

EVERY EYE SAW HIM

(A Study of Revelation 1:7)

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Many often ask, “When Christ return in A.D. 70, did “every eye” see Him? The reason for this question is the problem some have with interpreting the second coming of Christ as a past versus future event. Revelation 1:7 reads, “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, and they also who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him, Even so, Amen.” This text does harmonize with the A.D. 70 return of Christ at the fall of Jerusalem. Consider the following.

The historical background of the text is found in Zechariah 12:10ff. This places the passage in a Jewish historical context. Jesus quotes the passage first in Matthew 24:30 and applies it to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. This is also a historical Jewish context. John who was present on that occasion, heard the Lord quote and apply the text. In all three places where the text appears there are time clues which limit its application to the first century.

In Zechariah, the prophecy against the nation of Israel is introduced with the theme, the “burden of the word of the Lord,” (12:1, 2). The word burden used by the prophets almost always describes an impending judgment. See Isaiah 13:1; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:1, 11, 13; 23:1; Nah. 1:1; Zech. 9:1.

Secondly, because of the judgment that is coming upon Judah and Jerusalem, the land will mourn. *“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,”* (12:10).

Confirmation of the above is noted in verse 11, for it is like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. This refers to the mourning of Judah over the death of Josiah, the most pious king of Judah. Josiah died quickly in the valley of Megiddo, from a mortal wound of an archer, (2 Chronicles 35:22-24). Josiah enacted great reforms in Judah and Jerusalem, destroying the idols, high places of where the people offered sacrifices to idols. He even burned the bones of the priests who offered these sacrifices, 2 Chron. 34:3-7). Later after the book of the Law was found and read to Josiah, he restored true worship to Israel, reestablished and kept the Passover.

Josiah was greatly lamented at his death. “...So he died, and was buried in one of the tombs of his fathers, and all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. Jeremiah also lamented for Josiah. And to this day all the singing men and the singing women speak of Josiah in their lamentations. They made it a custom in Israel; and indeed they are written in the laments,” (2 Chron. 35:24, 25) All Judah and Jerusalem therefore mourned at His death.

God says there would be great mourning in Judah and Jerusalem like the mourning at the death of Josiah. “In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.” (Zech. 12:11)

Thus far we have a text which speaks of those who would look on the Lord whom they pierced. These were the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. God says they would mourn for Him as one mourns for His only son and grieves over a first born. This latter phrase recalls the tragedy in Egypt where every home in the nation suffered the loss of their first born. The mourning was great!

While looking on Him whom they pierced and the mourning appears to be chronologically the same, there is some time difference. The piercing refers to the Lord's crucifixion. The mourning refers to the destruction of Jerusalem. It occurs "in that day" the day of the Lord. The mourning would be great as of that in Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.

God says the land shall mourn, every family by itself. "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." (Zech 12:12-14)

The word family in the verses above is translated from the phule, according to the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament). Interestingly, phule is translated tribes in Matthew 24:30. "...then all the tribes (phule), of the earth (ge) or land shall mourn. The parallels are striking and show the relationship of all these passages.

Zechariah 12:10-12	<h2 style="text-align: center; color: #8B4513;">Revelation 1:7</h2> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He comes with clouds 2. Every eye shall see him 3. Even those who pierced him 4. The, tribes, (phule) of the earth (ges) shall wail, kopsontai <p style="text-align: center;">Things which must shortly come to pass...for the time is at hand. Rev. 1:1-3.</p>
Prophecy of Jerusalem's destruction	
Judah and Jerusalem mourn, lament, wail "kopsontai"	
Phulas, tribes (families) mourn	
ge, land denoting Jerusalem and Judah	
Those who pierced him	
They shall look on him whom they pierced	
Matthew 24:30	<h2 style="text-align: center; color: #8B4513;">Daniel 7:13</h2> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Son of Man comes 2. He come with clouds 3. He comes as the Ancient of Days, (v.21) 4. He come in judgment, 7:10
Prophecy of Jerusalem's destruction	
Phulai tribes mourn, wail "kopsontai"	
Judah and Jerusalem	
the land (ges) Judah and Jerusalem	
They shall see Him (he is the one they pierced)	
Son of Man comes on the clouds of Heaven	
Matthew 24:30	
Assuredly I say to you, this generation shall by no means pass till all these things are fulfilled. (Matthew 24:30).	

Thus, the mourning spoken of here is that which is prophesied for “all” the families of Judah and Jerusalem. Is there any difference in saying every eye shall see him, versus every family shall see him or all the tribes shall mourn, versus all the land shall mourn? There is no difference in either of these statements.

Thirdly, the phrase “in that day” quoted repeatedly in chapters 12-14, clearly refers to a time following the cessation of inspired prophets, many years after the crucifixion. The Lord would come to do battle with Jerusalem accompanied by “all the saints.”

“Behold the day of the Lord is coming and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, the house rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations as he fights in the day of battle and in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west, making a very large valley, Half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south. Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the Lord my God will come and all the saints with you.” (Zechariah 14:1-5)

The Lord would come with all his saints (1 Thess. 3:13; 2 Thess. 1:10) to destroy Jerusalem which would be attended by great mourning. Judah and Jerusalem would no longer have God’s covenantal favor. (See Deut. 5:1-3; Rom. 3:1, 2; Eph. 2:12) The mourning over this national loss is universal throughout the land. The land, by metonymy means the people mourn. It is “every” family or tribe.

Fourth, with this background, Jesus quotes the prophecy of Zechariah 12:10-14, placing it into a context of judgment upon national Israel. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24:30). See also Matt. 23:32-24:3, 34).

Fifth, Jesus adds the element of the “Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven” to the mourning by all tribes in the land. In one graceful stroke he connects Daniel 7:13, not to the day of Pentecost, but to the Olivet discourse. This is Jesus’ own inspired interpretation and application of Daniel’s prophecy. It serves to strengthen what we’ve said above on our text and chart concerning Zechariah being a judgment on Judah and Jerusalem.

Sixth, the setting of Daniel 7 is judgment. The court is seated, (vv.10, 11), the books are opened, the beast is destroyed. The Son of Man who comes on the clouds in Daniel 7:13 is none other than the Ancient of Days (v. 22).

Many expositors have problems with understanding Christ to be the Ancient of Days coming in judgment. They generally apply the Ancient of Days coming to Pentecost in A.D. 30. This results from trying to interpret Daniel’s dream or vision (vv. 1-14) versus listening to Daniel’s own interpretation of the dream provided by the Holy Spirit in versus 16-27. Compare an attempt to interpret Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (chapter 2:31-35) without reading Daniel’s explanation (2:36-45)! Therefore, the Holy Spirit’s interpretation of the dream should prevail over human wisdom’s attempt to interpret the vision. It is God who reveals secrets!

Therefore, the Ancient of Days or Son of Man coming in the clouds is a judgment text which Jesus places in the context of Jerusalem's fall in 70 A.D. Further in this event, i.e., Jerusalem's fall, the application of Zechariah 12:12 finds its historical fulfillment. It was then that all the tribes (every family) mourned. They saw Jesus, the Son of man coming in judgment upon the nation.

Seventh, Jesus placed the mourning of all the tribes and His cloud coming within the time frame of that first century generation. *"Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all be fulfilled."* (Matthew 24:34) Not only did Jesus say that the first century generation would not pass away, until all were fulfilled, He clearly said that all things written would be fulfilled during Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70. "For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled." (Luke 21:22)

Eighth, the apostle John was present on the occasion when Jesus prophesied the fall of Jerusalem, (Mark 13:3). He therefore heard firsthand "how" Jesus both interpreted and applied the passages in Zechariah 12 and Daniel 7. He knew clearly that the context was the judgment upon Jerusalem. Moreover, Jesus does not quote either passage to explain a yet future coming beyond A.D. 70.

Thus Jesus told Peter, James, John and Andrew that Zechariah 12:10-14 and Daniel 7:9-13 referred to the fall of Jerusalem. Why would not John apply the passages in the same manner as that which he was taught? Does it not make sense that he would teach that he mourning of every tribe and "seeing the Son of Man come in the clouds" is correctly applied to the A.D. 70 coming of Christ?

John was given no other framework, no other time, no other event, than the coming of Christ to judge Judah and Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Ninth, it is interesting that Jesus gave the prophecy concerning the mourning to John a second time! Does he change his interpretation and application which he gave John during the Olivet discourse? Does Zechariah 12:10-14 and Daniel 7:13 mean something during the revealing of the book of Revelation that it did not mean in A.D. 30 at the meeting on the Olivet discourse? Does time change the meaning of the God's world? John says he received his revelation from Christ, (Rev. 1:1).

"Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, and they also who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen." (Rev. 1:7) All the elements of Zechariah 12:10-14, Dan 7:13ff and Matthew 24:30 are set forth in the text.

It is the coming in clouds which Jesus said would happen before that first century generation passed, (Matthew 24:3,30,34). Two, it is a coming that would be seen by all the tribes of the land (by those who pierced him). It is a coming that produces mourning in the land of Jerusalem among all the tribes, --again every family of the house of David. Why then would John change the meaning when every thing fits perfectly?

Finally, the time limitations for the book demonstrate the nearness of that message. "Those things would shortly come to pass." The time was near, (Rev. 1:1, 3). See also 22:6, 10, 12. Every eye of the all the tribes of the land, --those who pierced Him, saw Him!

