamin's gate, which was North East, the First gate, which was North West, and Hananeel Tower, which was south, showed the extremities of Jerusalem. So these details teach that obstacles from the whole land will be removed so **New Jerusalem (the church) will then be raised up and the structure of the church will be setup without hindrance.**

This was **famous and familiar language.**

Isaiah 40:4 Every valley shall be exalted **And every mountain and hill brought low;** The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth;

11 The people shall dwell in it; And no longer shall there be utter destruction, But Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

**6. Inhabited kingdom. The kingdom shall be inhabited forever.**

This is in contrast to the Old Jerusalem that was destroyed...partially, many times...and totally, when Rome destroyed it. What use would it be to have a beautiful city with no residents?

While great cities (like Nineveh) were destroyed and became skeletons, it will not so with the New Jerusalem!

**7. Lessons:**

**a. The expulsion ( 驱除 ) of old Israel does not mean that the number of God's people will diminish.** God will bring in new people to his church, even as he does now – even more than before.

**b. This new church will established and preserved forever.**

**c. This river of life, which brings hope to the world, is the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God.** You, the church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, will preach the Gospel to others. **You are the means by which the Gospel spreads to the world.**

John 7:37 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If **anyone thirsts**, let him come to Me and drink. 38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, **out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.**"

This is familiar language, language which shows that this refers to conversions on earth...as there will be no thirst in heaven. Revelation 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" **And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.**

**Since the hungry and thirsty must come to the church for nourishment, when was the last time you gave someone directions to her?** Do not be content to watch people starve!

**d. This knowledge of a prosperous church should make you confident in how you live and serve the Lord.**

## **A Picture of Plagues on New Jerusalem's Enemies**

12 And this shall be the **plague ( 灾殃 ) with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem:** Their flesh shall **dissolve ( 消没 ) while they stand on their feet,** Their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets ( 眼眶 ) , And their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.

**1. In order to ensure that New Jerusalem will be establish and expand, God promised to destroy her enemies.**

**2. What is the nature of that destruction? God used a graveyard ( 墓地 ) scene...very graphic pictures!**

**a. God will bring a plague to the enemies of New Jerusalem.**

**b. This plague will dissolve their flesh (those who fought New Jerusalem), even while they are standing on their feet.** They walked in their own way so they were judged by God. This was familiar language.

Deuteronomy 28:22 "The LORD will strike you with **consumption**, with **fever**, **with inflammation**, with severe burning fever, with the sword, with scorching, and with mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish. **22** 耶和華要用癆病、熱病、火症、瘧疾、刀劍、旱風（或作：乾旱）、霉爛攻擊你。這都要追趕你，直到你滅亡。

**c. This plague will dissolve their eyes.** The Jews no longer looked to God and to the "hills from where their help came."

**d. This plague will dissolve their tongues.** They used their tongues to speak blasphemies (亵渎的话) and lies as false shepherds.

13 It shall come to pass in that day That a **great panic from the LORD** will be among them. Everyone will **seize the hand of his neighbor**, And raise his hand against his neighbor's hand;

### **3. What is the result of the plagues?**

**a. The wicked will panic.**

**b. The wicked will fight among themselves – destroying each other.** This is consistent with how God used Ammon and Moab to go against Edom. (2Chronicles 20:23). And how God destroyed the Midianites (during Gideon's time) caused them to kill each other. (Judges 7). And this is exactly what happened among the wicked 3 factions of the Jews...they attacked each other when the Romans laid siege (围攻, 围城) to Jerusalem.

14 **Judah also will fight at Jerusalem.** And the **wealth of all the surrounding nations Shall be gathered** together: Gold, silver, and apparel (衣物) in great abundance.

**4. Then other Jews (believers) will New Jerusalem fight. (The context was that the villages (Judah) would join with the city - Jerusalem.)** But keep in mind that the weapons of their warfare were not carnal (属肉体的). This was a spiritual battle.

### **5. The New Jerusalem will become wealthy from the goods of their enemies.**

This, of course, was not speaking of literally plundering the earthly wealth of the converts, but of **gaining the blessings of new converts**. There will be new leaders with additional gifts – power and influence in the affairs of men. These are the precious gifts. Gold, silver, and clothes are only symbolically named. Lesser things (gold, silver) - are used to represent greater things (salvation, leadership). **This was a familiar concept**...like when God caused the Egyptians to give the Jews their jewelry.

15 Such also shall be the **plague On the horse and the mule**, On the camel and the donkey, And on all the cattle that will be in those camps. **So shall this plague be.**

### **6. God will destroy property of the wicked ones also.**

Camels and donkeys were symbolic of wealth. This meant that anything associated with the wicked will be removed... **This was familiar language**, like when **God commanded all the animals of wicked nations to be destroyed**...as in the days of King Saul...like when **God destroyed the animals of Egypt as punishment**.

## **7. Lessons:**

**a. God will protect the church from all her enemies.** He will do so in any way that fits his plan!

**b. God will provide everything the church needs to do the work he has called her to do.**

**c. Learn to use what God has provided well...lest he remove his gifts.** Don't abuse God's gifts!

Psalms 12:3 May the LORD cut off all flattering (谄媚的) lips, And the tongue that speaks proud things,

**d. This beautiful picture of God's judgment on the wicked gives you confidence to go about your daily lives.** The Devil may **set his eyes on your children**, your husband, or your wife, to destroy your family, but God says he can't win. The Devil will **set his eyes on the church** and do everything in his power to try to destroy it, but God gives you assurance that he will destroy the wicked, not his church. **So work without fear.**

## **Conclusion:**

**God promised to prosper his church.** His church will expand numerically and be nourished spiritually. **God will plague his church's enemies** to protect her. Now the church can work without fear.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

**1. Have you been unwilling to challenge the enemies of the church because you think they are unconquerable (不可征服的)?** God says that the greatest enemy is conquerable. You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you.

**2. But you have to learn to use your sword well.** It is no use trying to tell others about Jesus when you don't know who Jesus is and the details of what he has done. So take time to learn doctrines. Just telling people that Jesus loves them is not the Gospel. They need flowing, abundant, and fresh waters of life... lest they die!

**3. Remember, Jesus purchased your place in his kingdom and you are obligated to work for him...and more...you would want to work for him out of love.**

Finally: Come to Jesus or be crushed. Come to him and find rest. Refuse him and be restless all our earthly life and for eternity. That is the picture today. The choice is yours.