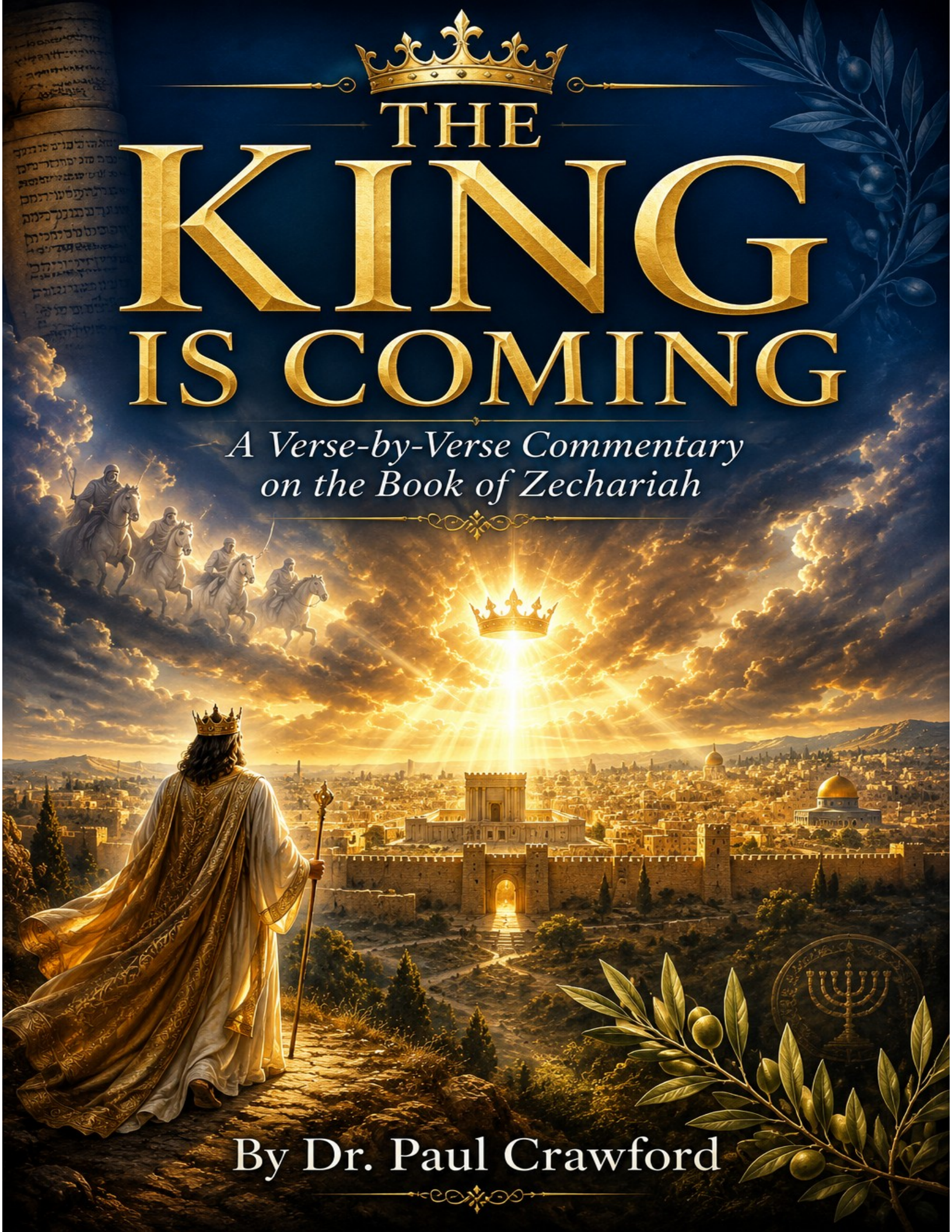




THE KING IS COMING

*A Verse-by-Verse Commentary
on the Book of Zechariah*

By Dr. Paul Crawford

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The King Is Coming

Zechariah begins with the gracious invitation:

“Return to Me, and I will return to you.”

It ends with the glorious declaration:

“The Lord will be King over all the earth.”

Between those two truths, Zechariah reveals a sweeping prophetic message of **repentance, restoration, cleansing, judgment, the Messiah, Jerusalem, and the coming Kingdom of God.**

The central message of the book can be summarized in one triumphant declaration:

THE KING IS COMING.

Preface

The book of Zechariah is one of the most remarkable prophetic books in all of Scripture. It speaks to a people who had known judgment, exile, discouragement, and loss, yet it also lifts their eyes toward restoration, cleansing, hope, and the coming reign of the Messiah.

Zechariah ministered during a critical period in Israel's history. The people had returned from Babylonian captivity, but Jerusalem still bore the scars of devastation. The temple had not yet been fully rebuilt. The nation was weak, the people were discouraged, and the promises of God may have seemed distant.

Into that setting, the Lord raised up Zechariah.

His message was not merely, "Rebuild the temple."

His message was much greater.

It was a call to return to God.

It was a declaration that God had not forgotten His covenant people.

It was a promise that Jerusalem would once again know blessing.

It was a warning that sin would be judged.

It was a revelation that a coming King would rule in righteousness.

And above all, it was a prophetic unveiling of the Messiah.

Throughout Zechariah, we encounter some of the clearest Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. We see the coming Branch. We see the humble King riding on a donkey. We see the Shepherd who is struck. We see the One who is pierced. We see a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. We see the Lord standing upon the Mount of Olives. We see the nations gathered, Jerusalem delivered, and the Lord reigning as King over all the earth.

These are not isolated predictions. Together, they form a powerful prophetic portrait of Jesus Christ.

For that reason, the title of this commentary is intentional:

The King Is Coming

Zechariah points both backward and forward.

It looks backward to Israel's failure and God's discipline.

It looks at the present call to repentance and obedience.

And it looks forward to the coming Messiah, the restoration of Jerusalem, the judgment of the nations, and the establishment of God's kingdom.

This commentary has been written with one primary goal: to help readers understand the book of Zechariah verse by verse while allowing the text itself to remain central.

Rather than rushing through Zechariah's visions, symbols, and prophetic statements, we will examine them carefully. We will consider their historical setting, their immediate meaning to Zechariah's original audience, their theological significance, and their prophetic fulfillment.

Special attention will also be given to the Messianic passages that point to Jesus Christ.

Zechariah can sometimes appear difficult because it contains symbolic visions, prophetic imagery, angelic messengers, judgments against nations, and future events. Yet these passages are not meant to discourage Bible students. They are meant to deepen our understanding of the sovereignty, faithfulness, holiness, and redemptive purposes of God.

When Zechariah is studied carefully, several truths become unmistakably clear.

God keeps His promises.

God disciplines His people but does not abandon them.

God judges sin.

God restores the repentant.

God controls the nations.

God has a purpose for Jerusalem.

God has provided cleansing from sin.

And God has appointed a King who will ultimately reign over all the earth.

That King is Jesus Christ.

One of the great themes running through Zechariah is the contrast between human weakness and divine power.

The returned exiles were not politically powerful.

They did not possess a mighty army.

They did not control the surrounding nations.

Their rebuilding efforts often seemed small and insignificant.

Yet God reminded them:

"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit."

That truth remains just as important today.

The work of God has never depended ultimately upon human strength. God accomplishes His purposes through His Spirit, according to His will, and in His appointed time.

Zechariah also reminds us not to despise small beginnings.

The people rebuilding Jerusalem may have looked insignificant compared with the great empires surrounding them, but God was working through them to advance a much greater plan.

From that restored community would come the Messiah.

From Israel would come the Savior.

And through that Savior, blessing would extend far beyond Jerusalem to the nations of the world.

The prophetic message of Zechariah therefore extends far beyond the sixth century before Christ. It reaches into the New Testament. It reaches toward the cross. It reaches toward the Second Coming. It reaches toward the future kingdom of God.

In Zechariah 9, the King comes humbly, riding on a donkey.

In Zechariah 12, the people look upon the One they pierced.

In Zechariah 13, the Shepherd is struck and the sheep are scattered.

In Zechariah 14, the Lord comes in power and becomes King over all the earth.

The first coming of Christ fulfilled many of Zechariah's prophecies.

The second coming will fulfill the rest.

That is why Zechariah is a book of tremendous hope.

History is not moving randomly.

The nations are not outside God's control.

The promises of Scripture will not fail.

Jesus Christ will return.

The King is coming.

As you work through this commentary, I encourage you not merely to study Zechariah intellectually, but devotionally.

Ask what each passage teaches you about God.

Ask what it reveals about Christ.

Ask where repentance is required.

Ask where faith must replace fear.

Ask where God is calling you to obedience.

Ask how the certainty of Christ's return should shape the way you live today.

Biblical prophecy was never given simply to satisfy curiosity about the future. It was given to produce faithfulness in the present.

If the King is coming, then we should live ready.

If the King is coming, then holiness matters.

If the King is coming, then worship matters.

If the King is coming, then obedience matters.

If the King is coming, then suffering is temporary.

If the King is coming, then the promises of God can be trusted.

My prayer is that this verse-by-verse study will deepen your understanding of Zechariah, strengthen your confidence in Scripture, increase your appreciation for biblical prophecy, and above all, draw your heart closer to Jesus Christ.

May we study these ancient words with open Bibles, humble hearts, and expectant faith.

And as we do, may one truth rise above every vision, every symbol, every warning, and every promise:

The King is coming.

Dr. Paul Crawford

Prologue

Jerusalem had known glory.

It had also known ruin.

Its walls had once stood strong. Its temple had once been the center of worship. Its streets had once echoed with the songs of pilgrims and the prayers of generations.

Then judgment came.

The armies of Babylon swept through the land. Jerusalem fell. The temple was destroyed. The people were carried away into exile.

For years, the city that had represented covenant, worship, and promise stood broken.

Then, by the providence of God, the exiles began to return.

They came back to a land that still carried the scars of destruction. They came back to rubble. They came back to unfinished work. They came back to opposition, disappointment, and uncertainty.

The promises of God were still true.

But the people needed to hear them again.

They needed more than encouragement to rebuild stone walls.

They needed their faith rebuilt.

They needed to remember who God was.

They needed to remember who they were.

They needed to remember that judgment was not the end of the story.

Into that moment stepped a prophet named Zechariah.

His name carried a message all by itself.

“The Lord remembers.”

And that was exactly what the people needed to know.

God had not forgotten Jerusalem.

God had not forgotten His covenant.

God had not forgotten His promises.

God had not forgotten His people.

The Lord spoke through Zechariah in visions, warnings, promises, symbols, and prophecies.

Some of those visions were mysterious.

A man stood among myrtle trees.

Horns rose up.

Craftsmen appeared.

A measuring line stretched toward Jerusalem.

Joshua the high priest stood in filthy garments while Satan accused him.

A golden lampstand burned beside olive trees.

A flying scroll moved through the air.

Chariots came out from between mountains of bronze.

Each vision carried a message.

God was still working.

God was still ruling.

God was still cleansing.

God was still restoring.

God was still preparing the way for something greater.

And then, as the prophecy unfolded, something extraordinary became clear.

Zechariah was not only speaking about rebuilding Jerusalem.

He was speaking about a King.

A King who would come humbly.

A King who would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey.

A Shepherd who would be rejected.

A Shepherd who would be struck.

A Man who would be pierced.

A fountain that would be opened for sin.

A day when the Lord would come.

A day when His feet would stand on the Mount of Olives.

A day when living waters would flow from Jerusalem.

A day when the Lord would be King over all the earth.

Centuries would pass before many of those prophecies came into sharper focus.

Then Jesus of Nazareth entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey.

The crowds shouted.

The religious leaders watched.

The disciples wondered.

And the words of Zechariah were being fulfilled before their eyes.

Later, silver would change hands.

A Shepherd would be struck.

The disciples would scatter.

The Messiah would be pierced.

Yet even the cross would not be the end.

Zechariah had already looked beyond rejection.

Beyond suffering.

Beyond the grave.

Beyond the centuries.

He saw a coming day when the Lord would intervene in history with unmistakable power.

He saw Jerusalem at the center of world events.

He saw nations gathered.

He saw judgment fall.

He saw repentance come.

He saw holiness cover the land.

He saw worship rise.

He saw the King reign.

That is the great horizon of Zechariah.

The book begins with a call:

Return to Me.

It moves through visions of restoration.

It reveals the Messiah.

It confronts sin.

It exposes false shepherds.

It promises cleansing.

And it ends with a throne.

The message is both ancient and urgent.

The same God who called His people back then still calls people to Himself today.

The same God who kept His promises in the first coming of Christ will keep every promise concerning His return.

The same King who came in humility will come again in glory.

The first time, He came riding on a donkey.

The next time, He will come as reigning King.

The first time, He was rejected.

The next time, every enemy will answer to Him.

The first time, He wore a crown of thorns.

The next time, He will be revealed as King over all the earth.

Zechariah stands as a prophetic bridge between devastation and restoration, between exile and hope, between the Old Testament expectation of Messiah and the New Testament revelation of Jesus Christ.

It reminds us that God is never finished simply because circumstances look hopeless.

Jerusalem was broken.

The temple was unfinished.

The nation was weak.

The people were discouraged.

Yet heaven had not abandoned them.

God was writing a larger story.

And He still is.

Every generation is tempted to believe that history is spinning beyond control.

Wars rise.

Nations fall.

Leaders change.

Cultures shift.

Fear spreads.

But Zechariah tells us to look beyond the chaos.

There is a throne above the turmoil.

There is a plan behind the history.

There is a promise beyond the present.

And there is a King who is coming.

This commentary begins where Zechariah began: with the Word of the Lord.

We will move through every vision, every warning, every promise, every Messianic prophecy, and every declaration of future glory.

Some passages will challenge us.

Some will comfort us.

Some will confront us.

Some will lift our eyes toward events still to come.

But through every chapter, one truth will remain constant:

God remembers.

God restores.

God redeems.

God reigns.

And the King is coming.

Zechariah Chapter 1 — A Call to Return and Visions of Hope

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

The Book of Zechariah begins with a simple but powerful message:

Return to God.

The people of Judah had returned from Babylonian captivity, but returning to their homeland was not enough. God wanted their hearts.

Jerusalem had been devastated. The temple had been destroyed. The people had experienced the consequences of generations of rebellion. Yet God had not abandoned them.

Through Zechariah, God called His people to repentance and then gave them visions of hope.

The chapter contains three major sections:

1. **A Call to Return to the Lord — verses 1–6**
2. **The Vision of the Horses Among the Myrtle Trees — verses 7–17**
3. **The Vision of the Four Horns and Four Craftsmen — verses 18–21**

The message is clear:

God disciplines His people, but He does not forget them.

He calls them back.

He comforts them.

He restores them.

And He deals with those who oppose them.

I. A CALL TO RETURN TO THE LORD

Zechariah 1:1

“In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah son of Berechiah, the grandson of Iddo the prophet.”

Zechariah's ministry began during the reign of Darius, king of Persia.

Judah was no longer an independent kingdom. The people had returned from Babylon, but they remained under Persian authority.

Politically, Israel appeared weak.

Spiritually, however, God was still speaking.

The phrase **“the word of the Lord came”** reminds us that Zechariah's message originated with God.

Zechariah was not presenting his personal opinions.

He was delivering God's Word.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ezra 5:1 — The prophets Haggai and Zechariah spoke God's message to the Jews living in Judah and Jerusalem.

Haggai 1:1 — During the second year of King Darius, the Lord gave His message through the prophet Haggai.

Nehemiah 12:16 — Zechariah was associated with the priestly family of Iddo.

Spiritual Lesson

God's people may find themselves in difficult circumstances, but God has not stopped speaking through His Word.

Application

Do not measure God's presence by your circumstances.

When life seems uncertain, return to what God has spoken.

Zechariah 1:2

“The Lord was very angry with your ancestors.”

God immediately reminded the new generation of what had happened to their ancestors.

Their ancestors had rebelled against God repeatedly.

God sent prophets.

He warned them.

He called them to repentance.

They refused to listen.

Eventually, judgment came.

Jerusalem was destroyed.

The temple was burned.

Many people were carried into captivity.

God's anger was not irrational or unjust.

It was His righteous response to persistent rebellion.

Cross References in Simple American English

2 Chronicles 36:16 — The people mocked God's messengers, rejected His words, and laughed at His prophets until God's judgment could no longer be delayed.

Isaiah 47:6 — God allowed His people to experience judgment because of their sin.

Lamentations 2:2 — In judgment, the Lord allowed the strongholds of Judah to be brought down.

Principle

God is loving, but His love does not mean that He ignores sin.

Application

Never confuse God's patience with God's approval.

The fact that judgment has not come immediately does not mean rebellion is acceptable.

Zechariah 1:3

“Therefore tell the people: ‘This is what the Lord Almighty says: Return to Me, and I will return to you,’ declares the Lord Almighty.”

This is the central command of the opening section.

Return to Me.

God was calling for repentance.

Biblical repentance is more than feeling sorry.

It means turning.

Turning away from sin.

Turning away from rebellion.

Turning away from self-rule.

And turning back to God.

Notice the promise:

“I will return to you.”

God was ready to restore fellowship with His people.

Cross References in Simple American English

Malachi 3:7 — God said, “Return to Me, and I will return to you.”

Joel 2:12 — God calls His people to return to Him with all their heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning.

James 4:8 — Come near to God, and He will come near to you.

Key Truth

Repentance is not merely turning away from something.

It is turning toward Someone.

Application

Ask yourself:

Is there anything in my life that has caused me to drift away from God?

God's invitation remains:

Return to Me.

Zechariah 1:4

“Do not be like your ancestors, to whom the earlier prophets proclaimed, ‘Turn from your evil ways and your evil deeds.’ But they would not listen or pay attention to Me,” declares the Lord.

The new generation faced a decision.

Would they repeat the sins of the previous generation?

Their ancestors had received repeated warnings.

The problem was not lack of information.

They knew what God had said.

The problem was refusal to listen.

Hearing God's Word without obeying God's Word accomplishes nothing.

Cross References in Simple American English

Jeremiah 25:5 — God's prophets repeatedly told the people to turn away from their evil ways and sinful actions.

2 Kings 17:14 — The people refused to listen and became stubborn like their ancestors.

Ezekiel 18:31 — God told His people to throw away their sins and receive a new heart and spirit.

Principle

Every generation must decide whether it will obey God.

Faithfulness cannot simply be inherited.

Application

You cannot live on someone else's faith.

Your parents' faith cannot replace your faith.

Your pastor's faith cannot replace your faith.

You must personally respond to God.

Zechariah 1:5

“Where are your ancestors now? And the prophets—do they live forever?”

God asked two sobering questions.

The ancestors were gone.

The prophets were gone.

Human life is temporary.

Generations come and go.

Leaders come and go.

Preachers come and go.

Kings come and go.

But God's Word remains.

Cross References in Simple American English

Psalms 90:10 — Human life is brief, and the years quickly pass away.

Job 14:1 — Human beings live only a short time and experience many troubles.

Hebrews 11:13 — The faithful people of earlier generations eventually died, still trusting God's promises.

Spiritual Lesson

Human beings are temporary.

God's truth is permanent.

Application

Build your life on something that will outlive you.

Build your life on God's Word.

Zechariah 1:6

“But My words and decrees, which I commanded My servants the prophets, overtook your ancestors. And they repented and said, ‘The Lord Almighty has done to us what our ways and deeds deserved, just as He determined to do.’”

The people died.

The prophets died.

But God's Word was fulfilled.

Everything God had warned would happen eventually happened.

Babylon came.

Jerusalem fell.

The temple was destroyed.

The nation experienced captivity.

God's Word **“overtook”** them.

They could not escape what God had declared.

Eventually, the people admitted that God's judgment was deserved.

Cross References in Simple American English

Deuteronomy 30:2 — God promised restoration when His people returned to Him and obeyed His voice.

Nehemiah 9:33 — The people confessed that God had been righteous in everything He allowed to happen because they had acted wickedly.

Lamentations 1:18 — Jerusalem acknowledged that the Lord was right because the people had rebelled against His commands.

Key Principle

God always keeps His Word.

His promises are certain.

His warnings are also certain.

Application

Never treat God's warnings lightly.

If God says sin destroys, believe Him.

If God says obedience brings blessing, believe Him.

If God promises forgiveness to the repentant, believe Him.

II. THE VISION OF THE HORSES AMONG THE MYRTLE TREES

Zechariah 1:7

“On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berechiah, the grandson of Iddo.”

Approximately three months after Zechariah's opening message, God spoke again.

What follows is the first of several visions God gave Zechariah.

These visions were intended to encourage a discouraged people.

Jerusalem still looked broken.

The temple was unfinished.

The surrounding nations appeared powerful.

But God wanted His people to understand something:

What they could see was not the whole story.

God was working behind the scenes.

Cross References in Simple American English

Haggai 1:15 — The people had begun rebuilding the temple during the reign of Darius.

Daniel 10:1 — God sometimes revealed future events through visions given during the reigns of earthly kings.

Ezra 6:15 — The rebuilding of the temple would eventually be completed.

Application

Do not assume that God is inactive simply because you cannot see everything He is doing.

Zechariah 1:8

“During the night I had a vision, and there before me was a man riding a red horse. He was standing among the myrtle trees in a ravine. Behind him were red, brown, and white horses.”

Zechariah saw a mysterious scene.

A man was riding a red horse.

Other horses stood behind him.

They were among myrtle trees in a low place.

The horses would soon be identified as agents sent throughout the earth.

Throughout Scripture, horses can symbolize strength, movement, warfare, or divine activity.

The myrtle tree may suggest restoration and blessing.

Cross References in Simple American English

Revelation 6:4 — John saw a red horse associated with judgment and conflict.

Isaiah 55:13 — The myrtle tree is used as a picture of God's restoration and blessing.

Revelation 19:11 — John saw heaven opened and Christ riding a white horse in righteousness and victory.

Spiritual Lesson

God's activity is not limited to what human beings can see.

There is a spiritual dimension to history.

Zechariah 1:9

“I asked, ‘My lord, what are these?’ The angel who was talking with me answered, ‘I will show you what they are.’”

Zechariah did not understand what he saw.

So he asked.

That is important.

There is nothing wrong with admitting that we do not understand something in Scripture.

Zechariah asked for understanding.

The angel explained.

Cross References in Simple American English

Daniel 7:16 — Daniel asked for the meaning of the vision he had received.

Ezekiel 40:4 — Ezekiel was told to pay close attention to everything God showed him.

Revelation 7:13 — John was asked about the meaning of something he saw in his vision.

Principle

Spiritual maturity includes humility.

Sometimes the wisest thing we can say is:

“I do not understand. Lord, teach me.”

Zechariah 1:10

“The man standing among the myrtle trees explained, ‘These are the ones the Lord has sent to go throughout the earth.’”

The horses represented messengers sent by God to survey the earth.

God knew what was happening among the nations.

Nothing escaped His attention.

Kings may think they rule independently.

Armies may think they control history.

Empires may think they are secure.

But God sees all of them.

Cross References in Simple American English

Job 1:7 — Satan reported that he had been moving throughout the earth.

2 Chronicles 16:9 — The eyes of the Lord search throughout the entire earth.

Revelation 5:6 — God's Spirit is pictured as going throughout all the earth.

Key Truth

God sees everything.

Nothing is hidden from Him.

Zechariah 1:11

“And they reported to the angel of the Lord, who was standing among the myrtle trees: ‘We have gone throughout the earth and found the whole world at rest and in peace.’”

The nations were peaceful.

At first, that sounds positive.

But there was a troubling contrast.

The pagan nations were comfortable.

Jerusalem was still devastated.

God's people were struggling while the nations that had oppressed them appeared secure.

That raised the question:

How long would God allow this situation to continue?

Cross References in Simple American English

1 Chronicles 4:40 — Some lands were described as peaceful and secure.

Psalms 46:9 — God has the power to end wars throughout the earth.

Habakkuk 1:3 — Habakkuk also struggled with seeing violence and injustice continue around him.

Application

Sometimes evil appears comfortable while God's people suffer.

Do not mistake temporary peace for God's final verdict.

Zechariah 1:12

“Then the angel of the Lord said, ‘Lord Almighty, how long will You withhold mercy from Jerusalem and the towns of Judah, which You have been angry with these seventy years?’”

Here we hear intercession.

The angel of the Lord asked:

“How long?”

That question appears repeatedly in Scripture.

It is the cry of people waiting for God to act.

The seventy years refer to Judah's period of judgment connected with Babylonian domination and exile.

The question is not whether God will restore Jerusalem.

The question is when.

Cross References in Simple American English

Psalms 79:5 — God's people cried, “How long, Lord? Will Your anger continue forever?”

Daniel 9:2 — Daniel understood from Jeremiah that Jerusalem's desolation would last seventy years.

Revelation 6:10 — Martyrs in heaven cry out, asking how long God will wait before judging evil.

Spiritual Lesson

It is not wrong to ask God, **“How long?”**

Faith sometimes waits.

Faith sometimes cries.

But faith continues trusting.

Zechariah 1:13

“So the Lord spoke kind and comforting words to the angel who talked with me.”

What a beautiful verse.

God's answer was not harsh.

It was comforting.

Judgment was not God's final word to His people.

Comfort was coming.

Restoration was coming.

Jerusalem's story was not over.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 40:1 — God told His messengers to comfort His people.

Isaiah 57:18 — God promised to heal, guide, and restore comfort.

Hosea 2:14 — God spoke tenderly to His people as He drew them back to Himself.

Key Truth

God knows how to speak comfort to discouraged hearts.

Application

When God's discipline has accomplished its purpose, His desire is restoration rather than destruction.

Zechariah 1:14

“Then the angel said to me, ‘Proclaim this message: This is what the Lord Almighty says: I am very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion.’”

God described Himself as jealous for Jerusalem.

Divine jealousy is not sinful envy.

It is God's holy commitment to what belongs to Him.

Israel belonged to God.

Jerusalem had been chosen for His purposes.

God would not permanently abandon His covenant people.

Cross References in Simple American English

Exodus 20:5 — God describes Himself as a jealous God who demands exclusive worship.

2 Corinthians 11:2 — Paul spoke of a godly jealousy for believers because they belonged to Christ.

Joel 2:18 — The Lord was jealous for His land and showed compassion toward His people.

Principle

God desires the undivided devotion of His people.

Application

Ask yourself:

Does God have first place in my heart?

Zechariah 1:15

“And I am very angry with the nations that feel secure. I was only a little angry, but they added to the calamity.”

God had allowed foreign nations to discipline Judah.

But those nations went beyond what God intended.

They acted cruelly.

They became arrogant.

They enjoyed Judah's suffering.

They assumed their power came from themselves.

God held them accountable.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 10:7 — Assyria did not understand that God was using it; its own heart desired destruction.

Obadiah 1:12 — Edom was condemned for rejoicing over Judah's disaster.

Amos 6:1 — God warned those who were comfortable and secure while ignoring spiritual danger.

Important Truth

God may use human rulers and nations to accomplish His purposes, but that does not excuse their wickedness.

God remains sovereign.

Human beings remain responsible.

Zechariah 1:16

“Therefore this is what the Lord says: I have returned to Jerusalem with mercy, and My house will be rebuilt there. The measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem,” declares the Lord Almighty.

Here comes the promise of restoration.

God says:

“I have returned.”

The same God who called the people to return to Him now promised to return to them with mercy.

The temple would be rebuilt.

Jerusalem would be measured for reconstruction.

Destruction would give way to restoration.

Cross References in Simple American English

Jeremiah 31:39 — Jerusalem would once again be measured and rebuilt.

Haggai 1:8 — God commanded the people to rebuild His house so that He would be honored.

Ezekiel 40:3 — Ezekiel saw a heavenly figure holding measuring instruments in a vision of restoration.

Key Phrase

“I have returned to Jerusalem with mercy.”

Spiritual Lesson

God's discipline has a purpose.

For the repentant, discipline can lead to restoration.

Zechariah 1:17

“Proclaim further: This is what the Lord Almighty says: My towns will again overflow with prosperity, and the Lord will again comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem.”

God promised more than survival.

He promised abundance.

The cities that had been devastated would again prosper.

Zion would again experience comfort.

Jerusalem would again experience God's favor.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 51:3 — God promised to comfort Zion and turn her devastated places into something like Eden.

Psalms 132:13 — The Lord chose Zion as the place He desired for His dwelling.

Jeremiah 33:13 — The towns of Judah would once again be inhabited and experience normal life.

Spiritual Lesson

God is able to rebuild what judgment, failure, and tragedy have broken.

Application

Never assume that your present condition must become your permanent condition.

God specializes in restoration.

III. THE VISION OF THE FOUR HORNS AND FOUR CRAFTSMEN

Zechariah 1:18

“Then I looked up, and there before me were four horns.”

Zechariah now saw another vision.

In biblical symbolism, a horn often represents strength, political power, or military authority.

The four horns represented powers that had oppressed God's people.

Cross References in Simple American English

Daniel 7:24 — The horns in Daniel's vision represented kings or kingdoms.

Daniel 8:20 — Daniel was specifically told that horns represented political powers.

Revelation 17:12 — The ten horns in John's vision represented ten kings.

Principle

Human power can appear enormous.

But no earthly power is greater than God.

Zechariah 1:19

“I asked the angel who was speaking to me, ‘What are these?’ He answered, ‘These are the horns that scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.’”

The horns represented powers responsible for scattering God's people.

Various empires had attacked Israel and Judah.

Assyria conquered the northern kingdom.

Babylon destroyed Jerusalem.

Other surrounding nations also participated in Israel's suffering.

The four horns likely symbolize the totality of hostile powers surrounding and oppressing God's people.

Cross References in Simple American English

Jeremiah 52:27 — Judah was carried away from its land into captivity.

Ezekiel 36:19 — God scattered His people among the nations because of their sins.

Daniel 8:22 — Horns can represent kingdoms that rise and exercise political power.

Spiritual Lesson

God knew exactly who had harmed His people.

Their suffering had not gone unnoticed.

Zechariah 1:20

“Then the Lord showed me four craftsmen.”

Now the vision changes.

There were four horns.

But there were also four craftsmen.

For every hostile power that arose, God had an instrument capable of bringing it down.

The word translated **craftsmen** can refer to skilled workers, artisans, smiths, or builders.

The picture is of people equipped to break the power represented by the horns.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 54:16 — God declared that He created the craftsman who works with fire and produces weapons.

Ezekiel 21:31 — God can deliver wicked nations into the hands of people who carry out judgment.

1 Kings 22:19 — Heaven's armies stand before the Lord, ready to carry out His purposes.

Key Truth

For every enemy, God has an answer.

For every proud power, God has the means to bring it down.

Zechariah 1:21

“I asked, ‘What are they coming to do?’ He answered, ‘These are the horns that scattered Judah so that no one could raise their head. But the craftsmen have come to terrify them and throw down these horns of the nations who lifted themselves up against the land of Judah to scatter its people.’”

The meaning becomes clear.

The horns had humiliated Judah.

They had scattered the people so severely that no one could even **“raise their head.”**

That expression pictures defeat, shame, helplessness, and despair.

But God was sending craftsmen against the horns.

The powers that had crushed Judah would themselves be crushed.

The oppressors would not have the final word.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 41:15 — God promised to make His people like a powerful instrument that could crush mountains.

Jeremiah 51:20 — God described an instrument He would use to break nations and kingdoms.

Micah 4:13 — God promised to give Zion strength to crush the power of hostile nations.

Key Principle

No enemy of God remains powerful forever.

Application

When evil appears unstoppable, remember:

God has already prepared the instrument capable of bringing it down.

IV. MAJOR THEMES OF ZECHARIAH 1

1. Repentance

The first message in Zechariah is not about prophecy charts or future kingdoms.

It is about repentance.

Before God revealed His plans for the future, He addressed the spiritual condition of His people.

“Return to Me.”

That remains God's call.

2. The Permanence of God's Word

People die.

Generations disappear.

Governments collapse.

Cultures change.

God's Word remains.

What God says will happen will happen.

3. God's Sovereignty Over the Nations

The horses traveled throughout the earth.

God knew exactly what was happening among the nations.

Nothing was outside His control.

4. God's Compassion for His People

God had disciplined Judah.

Yet discipline was not abandonment.

He spoke **“kind and comforting words.”**

God's heart was moving toward restoration.

5. God's Jealous Love

God was jealous for Jerusalem.

He had not forgotten His covenant.

His jealousy demonstrates His commitment to His people.

6. God's Judgment of Oppressors

The nations had gone too far.

They believed they could abuse God's people without consequences.

They were wrong.

God saw.

God remembered.

God would act.

7. God's Promise of Restoration

The temple would be rebuilt.

Jerusalem would be restored.

The towns would again prosper.

Judgment would not be the final chapter.

V. KEY LESSONS FROM ZECHARIAH 1

1. Return to God, and He will draw near to you.

God calls wandering people back into fellowship with Himself.

2. Learn from previous generations.

We do not have to repeat the spiritual failures of those who came before us.

3. God's Word always stands.

People pass away, but God's truth remains.

4. God sees the whole earth.

Nothing occurring among nations, governments, or individuals escapes His knowledge.

5. God hears the cry, “How long?”

Waiting is difficult, but God's delays never mean that He has forgotten.

6. God comforts His people.

He knows when His children are discouraged and speaks words of hope.

7. God desires exclusive devotion.

He is jealous for the hearts of His people.

8. God holds nations accountable.

No ruler or government is beyond His authority.

9. God can rebuild what has been destroyed.

Jerusalem's ruins were not the end of Jerusalem's story.

10. God has an answer for every enemy.

The four horns were met by four craftsmen.

God was already prepared to deal with those who opposed His purposes.

VI. CHRIST IN ZECHARIAH 1

The Book of Zechariah contains many important Messianic prophecies that become clearer as the book progresses.

Even in Chapter 1, several themes prepare us for Christ.

1. The Angel of the Lord Intercedes

The angel of the Lord asks:

“How long will You withhold mercy from Jerusalem?”

This picture of intercession points us toward the New Testament truth that Jesus Christ intercedes for His people.

Christ is our Advocate with the Father.

2. God Returns in Mercy

God declares:

“I have returned to Jerusalem with mercy.”

The greatest demonstration of God's mercy came when Jesus Christ entered the world.

God did not leave humanity in sin.

He came to save.

3. God Brings Restoration

The restoration of Jerusalem points toward the greater restoration God accomplishes through Christ.

Sin destroys.

Christ restores.

Sin separates.

Christ reconciles.

Sin brings death.

Christ gives life.

VII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Zechariah 1 forces us to ask several personal questions.

Have I drifted from God?

Am I repeating the mistakes of those who came before me?

Am I listening to God's Word without obeying it?

Do I believe God's Word will actually be fulfilled?

Am I discouraged because evil appears comfortable?

Have I mistaken God's delay for God's absence?

Do I believe God can restore what has been broken?

Am I trusting God when circumstances seem beyond my control?

VIII. QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What was God's first major command to the people through Zechariah?

Answer

God commanded them to return to Him. Their greatest need was not political independence or economic prosperity but spiritual restoration.

Question 2

Why did God remind Judah about their ancestors?

Answer

He wanted the new generation to learn from the failures of the previous generation rather than repeat the same rebellion.

Question 3

What does Zechariah 1:6 teach us about God's Word?

Answer

Human beings pass away, but God's Word remains and is always fulfilled.

Question 4

What did the horses among the myrtle trees represent?

Answer

They represented agents sent by God throughout the earth, showing that God knew what was happening among all the nations.

Question 5

Why was the earth's peace troubling?

Answer

The nations that had oppressed Judah were living comfortably while Jerusalem still suffered the consequences of destruction.

Question 6

What does the question “How long?” teach us about prayer?

Answer

Believers may honestly express their pain and longing while continuing to trust God's timing.

Question 7

How did God respond to the request for mercy?

Answer

He answered with kind and comforting words and promised restoration.

Question 8

What does God's jealousy for Jerusalem mean?

Answer

It refers to His holy, covenant love and His determination that His people belong exclusively to Him.

Question 9

Why was God angry with the surrounding nations?

Answer

Although God had allowed them to discipline Judah, they acted with cruelty and arrogance and went beyond what God intended.

Question 10

What did the measuring line over Jerusalem signify?

Answer

It showed that Jerusalem would be rebuilt and restored.

Question 11

What do the four horns represent?

Answer

They symbolize the hostile powers that scattered and oppressed Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

Question 12

What do the four craftsmen represent?

Answer

They represent God's appointed instruments for overthrowing the powers that had oppressed His people.

Question 13

What encouragement does the vision of the craftsmen give believers today?

Answer

No enemy is beyond God's ability to defeat. God always has the power and means necessary to accomplish His purposes.

Question 14

What is the central message of Zechariah 1?

Answer

God calls His people to return to Him, assures them that He has not forgotten them, promises restoration, and declares that He will deal with their enemies.

IX. FINAL THOUGHT

Zechariah Chapter 1 begins with ruins.

A ruined city.

A ruined temple.

A nation that had experienced judgment.

A people surrounded by stronger nations.

But God did not begin by telling them to look at the ruins.

He told them:

“Return to Me.”

Then He showed them that He was still watching.

Still ruling.

Still listening.

Still comforting.

Still judging evil.

Still rebuilding.

Still keeping His promises.

The message of Zechariah 1 is therefore a message of both repentance and hope.

If you have wandered from God:

Return.

If you are discouraged:

Remember that God sees.

If you are waiting:

Remember that God hears.

If something has been broken:

Remember that God restores.

If enemies seem powerful:

Remember the four craftsmen.

No opposition is greater than the God who rules over all.

Key Verse

“Return to Me, and I will return to you,” declares the Lord Almighty. — Zechariah 1:3

Key Phrase

Return to God and trust Him to restore what has been broken.

Zechariah Chapter 2 — Jerusalem Without Walls and God's Dwelling Among His People

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Zechariah Chapter 2 continues the series of visions God gave to encourage His people after their return from Babylonian captivity.

Jerusalem was still weak.

Its walls were broken.

Its population was small.

Its future seemed uncertain.

But God gave Zechariah a vision that revealed something far greater than the present condition of the city.

Jerusalem would grow.

God Himself would protect it.

His glory would dwell within it.

The nations would come to Him.

And the whole earth would one day recognize His sovereign rule.

This chapter moves from **measurement** to **protection**, from **deliverance** to **dwelling**, and from **Jerusalem** to **the nations**.

Its message is one of tremendous hope:

God is not limited by ruined walls, scattered people, or powerful enemies.

He is able to restore, protect, gather, and dwell among His people.

I. THE MAN WITH THE MEASURING LINE

Zechariah 2:1

“Then I looked up and saw a man with a measuring line in his hand.”

Zechariah's next vision begins with a man carrying a measuring line.

In the ancient world, a measuring line was used for surveying land and planning construction.

This image therefore points toward rebuilding and expansion.

Jerusalem had been devastated.

Its buildings were damaged.

Its walls had been destroyed.

But the measuring line suggested that God was not finished with the city.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ezekiel 47:3 — Ezekiel saw a man using a measuring line in a vision connected with God's future restoration.

Jeremiah 31:38 — God promised that Jerusalem would again be rebuilt.

Revelation 21:15 — John saw an angel measuring the New Jerusalem with a golden measuring rod.

Spiritual Lesson

When God begins measuring, He is preparing to build.

Application

What looks ruined to us may already be under God's plan for restoration.

Do not judge the future only by what you see today.

Zechariah 2:2

“I asked him, ‘Where are you going?’ He replied, ‘To measure Jerusalem, to see how wide and how long it is.’”

The man was going to measure Jerusalem.

This was not merely an exercise in surveying.

It symbolized that Jerusalem had a future.

A city that appeared broken and insignificant was being measured for expansion.

God saw something larger than the people could presently imagine.

Cross References in Simple American English

Revelation 21:16 — The New Jerusalem is measured in its length, width, and height.

Ezekiel 45:6 — Land was measured and set aside in God's plans for His people.

Psalm 48:12 — God's people were encouraged to walk around Zion and consider its strength and importance.

Principle

God often sees future potential where we see only present weakness.

Application

Do not allow today's limitations to define what God can do tomorrow.

Zechariah 2:3

“Then the angel who was speaking with me went out, and another angel came to meet him.”

Zechariah again saw heavenly messengers involved in the vision.

The appearance of another angel shows that heaven was actively engaged in communicating God's plan.

Earthly Jerusalem looked weak.

But heavenly activity surrounded it.

Cross References in Simple American English

Daniel 9:21 — The angel Gabriel came quickly to Daniel with understanding.

Genesis 18:2 — Abraham saw heavenly visitors who brought a message from God.

Luke 1:19 — Gabriel told Zechariah that he stood in God's presence and had been sent with a message.

Spiritual Lesson

God's work is often greater than what is visible to human eyes.

Application

Do not assume that silence on earth means inactivity in heaven.

Zechariah 2:4

“And said, ‘Run and tell that young man: “Jerusalem will be a city without walls because of the great number of people and livestock in it.”””

The angel was told to run.

The message was urgent.

Jerusalem's future growth would be so great that ordinary walls would not be able to contain the city.

For a people looking at ruins, this must have sounded almost impossible.

Yet God was promising abundance.

The city that had been emptied would again overflow.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 49:19 — Jerusalem's ruined places would one day become too small because of the number of people living there.

Ezekiel 38:11 — Some future communities are described as living without walls or gates.

Revelation 21:25 — The gates of the New Jerusalem will never need to be shut.

Key Truth

God's restoration can exceed the boundaries of what we think is possible.

Application

Sometimes our plans are too small because our view of God is too small.

Zechariah 2:5

“For I will be a wall of fire around her,” declares the Lord, “and I will be the glory within her.”

This is one of the great promises of Zechariah.

Jerusalem's safety would not ultimately depend upon stone walls.

God Himself would be her protection.

He would be a **wall of fire around her**.

Fire in Scripture can symbolize protection, holiness, judgment, and the presence of God.

But God promised more than external protection.

He also said:

“I will be the glory within her.”

God would protect from the outside and dwell on the inside.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 60:19 — The Lord Himself will be the everlasting light and glory of His people.

Exodus 14:19 — God's presence stood between Israel and the Egyptian army, protecting His people.

Psalms 34:7 — The angel of the Lord surrounds those who fear Him and delivers them.

Key Principle

The safest place is not necessarily behind the strongest wall.

It is in the presence of God.

Application

Security is never ultimately found in money, government, possessions, or human strength.

Our greatest security is God Himself.

II. A CALL TO FLEE AND BE DELIVERED

Zechariah 2:6

“Come! Come! Flee from the land of the north,” declares the Lord, “for I have scattered you to the four winds of heaven.”

God now called His scattered people to return.

The **land of the north** refers primarily to the region of Babylon, from which invaders had historically approached Judah.

Many Jews had already returned to Jerusalem.

Others had remained behind.

God called them to leave exile.

The scattering had occurred under His sovereign judgment.

Now restoration was being offered.

Cross References in Simple American English

Jeremiah 6:22 — An invading nation was described as coming from the north.

Isaiah 43:5 — God promised to gather His children from distant places.

Deuteronomy 30:4 — Even if God's people were scattered to the farthest places, He promised to gather them.

Spiritual Lesson

The God who scatters in discipline can gather in mercy.

Application

When God calls you out of something, do not remain there because it has become familiar.

Zechariah 2:7

“Come, Zion! Escape, you who live with the daughter of Babylon.”

The call becomes personal and urgent.

Escape.

Babylon had been the place of captivity.

Now God's people were told not to become comfortable there.

A place that had once held them against their will could become a place they chose to remain.

That is spiritually dangerous.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 48:20 — God's people were told to leave Babylon and announce that the Lord had redeemed them.

Jeremiah 51:6 — God's people were warned to flee Babylon so they would not be caught in its judgment.

Revelation 18:4 — God's people are called to come out of Babylon so they will not share in its sins and judgment.

Principle

Deliverance must be followed by departure.

Application

God may free a person from bondage, but that person must not keep returning to what once enslaved him.

Zechariah 2:8

“For this is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘After the Glorious One has sent Me against the nations that have plundered you—for whoever touches you touches the apple of His eye—’”

This verse reveals how precious God's people are to Him.

The expression **“apple of His eye”** refers to the pupil of the eye, one of the most sensitive and carefully protected parts of the body.

To attack God's people is pictured as touching something precious to Him.

This does not mean God's people never suffer.

They had suffered greatly.

But it means their suffering was never unnoticed.

Cross References in Simple American English

Deuteronomy 32:10 — God guarded Israel like the pupil of His eye.

Psalms 17:8 — David asked God to protect him like the apple of His eye.

Genesis 12:3 — God promised that those who blessed Abraham would be blessed and those who cursed him would face judgment.

Key Truth

God's people are precious to Him.

Application

You may feel forgotten by others.

You are not forgotten by God.

Zechariah 2:9

“I will surely raise My hand against them so that their slaves will plunder them. Then you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent Me.”

The nations that had plundered God's people would themselves be plundered.

This is a recurring biblical principle.

Human power is temporary.

Empires rise.

Empires fall.

Those who abuse others often discover that their power does not last forever.

God's judgment would confirm the truth of His message.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 14:2 — Those who had oppressed God's people would one day experience reversal.

Exodus 12:36 — The Egyptians gave possessions to Israel as the people left Egypt.

Habakkuk 2:8 — Those who plunder nations will eventually be plundered themselves.

Spiritual Lesson

God can reverse situations that appear completely one-sided.

Application

Never confuse temporary power with permanent victory.

III. GOD’S PROMISE TO DWELL WITH HIS PEOPLE

Zechariah 2:10

“Shout and be glad, Daughter Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you,” declares the Lord.

The chapter now reaches one of its most important promises.

God says:

“I am coming.”

And:

“I will live among you.”

This is the heart of God's covenant purpose.

God's greatest gift is not merely protection.

It is His presence.

Cross References in Simple American English

Zephaniah 3:14 — God's people are told to sing and rejoice because the Lord is with them.

John 1:14 — The eternal Word became flesh and lived among us.

Isaiah 12:6 — God's people are told to shout for joy because the Holy One of Israel is among them.

Christ Connection

This verse points powerfully toward Jesus Christ.

John 1:14 tells us that the Word became flesh and **dwelt among us**.

God's promise to dwell with His people ultimately finds its greatest fulfillment in Christ.

Application

The greatest blessing God can give is Himself.

Zechariah 2:11

“Many nations will be joined with the Lord in that day and will become My people. I will live among you and you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent Me to you.”

God's plan was never limited to one ethnic nation.

Through Israel, blessing would extend to many nations.

People from many nations would be joined to the Lord.

They would become His people.

This anticipates the worldwide scope of the gospel.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 56:7 — God's house would become a house of prayer for all nations.

Ephesians 2:19 — Gentile believers are no longer strangers but members of God's household.

Revelation 21:3 — God will dwell with His people, and they will belong to Him.

Major Doctrine

God's redemptive plan includes people from every nation.

Application

The gospel is not for one race, one culture, or one country.

Jesus Christ is gathering a people from all nations.

Zechariah 2:12

“The Lord will inherit Judah as His portion in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem.”

Judah belonged to God.

Jerusalem had suffered judgment.

But rejection was not final.

God would again demonstrate His choice and favor.

The phrase “**His portion**” emphasizes possession.

God was reclaiming what belonged to Him.

Cross References in Simple American English

Deuteronomy 32:9 — The Lord's people are described as His special portion.

Psalms 78:68 — God chose Judah and Mount Zion.

Psalms 132:14 — God declared Zion to be the place He desired for His dwelling.

Spiritual Lesson

God's discipline does not cancel His purposes.

Application

Failure does not necessarily mean God's story with you is finished.

Repentance can become the doorway to restoration.

Zechariah 2:13

“Be still before the Lord, all mankind, because He has risen from His holy dwelling.”

The chapter closes with silence.

After all the promises, warnings, and visions, the proper response is reverence.

God has risen to act.

Human beings are told to be still.

This is not empty silence.

It is awe before divine majesty.

Cross References in Simple American English

Habakkuk 2:20 — The Lord is in His holy temple; all the earth should be silent before Him.

Psalms 46:10 — Be still and know that He is God.

Zechariah 1:7 — Be silent before the Lord because the day of His action is near.

Key Principle

There are moments when faith speaks.

There are also moments when faith becomes silent before the greatness of God.

Application

We do not always need more words.

Sometimes we need deeper reverence.

IV. MAJOR THEMES OF ZECHARIAH 2

1. God Plans Restoration

The measuring line showed that Jerusalem had a future.

God was not preserving ruins.

He was preparing restoration.

2. God Himself Is Our Protection

Jerusalem's greatest defense would not be stone.

God would be a wall of fire around her.

3. God's Presence Is Greater Than God's Gifts

God did not merely promise prosperity.

He promised:

“I will live among you.”

The presence of God is the greatest blessing.

4. God's People Must Leave Babylon

God called His people out of the place of captivity.

Spiritual freedom requires separation from what enslaves us.

5. God's People Are Precious to Him

Whoever touched them touched the apple of His eye.

God notices what happens to those who belong to Him.

6. God Judges Oppressors

The nations that plundered Judah would eventually experience judgment themselves.

7. God's Plan Includes the Nations

Many nations would be joined to the Lord.

This anticipates the worldwide gospel mission.

8. God Will Dwell with His People

The chapter looks forward to God's presence among His people in a profound way.

This theme reaches its fulfillment in Christ and ultimately in the New Jerusalem.

V. CHRIST IN ZECHARIAH 2

Zechariah 2 contains several themes that point directly toward Jesus Christ.

1. God Comes to Dwell Among His People

Zechariah 2:10 says:

“I am coming, and I will live among you.”

John 1:14 says:

“The Word became flesh and lived among us.”

Jesus is God dwelling with humanity.

2. The Nations Become God's People

Zechariah foretells that many nations will join themselves to the Lord.

Through the gospel, Jews and Gentiles are brought together in Christ.

The church demonstrates that God's salvation reaches every nation.

3. God's Glory Dwells Within

God promised to be “**the glory within**” Jerusalem.

Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God's glory.

John tells us that the disciples saw His glory.

4. God Protects His People

The wall of fire anticipates the divine protection of God's people.

Christ promises that His church will endure and that the gates of hell will not overcome it.

VI. KEY LESSONS FROM ZECHARIAH 2

1. God's plans are bigger than our present circumstances.

Jerusalem looked small, but God saw expansion.

2. God Himself is the greatest protection of His people.

Walls can fall.

God does not.

3. God's presence is the believer's greatest treasure.

He promised not merely to bless His people but to dwell among them.

4. God calls His people out of bondage.

Freedom requires leaving the place of captivity.

5. God's people are precious to Him.

They are described as the apple of His eye.

6. God can reverse the power of oppressors.

Those who plundered would themselves be plundered.

7. God's salvation reaches the nations.

Many nations will become His people.

8. God remains faithful to His purposes.

Judah would remain His portion.

Jerusalem would again be chosen.

9. God deserves reverence.

When He rises to act, all humanity should stand in awe.

VII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Zechariah 2 challenges us to ask:

Am I measuring my future by present circumstances rather than God's promises?

Where am I looking for security?

Have I become comfortable in a place God has called me to leave?

Do I really believe that I am precious to God?

Am I trusting God's justice when others seem to prosper through wrongdoing?

Do I value God's presence more than His blessings?

Do I understand that God's saving purpose reaches people from every nation?

Do I know how to become silent and reverent before God?

VIII. QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What did the measuring line represent?

Answer

It represented God's intention to rebuild, expand, and restore Jerusalem.

Question 2

Why would Jerusalem become a city without walls?

Answer

Because its population and livestock would become too numerous to be contained within ordinary boundaries.

Question 3

What did God promise to be around Jerusalem?

Answer

God promised to be a wall of fire around her.

Question 4

What did God promise to be within Jerusalem?

Answer

He promised to be the glory within her.

Question 5

Why did God tell His people to flee Babylon?

Answer

Because Babylon was a place of captivity and coming judgment. God's people were being called back to the land He had given them.

Question 6

What does the phrase “apple of His eye” teach us?

Answer

It teaches that God's people are precious to Him and that He takes their mistreatment seriously.

Question 7

What would happen to the nations that had plundered Judah?

Answer

God would judge them and reverse their position so that they themselves would be plundered.

Question 8

Why was Zion told to rejoice?

Answer

Because God promised to come and dwell among His people.

Question 9

How does Zechariah 2:10 point toward Jesus Christ?

Answer

It points toward the incarnation, when God the Son came into the world and lived among humanity.

Question 10

What does verse 11 teach about God's plan for the nations?

Answer

It teaches that many nations would be joined to the Lord and become His people.

Question 11

What does Judah being God's portion mean?

Answer

It means Judah belonged uniquely to God and remained part of His covenant purposes.

Question 12

Why does the chapter end with a command to be still?

Answer

Because God had risen to act, and the proper response of humanity was reverence, awe, and silence before Him.

IX. FINAL THOUGHT

Zechariah Chapter 2 begins with a measuring line and ends with the whole earth standing silent before God.

Between those two images is an extraordinary message of hope.

Jerusalem looked broken.

God saw a city overflowing with people.

The walls were gone.

God promised to become a wall of fire.

The temple glory had departed.

God promised:

“I will be the glory within her.”

The people had been scattered.

God called them home.

The nations had plundered them.

God promised justice.

And then God announced something even greater:

“I am coming, and I will live among you.”

That is the heart of the chapter.

God's greatest promise is not simply that circumstances will improve.

His greatest promise is His presence.

For the believer, that truth reaches its fullest expression in Jesus Christ.

God came near.

The Word became flesh.

He dwelt among us.

And one day the promise will reach its final fulfillment when God dwells forever with His redeemed people.

Until then:

Trust His protection.

Leave the places of bondage.

Remember that you are precious to Him.

Rejoice in His presence.

And stand in reverent awe before the God who rises from His holy dwelling.

Key Verse

“For I will be a wall of fire around her,” declares the Lord, “and I will be the glory within her.” — Zechariah 2:5

Key Phrase

God surrounds His people with protection and fills them with His presence.

Zechariah Chapter 3 — Joshua Cleansed and the Coming Branch

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Zechariah Chapter 3 is one of the clearest Old Testament pictures of guilt, accusation, cleansing, restoration, and the coming Messiah.

The chapter opens like a courtroom scene.

Joshua the high priest stands before the angel of the Lord.

Satan stands nearby to accuse him.

Joshua is wearing filthy garments.

He has no defense to offer.

Yet the Lord intervenes.

Satan is rebuked.

Joshua's filthy garments are removed.

His guilt is taken away.

Clean garments are placed upon him.

Then God gives Joshua a charge to walk faithfully and introduces one of the great Messianic titles of Scripture:

The Branch.

This chapter moves from **accusation** to **cleansing**, from **cleansing** to **service**, and from **service** to **Messianic hope**.

Its central message is powerful:

Satan accuses, but God cleanses and restores those whom He has chosen.

I. JOSHUA BEFORE THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

Zechariah 3:1

“Then the Lord showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan was standing at his right hand to accuse him.”

Zechariah sees Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord.

Joshua represented the priesthood and, in an important sense, the people of Israel.

But Satan was also present.

His purpose was accusation.

The name **Satan** means adversary or accuser.

This scene reveals something Scripture teaches elsewhere:

Satan attacks God's people not only through temptation, but also through accusation.

He points to guilt.

He points to failure.

He points to sin.

He tries to use what is true about our failures to produce hopeless condemnation.

Cross References in Simple American English

Job 1:6 — Satan appeared among the heavenly beings before the Lord and challenged Job's integrity.

Revelation 12:10 — Satan is called the accuser of believers, accusing them before God day and night.

Psalms 109:6 — An accuser is pictured standing at a person's right hand to bring charges.

Spiritual Lesson

Satan's strategy often includes accusation.

Application

When conviction leads you to repentance, it is from God.

When accusation tells you there is no hope, no forgiveness, and no way back, remember that Christ provides an answer to condemnation.

Zechariah 3:2

“The Lord said to Satan, ‘The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man like a burning stick snatched from the fire?’”

Joshua does not defend himself.

God defends him.

This is crucial.

The Lord does not say Joshua is innocent.

The filthy garments in the next verse prove otherwise.

Instead, God appeals to His own choice and His rescuing grace.

Joshua is described as:

“a burning stick snatched from the fire.”

The picture is of something nearly consumed but rescued before destruction.

Judah had experienced devastating judgment.

Jerusalem had burned.

The temple had been destroyed.

The people had gone into exile.

Yet God had preserved a remnant.

Joshua represented a people rescued by grace.

Cross References in Simple American English

Jude 1:9 — Michael the archangel said to the devil, “The Lord rebuke you.”

Amos 4:11 — God described some of His people as being like a burning stick pulled from the fire.

1 Corinthians 3:15 — Paul describes someone being saved as through fire, even though much is lost.

Key Truth

God's people are saved because of His grace, not because they can prove themselves innocent.

Application

When Satan reminds you of what you were, remember what God has rescued you from.

Zechariah 3:3

“Now Joshua was clothed in filthy garments as he stood before the angel.”

The filthy garments symbolize guilt and defilement.

Joshua was the high priest.

Under normal circumstances, the high priest wore holy garments designed for service before God.

But in Zechariah's vision, Joshua's clothing was polluted.

This was not merely a personal problem.

As high priest, he represented the spiritual condition of the nation.

The people had sinned.

The priesthood had been defiled.

The nation needed cleansing.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 64:6 — Human righteousness, apart from God's grace, is like filthy clothing.

Revelation 3:4 — Some believers are described as not having stained their garments and therefore walking with Christ in white.

Isaiah 6:5 — Isaiah recognized his own uncleanness when he stood before the holiness of God.

Spiritual Lesson

Sin is not merely an action.

It produces guilt and defilement before a holy God.

Application

We cannot cleanse ourselves by pretending our garments are clean.

We need God to remove the guilt.

Zechariah 3:4

“The angel said to those standing by, ‘Take off his filthy clothes.’ Then he said to Joshua, ‘See, I have taken away your sin, and I will clothe you with fine garments.’”

This is the turning point of the chapter.

Joshua does not remove his own garments.

God commands that they be removed.

Then the meaning is explained:

“I have taken away your sin.”

This is a picture of divine forgiveness.

God does more than expose sin.

He removes guilt.

Then Joshua receives fine garments.

This represents restoration, righteousness, and renewed fitness for service.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 61:10 — God clothes His people with salvation and covers them with righteousness.

Revelation 7:14 — The redeemed are pictured in robes made clean through the blood of the Lamb.

Luke 15:22 — The father of the prodigal son orders the best robe to be placed on his returning son.

Key Principle

God does not merely forgive the sinner.

He also restores the sinner.

Application

Forgiveness is more than having guilt erased.

In Christ, the believer receives a new standing before God.

Zechariah 3:5

“I said, ‘Put a clean turban on his head.’ So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the Lord stood by.”

The clean turban completed Joshua's restoration to priestly service.

The high priest's turban had special significance.

According to the Law, a gold plate was attached to it bearing the words:

“Holy to the Lord.”

Joshua had been defiled.

Now he was restored to holiness and service.

Notice that the angel of the Lord remained present throughout the process.

Cross References in Simple American English

Exodus 28:36 — The high priest wore a gold plate engraved with the words “Holy to the Lord.”

Ezekiel 44:18 — Priests were instructed concerning proper priestly head coverings.

Isaiah 61:10 — God's salvation is pictured as being clothed in beautiful garments.

Spiritual Lesson

God cleanses His servants so they can serve Him.

Application

Grace does not merely rescue us from judgment.

Grace prepares us for useful service.

II. GOD’S CHARGE AND PROMISE TO JOSHUA

Zechariah 3:6

“The angel of the Lord gave this solemn command to Joshua.”

Cleansing was followed by responsibility.

Joshua had been forgiven and restored.

Now he was charged to live faithfully.

This order is important.

God did not tell Joshua to obey in order to earn cleansing.

He cleansed Joshua first.

Then He called him to obedience.

Cross References in Simple American English

1 Timothy 5:21 — Paul gives Timothy a solemn charge before God and the angels.

Numbers 3:8 — Priests and Levites were entrusted with responsibilities connected with God's sanctuary.

Leviticus 8:35 — Priests were required to remain faithful to God's instructions concerning their service.

Principle

Grace comes before service.

Application

We do not obey God in order to become accepted.

We obey because He has shown us grace.

Zechariah 3:7

“This is what the Lord Almighty says: If you walk in My ways and keep My charge, then you will govern My house and have charge of My courts, and I will give you a place among those standing here.”

Joshua's continued usefulness in priestly service required faithful obedience.

Two responsibilities appear:

Walk in My ways.

Keep My charge.

The first concerns personal conduct.

The second concerns faithful service.

God promised Joshua authority and access if he remained faithful.

Cross References in Simple American English

1 Kings 2:3 — David told Solomon to walk in God's ways and keep His commands.

Hebrews 3:6 — Christ is faithful over God's house, and believers belong to that house.

Revelation 3:21 — Christ promises the overcomer a place with Him in His rule.

Key Truth

Spiritual privilege carries spiritual responsibility.

Application

Those who lead God's people must first learn to walk faithfully before God.

Zechariah 3:8

“Listen, High Priest Joshua, you and your associates sitting before you, who are symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring My servant, the Branch.”

Now the vision moves beyond Joshua.

Joshua and the priests were **signs** pointing toward something greater.

God announces:

“I am going to bring My servant, the Branch.”

The title **Branch** is Messianic.

It refers to a coming descendant of David who would rule in righteousness.

Joshua's priesthood pointed forward.

The coming Messiah would fulfill God's saving purpose perfectly.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 4:2 — The Branch of the Lord is described as beautiful and glorious.

Jeremiah 23:5 — God promised to raise up a righteous Branch from David who would reign wisely.

Jeremiah 33:15 — God promised a righteous Branch who would carry out justice and righteousness.

Christ Connection

The Branch is Jesus Christ.

He is the promised Messiah.

He is the righteous King.

He is also the great High Priest who perfectly represents His people before God.

Application

Every earthly priesthood points beyond itself.

Our final hope is not in human religious leadership.

It is in Christ.

Zechariah 3:9

“See, the stone I have set before Joshua! There are seven eyes on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it,” declares the Lord Almighty, “and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day.”

This is one of the most profound verses in the chapter.

God introduces a **stone**.

In Scripture, the Messiah is often pictured as a stone.

The **seven eyes** symbolize perfect knowledge and complete divine awareness.

Then comes the remarkable promise:

“I will remove the sin of this land in a single day.”

This language points strongly toward the once-for-all work of Christ.

At the cross, Jesus offered Himself as the sacrifice for sin.

The work was decisive.

The sacrifice was sufficient.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 28:16 — God promised to place a tested and precious cornerstone in Zion.

Revelation 5:6 — The Lamb is pictured with seven eyes, representing the fullness of the Spirit and complete knowledge.

Hebrews 9:26 — Christ appeared once to remove sin by sacrificing Himself.

Key Doctrine

Christ's sacrifice is sufficient to deal with sin.

Application

The gospel does not teach that we must repeatedly provide payment for our guilt.

Christ's sacrifice accomplished what human effort never could.

Zechariah 3:10

“In that day each of you will invite your neighbor to sit under your vine and fig tree,” declares the Lord Almighty.”

The chapter ends with peace.

The image of sitting under one's own vine and fig tree was a common biblical picture of security, prosperity, rest, and blessing.

After cleansing comes peace.

After judgment comes restoration.

After guilt is removed, fellowship becomes possible.

Cross References in Simple American English

Micah 4:4 — In God's kingdom, people will sit under their vines and fig trees without fear.

1 Kings 4:25 — During Solomon's peaceful reign, Judah and Israel lived securely under their vines and fig trees.

John 1:48 — Jesus told Nathanael that He saw him under the fig tree.

Spiritual Lesson

God's salvation ultimately leads to peace.

Application

The peace God gives is deeper than comfortable circumstances.

It begins with peace between the sinner and God.

III. MAJOR THEMES OF ZECHARIAH 3

1. Satan Is the Accuser

Satan stands ready to accuse.

He points toward guilt and failure.

But accusation is not the final word for those whom God has cleansed.

2. God Is the Defender

Joshua had no defense of his own.

The Lord rebuked Satan.

Salvation rests upon God's intervention.

3. Sin Defiles

The filthy garments reveal the seriousness of sin.

Sin cannot simply be ignored or covered by human effort.

4. God Removes Guilt

Joshua's dirty garments were removed.

God declared:

“I have taken away your sin.”

Forgiveness originates with God.

5. God Clothes His People

God did not leave Joshua exposed after removing the filthy garments.

He clothed him in clean garments.

This points toward the righteousness God provides.

6. Grace Leads to Obedience

Joshua was cleansed first.

Then he was commanded to walk faithfully.

Biblical obedience is a response to grace.

7. The Priesthood Points to Christ

Joshua and his companions were signs.

Their ministry anticipated the coming Branch.

8. The Branch Is the Messiah

The Branch is a clear Old Testament title for the coming Davidic Messiah.

Jesus fulfills that hope.

9. Sin Will Be Removed

God promised to remove sin in one day.

The cross provides the decisive fulfillment of that promise.

10. Salvation Leads to Peace

The final picture is one of rest beneath the vine and fig tree.

God's redemptive purpose ends in peace, fellowship, and security.

IV. CHRIST IN ZECHARIAH 3

Zechariah Chapter 3 is saturated with themes that point toward Jesus Christ.

1. Christ Answers the Accuser

Satan accuses.

But Christ is the believer's Advocate.

The believer's answer to condemnation is not personal perfection.

It is the finished work of Jesus Christ.

2. Christ Removes Our Filthy Garments

Joshua could not clean himself.

God removed his garments.

Likewise, sinners cannot remove their own guilt.

Christ cleanses.

3. Christ Clothes Us in Righteousness

The clean garments picture a new standing before God.

The believer is accepted because of what Christ has done.

4. Christ Is the Branch

Jesus is the righteous descendant of David promised by the prophets.

He fulfills God's covenant promises.

5. Christ Is the Stone

Scripture repeatedly identifies Christ as the cornerstone.

He is the foundation of God's redemptive work.

6. Christ Removes Sin

Zechariah promises:

“I will remove the sin of this land in a single day.”

At Calvary, Jesus offered the once-for-all sacrifice for sin.

V. THE GOSPEL PICTURE IN ZECHARIAH 3

This chapter presents the gospel in picture form.

The sinner stands guilty.

Joshua is wearing filthy garments.

The accuser brings charges.

Satan stands ready to condemn.

God intervenes.

The Lord rebukes the accuser.

Guilt is removed.

The filthy garments are taken away.

Righteousness is provided.

Clean garments are given.

The cleansed person is called to serve.

Joshua receives a new charge.

The Messiah is promised.

God announces the Branch.

Sin is removed decisively.

God promises cleansing in one day.

This is the movement of grace:

Guilt → Grace → Cleansing → Righteousness → Service → Hope.

VI. KEY LESSONS FROM ZECHARIAH 3

1. Satan accuses, but God defends.

The believer's security rests in God's grace.

2. Sin cannot be hidden before God.

Joshua's filthy garments revealed his condition.

3. God alone can remove guilt.

Joshua did not cleanse himself.

4. God restores those He forgives.

The filthy garments were replaced with clean ones.

5. Grace leads to obedience.

Joshua was cleansed before he was charged to serve.

6. Spiritual leadership requires faithfulness.

Joshua was called to walk in God's ways and keep His charge.

7. The Branch points to Jesus Christ.

The Messiah is the ultimate hope of God's people.

8. Christ's sacrifice deals decisively with sin.

God promised to remove sin in one day.

9. God's salvation produces peace.

The chapter ends with people resting securely under vine and fig tree.

VII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Zechariah 3 challenges us to ask:

Am I listening more to Satan's accusations than to God's promises?

Am I trying to clean myself rather than trusting God's grace?

Have I forgotten how serious sin is?

Do I understand that forgiveness should lead to obedience?

Am I walking faithfully in the responsibilities God has given me?

Is my confidence resting in Jesus Christ, the Branch?

Do I believe Christ's sacrifice is sufficient for my sin?

Am I living like someone who has truly been cleansed?

VIII. QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Who was standing before the angel of the Lord?

Answer

Joshua the high priest.

Question 2

What was Satan doing?

Answer

He was standing beside Joshua to accuse him.

Question 3

How did the Lord respond to Satan?

Answer

The Lord rebuked Satan and defended Joshua as one whom He had rescued.

Question 4

What did the burning stick represent?

Answer

It represented someone rescued from destruction. Joshua and the restored community had been preserved by God's grace.

Question 5

What did Joshua's filthy garments represent?

Answer

They represented guilt, sin, and spiritual defilement.

Question 6

Who removed Joshua's filthy garments?

Answer

God commanded that they be removed.

Question 7

What did the clean garments represent?

Answer

They represented forgiveness, restoration, and a new standing before God.

Question 8

Why was the clean turban important?

Answer

It represented Joshua's restored priestly holiness and readiness to serve.

Question 9

What responsibility did Joshua receive after cleansing?

Answer

He was commanded to walk in God's ways and faithfully carry out his priestly responsibilities.

Question 10

Who is “the Branch”?

Answer

The Branch is the promised Messiah, ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Question 11

What does the stone represent?

Answer

It points toward God's appointed foundation and, in the broader biblical witness, toward the Messiah as the cornerstone.

Question 12

What is significant about the phrase “in a single day”?

Answer

It anticipates the decisive removal of sin accomplished through Christ's once-for-all sacrifice.

Question 13

What does sitting under the vine and fig tree symbolize?

Answer

It symbolizes peace, security, blessing, and fellowship under God's rule.

Question 14

What is the central message of Zechariah 3?

Answer

God answers Satan's accusation, removes the guilt of His people, restores them for service, and promises the coming Messiah who will deal decisively with sin.

IX. FINAL THOUGHT

Zechariah Chapter 3 begins with an accused man wearing filthy garments.

It ends with a promise of peace.

That transformation happens because God acts.

Joshua does not defeat Satan.

God rebukes him.

Joshua does not remove his guilt.

God takes it away.

Joshua does not provide clean garments.

God clothes him.

Joshua does not create his own future.

God promises the Branch.

This is grace.

The believer's hope is not that Satan has nothing to accuse.

Our hope is that God has provided an answer to the accusation.

Jesus Christ is that answer.

He is the Branch.

He is the righteous One.

He is the great High Priest.

He is the cornerstone.

He is the sacrifice for sin.

And through Him, filthy garments are exchanged for righteousness.

So when the accuser speaks, remember who speaks louder.

When guilt overwhelms you, remember who removes sin.

When failure makes you feel unusable, remember that God restores.

When the future seems uncertain, remember the Branch.

And when you wonder whether your sin can truly be forgiven, remember the promise:

God can remove sin in a single day.

At the cross, Jesus Christ accomplished the sacrifice that makes forgiveness possible.

Key Verse

**“See, I have taken away your sin, and I will clothe you with fine garments.” —
Zechariah 3:4**

Key Phrase

Satan accuses, but God cleanses, restores, and points us to Christ.

Zechariah Chapter 4 — The Golden Lampstand and God’s Spirit

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Zechariah Chapter 4 contains one of the most memorable statements in the entire Old Testament:

“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit.”

The people of Judah had returned from exile, but the work before them was difficult.

The temple still needed to be completed.

Opposition remained.

Resources were limited.

Discouragement was real.

Zerubbabel, the governor, had begun the work, but the task looked overwhelming.

Into that setting, God gave Zechariah a vision of a golden lampstand supplied continually with oil from two olive trees.

The message was unmistakable:

God’s work must be accomplished in God’s power.

Human strength was not enough.

Political influence was not enough.

Financial resources were not enough.

Natural ability was not enough.

What Zerubbabel needed was the empowering presence of the Spirit of God.

This chapter teaches us that when God calls His people to accomplish something, He also supplies what is necessary to complete it.

I. THE VISION OF THE GOLDEN LAMPSTAND

Zechariah 4:1

“Then the angel who talked with me came back and woke me, as one is awakened from sleep.”

Zechariah had been receiving a series of visions.

Now the interpreting angel returned and awakened him.

This does not necessarily mean that Zechariah had been physically sleeping. The language may describe his condition after the intensity of the previous vision.

He was brought back to full alertness so that he could receive another message from God.

Cross References in Simple American English

Daniel 8:18 — Daniel fell into a deep condition during a vision, and the angel touched him and helped him stand.

Daniel 10:9 — Daniel fell into a deep sleep-like state while receiving a revelation.

Ephesians 5:14 — Believers are called to wake from spiritual sleep and live in the light of Christ.

Spiritual Lesson

There are times when God's people need to be spiritually awakened.

Application

It is possible to become spiritually dull even while surrounded by spiritual things.

Ask God to awaken your heart to hear His Word clearly.

Zechariah 4:2

“He asked me, ‘What do you see?’ I replied, ‘I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl on top, and seven lamps on it, with seven pipes to the lamps.’”

Zechariah saw a golden lampstand.

This image would remind Jewish readers of the lampstand in the tabernacle and temple.

The lampstand represented light.

But this lampstand was unusual.

It had a bowl above it and a system of pipes feeding oil into the lamps.

The picture is one of continual supply.

The lamps did not depend upon repeated human effort to keep them burning.

Oil was being provided constantly.

Cross References in Simple American English

Exodus 25:31 — God commanded Israel to make a lampstand from pure gold for the tabernacle.

Revelation 1:12 — John saw golden lampstands representing churches.

Revelation 4:5 — Seven lamps of fire burned before God's throne, symbolizing the fullness of the Spirit of God.

Key Truth

Light requires continual supply.

Application

The believer cannot shine spiritually through yesterday's strength.

We need continual dependence upon God.

Zechariah 4:3

“There are also two olive trees by it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on the left.”

Two olive trees stood beside the lampstand.

Olive oil was commonly used to fuel lamps.

Instead of workers repeatedly pouring oil into the lampstand, the trees themselves appear to provide the supply.

This is a picture of uninterrupted provision.

God was showing that His work would not depend upon human resources alone.

Cross References in Simple American English

Revelation 11:4 — Two witnesses are described as two olive trees and two lampstands standing before the Lord.

Psalms 52:8 — David compared himself to a flourishing olive tree in God's house.

Romans 11:17 — Paul used the olive tree as a picture connected with God's covenant blessings.

Spiritual Lesson

God does not command His people to serve Him without providing spiritual resources.

Application

If God has called you to a task, depend upon His supply rather than your own strength.

Zechariah 4:4

“I asked the angel who talked with me, ‘What are these, my lord?’”

Zechariah did not understand the vision.

Once again, he asked.

This pattern appears repeatedly in his visions.

He did not pretend to know what he did not know.

Cross References in Simple American English

Daniel 12:8 — Daniel heard a revelation but did not understand it, so he asked for explanation.

Ezekiel 37:3 — Ezekiel admitted that God alone knew the answer to what he was seeing.

Revelation 7:13 — John was questioned about the meaning of a vision and received an explanation.

Principle

A teachable heart is willing to ask questions.

Application

Do not be embarrassed when you do not understand a difficult passage.

Study.

Pray.

Ask.

Seek understanding.

Zechariah 4:5

“He answered, ‘Don’t you know what these are?’ And I said, ‘No, my lord.’”

The angel's question emphasizes that the vision required interpretation.

Zechariah responded honestly.

“No, my lord.”

Spiritual understanding begins with humility.

Cross References in Simple American English

Acts 8:31 — The Ethiopian official admitted that he needed someone to help him understand Scripture.

John 3:9 — Nicodemus asked Jesus how the things He described could happen.

Daniel 8:16 — Daniel needed angelic explanation to understand what he had seen.

Spiritual Lesson

God teaches those who are willing to admit their need.

II. NOT BY MIGHT, BUT BY MY SPIRIT

Zechariah 4:6

“So he said to me, ‘This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the Lord Almighty.’”

This is the central verse of the chapter.

Zerubbabel faced a massive task.

The temple needed to be rebuilt.

Opposition had slowed the work.

Resources were limited.

Humanly speaking, the project looked too difficult.

God's answer was not:

Work harder.

Find a larger army.

Gain more political influence.

Become more powerful.

Instead, God said:

“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit.”

The word **might** can refer to collective strength, armies, resources, or human forces.

The word **power** can refer to individual strength or ability.

God was telling Zerubbabel that the completion of the temple would happen through divine empowerment.

Cross References in Simple American English

Psalms 20:7 — Some trust in chariots and horses, but God's people trust in the name of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 1:27 — God often chooses what appears weak in order to shame what appears strong.

2 Corinthians 12:9 — God's power is made perfect in human weakness.

Key Principle

God's work cannot be accomplished merely through human strength.

Application

You may have talent.

You may have education.

You may have resources.

You may have experience.

But none of those can replace dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

Zechariah 4:7

**“What are you, mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground.
Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’”**

The **mighty mountain** represents overwhelming opposition.

To Zerubbabel, the obstacles looked like a mountain.

To God, they were nothing.

God promised that the mountain would become level ground.

Then Zerubbabel would bring out the capstone.

The capstone represented completion.

The same man who had started the temple would see it finished.

And when it was completed, the people would shout:

“Grace, grace to it!”

Why grace?

Because everyone would recognize that the work had been completed by God's favor and power.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 40:4 — God promises that mountains and hills will be made low and rough places made smooth.

Isaiah 45:2 — God promised to go before His servant and level obstacles.

Psalms 118:22 — The rejected stone became the chief cornerstone.

Spiritual Lesson

What looks like a mountain to us is not a mountain to God.

Application

Do not judge an obstacle only by its size.

Judge it in light of God's power.

Zechariah 4:8

“Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying:”

The vision now becomes a direct prophetic promise.

God was not leaving Zerubbabel with a vague encouragement.

He was about to give a specific assurance.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ezra 3:10 — Zerubbabel and the people had already begun laying the temple foundation.

Haggai 2:4 — God told Zerubbabel and the people to be strong and continue working because He was with them.

Philippians 1:6 — God is faithful to continue and complete the good work He begins.

Principle

God's promises give strength for difficult assignments.

Zechariah 4:9

“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you.”

This is a direct promise of completion.

Zerubbabel had begun the temple.

Zerubbabel would finish it.

The project would not die halfway through.

God's promise guaranteed the outcome.

The completion of the temple would confirm the truth of the prophetic message.

Cross References in Simple American English

Haggai 2:9 — God promised that the glory of the rebuilt temple would be great.

Nehemiah 6:15 — Another major rebuilding project in Jerusalem was later completed despite opposition.

John 17:4 — Jesus spoke of completing the work the Father had given Him.

Key Truth

When God truly begins a work according to His purpose, He is able to bring it to completion.

Application

Do not abandon an assignment simply because progress is slow.

Faithfulness often requires perseverance.

Zechariah 4:10

“Who dares despise the day of small things? These seven—the eyes of the Lord that range throughout the earth—will rejoice when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.”

Some people looked at the rebuilding project and saw something small.

Compared with Solomon's temple, the new temple appeared unimpressive.

It was easy to become discouraged.

God warned them not to despise small beginnings.

The **plumb line** represented construction in progress.

God rejoiced to see the work moving forward.

The seven eyes represent the fullness of God's knowledge and observation.

He sees everything.

Cross References in Simple American English

2 Chronicles 16:9 — The eyes of the Lord search throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are devoted to Him.

Amos 7:7 — Amos saw the Lord standing with a plumb line, representing careful measurement.

Job 8:7 — Though a beginning may be small, the end can become very great.

Key Principle

Small does not mean insignificant.

Application

Never despise:

A small ministry.

A small church.

A small beginning.

A small opportunity.

A small act of obedience.

God often begins great works in small ways.

III. THE TWO OLIVE TREES

Zechariah 4:11

“Then I asked the angel, ‘What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?’”

Zechariah now returned to the two olive trees.

He understood that they were important but still wanted a clear interpretation.

Cross References in Simple American English

Revelation 11:3 — God appoints two witnesses to serve Him during a future period of judgment.

1 Kings 6:23 — Olive wood was used in the temple.

Exodus 25:32 — The lampstand in the tabernacle had branches extending from its sides.

Spiritual Lesson

God uses symbols to communicate spiritual truth, but the symbols must be interpreted in context.

Zechariah 4:12

“And again I asked, ‘What are these two olive branches that pour out golden oil through two golden pipes?’”

The olive branches were directly supplying oil.

The picture emphasizes continuous provision.

Oil is frequently associated in Scripture with consecration and anointing.

In this vision, the oil most naturally points toward God's Spirit supplying what is necessary for His work.

Cross References in Simple American English

Exodus 27:20 — Pure olive oil was used to keep the lamp burning continually.

Psalms 133:2 — Oil poured upon Aaron pictured consecration and blessing.

James 5:14 — Oil appears in connection with prayer and ministry.

Key Truth

God's servants require continual spiritual supply.

Application

Ministry cannot survive on past anointing.

We need fresh dependence upon God.

Zechariah 4:13

“He replied, ‘Don’t you know what these are?’ I said, ‘No, my lord.’”

Again, Zechariah admits that he does not know.

His humility remains consistent.

Cross References in Simple American English

Mark 4:13 — Jesus questioned His disciples when they did not understand a parable.

Luke 24:25 — Jesus corrected His disciples for being slow to understand what Scripture had revealed.

John 16:12 — Jesus told His disciples that there were things they were not yet ready to understand.

Spiritual Lesson

Understanding often comes gradually.

Application

Do not become discouraged if you do not understand everything immediately.

Continue studying.

Zechariah 4:14

“So he said, ‘These are the two anointed ones who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.’”

The two olive trees represent **two anointed ones**.

In the immediate historical context, these most naturally point to **Joshua the high priest** and **Zerubbabel the governor**.

Joshua represented priestly leadership.

Zerubbabel represented royal or civil leadership from the line of David.

Both had been appointed by God for the restoration of His people.

Together they served under the authority of **“the Lord of the whole earth.”**

Cross References in Simple American English

Revelation 11:4 — Two witnesses are described as olive trees standing before the Lord of the earth.

Deuteronomy 19:15 — Two witnesses establish reliable testimony.

1 Samuel 16:13 — David was anointed, and the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him.

Christ Connection

Joshua and Zerubbabel together point forward to Jesus Christ.

Joshua represents priesthood.

Zerubbabel represents royal authority.

Jesus fulfills both.

He is our great High Priest.

He is also the King from David's line.

Application

God's servants do not stand in their own authority.

They stand before the Lord of the whole earth.

IV. MAJOR THEMES OF ZECHARIAH 4

1. The Holy Spirit Provides the Power

The dominant message is unmistakable:

“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit.”

God's work requires God's power.

2. God Provides Continual Supply

The lampstand was continually supplied with oil.

God does not call His servants to live on empty spiritual reserves.

3. Obstacles Are Not Final

The mountain would become level ground.

No obstacle is greater than God's ability.

4. God Completes His Purposes

Zerubbabel began the temple and would finish it.

God's promise guaranteed completion.

5. Small Beginnings Matter

God warned His people not to despise small things.

What looks insignificant to humans may be important in God's plan.

6. God Sees the Whole Earth

His eyes range throughout the earth.

Nothing escapes His attention.

7. God Uses Anointed Servants

Joshua and Zerubbabel had distinct roles, but both served God's purpose.

V. CHRIST IN ZECHARIAH 4

Zechariah 4 points toward Christ in several important ways.

1. Christ Is the Perfect Spirit-Anointed Servant

Jesus carried out His ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Messiah would not accomplish God's work by mere human force.

2. Christ Is the True Light

The lampstand represents light.

Jesus declared:

“I am the light of the world.”

He is the ultimate source of spiritual light.

3. Christ Is Both Priest and King

Joshua represented the priesthood.

Zerubbabel came from David's royal line.

Jesus combines both roles perfectly.

He is Priest.

He is King.

4. Christ Completes the Father's Work

Zerubbabel would finish what he began.

Jesus could say to the Father that He had finished the work given to Him.

At the cross He declared:

“It is finished.”

VI. A THEOLOGY OF “NOT BY MIGHT”

Zechariah 4:6 does not teach that human effort is unnecessary.

Zerubbabel still had to build.

Workers still had to labor.

Stones still had to be placed.

Leadership still mattered.

Planning still mattered.

The point is not:

Do nothing and wait for God.

The point is:

Do God's work in dependence upon God's power.

There is a great difference.

Human responsibility and divine empowerment work together.

We labor.

God supplies the strength.

We obey.

God produces the fruit.

We serve.

God receives the glory.

VII. THE DANGER OF SELF-RELIANCE

One of the greatest dangers in Christian service is replacing dependence upon God with dependence upon human ability.

We can begin to trust in:

Money.

Education.

Technology.

Organization.

Influence.

Buildings.

Talent.

Personality.

Programs.

Political power.

None of these things is necessarily wrong.

But none of them can replace the Holy Spirit.

A church can possess tremendous resources and still lack spiritual power.

A preacher can possess great communication ability and still lack spiritual effectiveness.

A ministry can appear successful outwardly and still accomplish little of eternal value.

Zechariah 4 reminds us:

God's work must be done God's way through God's power.

VIII. DO NOT DESPISE SMALL THINGS

Zechariah 4:10 is especially important for discouraged believers.

We naturally admire what is large.

Large crowds.

Large churches.

Large ministries.

Large budgets.

Large influence.

But God does not measure significance the way humans do.

A small beginning can become part of a great work.

Moses began with a shepherd's staff.

David began with sheep.

The disciples were a small group.

Bethlehem was a small town.

Jesus was laid in a manger.

Never despise something merely because it appears small.

The question is not:

How large is it?

The question is:

Is God in it?

IX. KEY LESSONS FROM ZECHARIAH 4

1. God's work is accomplished through His Spirit.

Human strength cannot replace divine power.

2. God supplies what His servants need.

The olive trees continually supplied the lampstand.

3. No obstacle is too great for God.

Mountains become level ground before His purposes.

4. God finishes what He begins.

Zerubbabel would complete the temple he started.

5. Grace deserves the glory.

The completed work would produce shouts of:

“Grace, grace!”

6. Small beginnings should not be despised.

God often works through seemingly insignificant beginnings.

7. God sees everything.

His eyes range throughout the whole earth.

8. God uses different servants for different roles.

Joshua and Zerubbabel served in different capacities but toward the same divine purpose.

X. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Zechariah 4 challenges us to ask:

Am I depending upon my own strength more than God's Spirit?

What mountain am I allowing to intimidate me?

Have I become discouraged because progress seems small?

Am I tempted to quit something God has called me to finish?

Do I give God the glory when He brings success?

Am I trying to serve God without continual spiritual dependence?

Have I despised a small ministry, opportunity, church, or beginning?

Do I truly believe God can finish what He has begun?

XI. QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What did Zechariah see in the vision?

Answer

He saw a golden lampstand with seven lamps, a bowl, pipes supplying the lamps, and two olive trees beside it.

Question 2

What did the lampstand symbolize?

Answer

It pictured God's light and the work sustained by the continual supply of His Spirit.

Question 3

What is the central message of Zechariah 4:6?

Answer

God's work is accomplished not through mere human strength or resources, but through the power of His Spirit.

Question 4

Who was Zerubbabel?

Answer

He was the governor of Judah and a descendant of David who led the rebuilding of the temple.

Question 5

What did the great mountain represent?

Answer

It represented the major obstacles and opposition standing before Zerubbabel and the rebuilding work.

Question 6

What would happen to the mountain?

Answer

God promised that it would become level ground before Zerubbabel.

Question 7

What did the capstone represent?

Answer

It represented the completion of the temple.

Question 8

Why would people shout “Grace, grace”?

Answer

Because the completed work would demonstrate that God's grace and power had made it possible.

Question 9

What promise did God give Zerubbabel?

Answer

The same hands that laid the foundation of the temple would also finish it.

Question 10

What does it mean not to despise the day of small things?

Answer

It means we should not treat small beginnings or limited progress as insignificant when God is working through them.

Question 11

What do the seven eyes represent?

Answer

They symbolize the complete knowledge and watchfulness of God over the whole earth.

Question 12

Who were the two anointed ones?

Answer

In the immediate context, they most naturally represent Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor.

Question 13

How do Joshua and Zerubbabel point toward Christ?

Answer

Joshua represents the priestly role and Zerubbabel represents the royal Davidic line. Jesus perfectly fulfills both offices as Priest and King.

Question 14

What is the central lesson of Zechariah 4?

Answer

God accomplishes His work through the power of His Spirit, removes obstacles, values faithful beginnings, and enables His servants to complete the work He gives them.

XII. FINAL THOUGHT

Zechariah Chapter 4 begins with a lampstand and ends with two servants standing before the Lord of all the earth.

Between those pictures comes one of the greatest principles of Christian service:

“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit.”

Zerubbabel had a temple to build.

He had opposition to face.

He had limited resources.

He had discouraged people.

He had every reason, humanly speaking, to believe the task was too great.

But God did not tell him to focus on the mountain.

God told him to depend upon the Spirit.

The mountain would fall.

The temple would be completed.

The capstone would be placed.

And the people would shout:

“Grace, grace!”

That is how God's work should end.

Not with praise for human greatness.

Not with celebration of human power.

But with recognition of divine grace.

So when the task seems too large:

Depend upon the Spirit.

When the opposition looks like a mountain:

Trust God to level it.

When the beginning seems small:

Do not despise it.

When progress feels slow:

Keep working.

When God brings completion:

Give Him the glory.

The lamp can continue burning because God continues supplying the oil.

Key Verse

**“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the Lord Almighty. —
Zechariah 4:6**

Key Phrase

God's work must be accomplished through God's Spirit, for God's glory.

Zechariah Chapter 5 — The Flying Scroll and the Basket of Wickedness

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Zechariah Chapter 5 shifts the focus from encouragement and restoration to the serious problem of sin among God's people.

In the previous visions, God promised protection, cleansing, spiritual power, and future blessing.

But restoration could not mean ignoring wickedness.

A holy God would not rebuild Jerusalem while allowing sin to remain unchallenged.

Zechariah therefore receives two striking visions.

The first is a **flying scroll** carrying God's judgment against specific sins.

The second is a **basket containing a woman called Wickedness**, which is carried away to the land of Shinar.

Together these visions teach an important truth:

God not only restores His people; He also purifies them.

The chapter contains two major sections:

1. **The Flying Scroll — Judgment on Sin — verses 1–4**
2. **The Woman in the Basket — Wickedness Removed — verses 5–11**

The message is clear:

God sees sin, judges sin, restrains sin, and ultimately removes wickedness from among His people.

I. THE FLYING SCROLL — JUDGMENT ON SIN

Zechariah 5:1

“Then I looked up again, and I saw a flying scroll.”

Zechariah now sees another vision.

This time it is a scroll flying through the air.

Scrolls in Scripture often contain written revelation, commands, warnings, or judgments.

The fact that the scroll is flying suggests that the message is active.

God's Word is going out.

It is not sitting unused.

It is moving throughout the land to accomplish the purpose for which God sent it.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ezekiel 2:9 — Ezekiel saw a scroll containing words of sorrow, mourning, and judgment.

Revelation 5:1 — John saw a scroll in God's hand that contained His purposes for judgment and redemption.

Jeremiah 36:2 — God told Jeremiah to write His words on a scroll.

Spiritual Lesson

God's Word is active.

It reveals.

It warns.

It judges.

It exposes what human beings try to hide.

Application

Never treat Scripture as merely information.

God's Word confronts us personally.

Zechariah 5:2

“The angel asked me, ‘What do you see?’ I answered, ‘I see a flying scroll, twenty cubits long and ten cubits wide.’”

The scroll was enormous.

Twenty cubits by ten cubits would have made it roughly thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide, depending on the cubit used.

Its size emphasized the importance and visibility of the message.

Interestingly, these dimensions correspond closely to the dimensions of the porch of Solomon's temple.

The scroll therefore may also suggest judgment proceeding from God's holy standard.

Cross References in Simple American English

1 Kings 6:3 — The porch of Solomon’s temple measured twenty cubits long and ten cubits deep.

Ezekiel 40:49 — Ezekiel measured the entrance area of the future temple.

Revelation 21:16 — The New Jerusalem was carefully measured according to God’s design.

Principle

God measures according to His own standard.

Application

The question is not whether our behavior seems acceptable to society.

The question is whether it agrees with God’s Word.

Zechariah 5:3

“He said to me, ‘This is the curse that goes out over the whole land. On one side, it condemns everyone who steals; on the other side, it condemns everyone who swears falsely.’”

The scroll carried a curse.

This refers to the judgment connected with breaking God’s covenant commands.

Two sins are specifically mentioned:

Stealing.

Swearing falsely.

Stealing violates a person’s relationship with others.

False oaths violate a person’s relationship with God.

These two sins may represent broader violations of God’s law.

The people were rebuilding a holy community, but outward reconstruction would mean little if dishonesty remained in their hearts.

Cross References in Simple American English

Deuteronomy 27:26 — A curse rests upon the person who refuses to keep God’s law.

Malachi 3:5 — God promised to judge thieves, liars, oppressors, and those who dishonor Him.

Leviticus 19:12 — God commanded His people not to swear falsely by His name.

Spiritual Lesson

Sin affects both our relationship with God and our relationships with other people.

Application

A person cannot claim devotion to God while living dishonestly toward others.

Zechariah 5:4

“The Lord Almighty declares: ‘I will send it out, and it will enter the house of the thief and of the one who swears falsely by My name. It will remain in that house and destroy it completely—its wood and stones alike.’”

God’s judgment would enter the homes of those living in deliberate sin.

This is a frightening image.

Sin may appear private.

But it is never hidden from God.

The curse would remain until the house was consumed.

The mention of wood and stones emphasizes complete judgment.

Cross References in Simple American English

Leviticus 14:45 — A contaminated house could be torn down completely, including its stones and wood.

Habakkuk 2:11 — Even the stones and beams of a house are pictured as testifying against injustice.

Proverbs 3:33 — The Lord’s curse rests upon the house of the wicked, but He blesses the home of the righteous.

Key Truth

Sin carries consequences beyond the moment in which it is committed.

Application

Hidden sin can damage:

Families.

Homes.

Relationships.

Reputations.

Churches.

Ministries.

Do not wait until sin destroys what you value.

Repent while mercy is offered.

II. THE WOMAN IN THE BASKET — WICKEDNESS REMOVED

Zechariah 5:5

“Then the angel who talked with me came forward and said, ‘Look up and see what is coming.’”

Zechariah is directed to look again.

Another symbolic picture is coming.

The first vision showed judgment against individual acts of sin.

The second vision broadens the picture.

Now wickedness itself is personified and removed.

Cross References in Simple American English

Amos 7:1 — God showed Amos symbolic visions revealing His purposes.

Daniel 10:1 — Daniel received visions concerning future events.

Revelation 4:1 — John was invited to look and see what God would reveal.

Spiritual Lesson

God wants His people to understand not only individual sinful actions but the deeper reality of wickedness itself.

Zechariah 5:6

“I asked, ‘What is it?’ He replied, ‘It is a measuring basket, an ephah. This is the sin of the people throughout the land.’”

Zechariah saw an **ephah**, a basket used for measuring grain and other goods.

Because an ephah was associated with commerce, the image may suggest economic corruption, dishonest trade, materialism, or wickedness becoming organized within society.

The basket represented the iniquity found throughout the land.

Cross References in Simple American English

Amos 8:5 — Dishonest merchants made the ephah smaller so they could cheat customers.

Micah 6:11 — God condemned dishonest scales and fraudulent measurements.

Leviticus 19:36 — God commanded His people to use honest scales and measurements.

Key Principle

God cares about integrity in everyday life.

Application

Faithfulness to God includes honesty in:

Business.

Money.

Contracts.

Work.

Sales.

Taxes.

Promises.

A person cannot separate spirituality from integrity.

Zechariah 5:7

“Then the lead cover was lifted, and there sat a woman inside the basket.”

Inside the basket was a woman.

The woman is symbolic.

The next verse identifies her clearly as **Wickedness**.

The heavy lead cover suggests restraint.

Wickedness was being contained.

Cross References in Simple American English

Revelation 17:3 — John saw a symbolic woman representing a corrupt religious and political system.

Proverbs 7:10 — Wickedness is sometimes personified through the image of an immoral woman.

Revelation 17:5 — Symbolic Babylon is pictured as the mother of abominations.

Spiritual Lesson

Scripture sometimes personifies sin to show its active, corrupting influence.

Zechariah 5:8

“He said, ‘This is Wickedness,’ and he forced her back into the basket and pushed the lead cover over its opening.”

The angel identifies the woman:

“This is Wickedness.”

The meaning is not uncertain.

She represents evil.

But notice what happens.

She is forced back into the basket.

The cover is shut.

Wickedness is restrained.

This reveals God’s authority over evil.

Sin is powerful.

But sin is not sovereign.

Cross References in Simple American English

Revelation 20:1 — An angel is given authority to restrain Satan.

Proverbs 9:13 — Folly is personified as loud, foolish, and destructive.

Micah 7:19 — God promises to conquer the sins of His people and cast them away.

Key Truth

Evil may be active, but it is never beyond God’s control.

Application

Never believe that wickedness has become too powerful for God to restrain.

Zechariah 5:9

“Then I looked up and saw two women flying with the wind in their wings. They had wings like those of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between earth and heaven.”

Two women now appear with wings like those of a stork.

They lift the basket and carry it away.

The stork was an unclean bird under the Mosaic Law, which fits the context of removing wickedness.

The picture is one of complete relocation.

Wickedness is being taken away from the holy land.

Cross References in Simple American English

Leviticus 11:19 — The stork was classified among the birds Israel was not to eat.

Revelation 12:14 — Wings are used symbolically to picture rapid movement and escape.

Ezekiel 17:3 — Ezekiel used symbolic winged creatures in prophetic imagery.

Spiritual Lesson

God’s goal is not merely to expose wickedness.

He intends to remove it.

Application

True repentance does not ask:

How much sin can I keep?

It asks:

How completely can this be removed from my life?

Zechariah 5:10

“I asked the angel, ‘Where are they taking the basket?’”

Zechariah again asks for understanding.

The destination matters.

Where wickedness is taken will reveal more about the meaning of the vision.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ezekiel 8:3 — Ezekiel was transported in a vision to see spiritual corruption.

Ezekiel 37:1 — The Spirit carried Ezekiel to a place where God revealed a message.

Revelation 21:10 — John was carried away in the Spirit and shown the holy city.

Principle

Prophetic symbols should be interpreted carefully rather than guessed at carelessly.

Zechariah 5:11

“He replied, ‘To the land of Shinar, to build a house for it. When it is ready, the basket will be set there in its place.’”

The basket is taken to **Shinar**.

Shinar is associated with ancient Babylon.

It was the region connected with Babel and early human rebellion against God.

It later became associated with Babylonian power, idolatry, pride, and opposition to God.

Wickedness is removed from the holy land and carried back to a place historically associated with rebellion.

The building of a house for it suggests wickedness becoming established within a system opposed to God.

Cross References in Simple American English

Genesis 11:2 — The people who built the Tower of Babel settled in the land of Shinar.

Genesis 10:10 — Nimrod’s kingdom began in Babel in the land of Shinar.

Revelation 18:2 — End-time Babylon is pictured as a center of corruption destined for judgment.

Spiritual Lesson

God separates holiness from wickedness.

Application

God does not call His people to make peace with Babylon.

He calls them to come out of its corruption.

III. MAJOR THEMES OF ZECHARIAH 5

1. God's Word Judges Sin

The flying scroll reveals that God's Word carries moral authority.

It does not merely advise.

It judges.

2. Sin Cannot Remain Hidden

The curse enters the sinner's house.

Private wrongdoing is still visible to God.

3. God Requires Integrity

Stealing and false oaths show that God cares deeply about honesty.

Spirituality without integrity is counterfeit.

4. Wickedness Can Become Organized

The ephah suggests that sin can become embedded in society, commerce, culture, and systems.

5. God Restrains Evil

The lead cover is forced over Wickedness.

God remains sovereign over sin.

6. God Removes Wickedness

The basket is carried away from the land.

God's purpose is purification.

7. Babylon Represents Rebellion

Shinar connects the vision with humanity's long history of organized resistance against God.

8. Judgment and Restoration Belong Together

God cannot restore His people while ignoring the sin that destroyed them.

True restoration requires purification.

IV. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE FLYING SCROLL

The two sins specifically named are important.

Stealing

This violates the command:

“You shall not steal.”

It concerns our relationship with other people.

Swearing Falsely

This violates the command against misusing God's name.

It concerns our relationship with God.

Together these may represent the two major directions of God's moral law:

Our responsibility toward God.

Our responsibility toward others.

Spiritual Lesson

Sin always affects relationships.

It damages fellowship with God.

It damages fellowship with people.

V. BABYLON IN BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

Shinar is more than a geographical location.

It carries theological significance.

1. Babel Began in Shinar

Genesis 11 records humanity gathering in rebellion and attempting to build a name for itself apart from God.

2. Babylon Became a Center of Idolatry

Babylon later became one of the greatest pagan empires of the ancient world.

3. Babylon Destroyed Jerusalem

It was Babylon that destroyed the temple and carried Judah into captivity.

4. Revelation Uses Babylon Symbolically

Revelation presents Babylon as a larger symbol of human civilization organized in rebellion against God.

Key Principle

Babylon represents what humanity builds when it seeks greatness apart from God.

VI. CHRIST IN ZECHARIAH 5

Zechariah 5 primarily emphasizes judgment, but its themes also point us toward our need for Christ.

1. Christ Bears the Curse

The flying scroll reveals the curse brought by breaking God's law.

The New Testament teaches that Christ redeemed believers from the curse of the law by bearing judgment in our place.

2. Christ Cleanses from Sin

The basket reveals wickedness that must be removed.

Christ does not merely forgive the penalty of sin.

He also begins the work of cleansing His people from sin's power.

3. Christ Will Ultimately Remove Evil

The vision anticipates a world in which wickedness does not remain among God's people forever.

Christ will one day judge evil completely.

4. Christ Calls His People Out of Babylon

The biblical call to separate from Babylon ultimately represents separation from the sinful world system opposed to God.

Believers belong to Christ.

Our loyalty is to His kingdom.

VII. SIN IN THE HOME

Zechariah 5:4 gives a sobering picture of judgment entering the house.

Sin rarely remains isolated.

A hidden sin can eventually affect an entire family.

Dishonesty can destroy trust.

Greed can destroy relationships.

Adultery can destroy marriages.

Addiction can devastate households.

Bitterness can poison generations.

The lesson is clear:

Deal with sin before sin deals with your home.

VIII. GOD'S PURPOSE IS PURITY

Zechariah's visions reveal a pattern.

Chapter 3 showed Joshua being cleansed.

Chapter 4 showed God's Spirit empowering His servants.

Chapter 5 shows wickedness being removed.

God does not merely want a rebuilt temple.

He wants a holy people.

Outward restoration without inward holiness is incomplete.

Principle

God is interested in more than rebuilding our circumstances.

He wants to transform our character.

IX. KEY LESSONS FROM ZECHARIAH 5

1. God's Word exposes and judges sin.

The flying scroll carries divine judgment throughout the land.

2. Sin cannot remain hidden forever.

God sees what happens inside the home as well as in public.

3. Dishonesty matters to God.

Stealing and false oaths are serious offenses.

4. Wickedness can influence entire societies.

The basket shows sin becoming something larger than individual acts.

5. God remains sovereign over evil.

Wickedness is forced back into the basket and restrained.

6. God intends to remove evil from His people.

The basket is carried away from the land.

7. Babylon represents organized rebellion against God.

Shinar recalls the long history of human pride and idolatry.

8. Restoration requires purification.

God does not simply rebuild what is broken.

He removes what caused the destruction.

X. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Zechariah 5 challenges us to ask:

Is there hidden sin in my life that I am hoping God will ignore?

Am I completely honest in my dealings with others?

Do my words honor God?

Have I allowed dishonesty to enter my home?

Am I treating sin casually because judgment has not come immediately?

Is there something God is trying to remove from my life that I keep bringing back?

Have I become comfortable with the values of Babylon?

Do I want God merely to improve my circumstances, or do I want Him to purify my heart?

XI. QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What did Zechariah see flying through the air?

Answer

He saw a large flying scroll.

Question 2

What did the scroll represent?

Answer

It represented God's curse and judgment against sin throughout the land.

Question 3

Which two sins were specifically mentioned?

Answer

Stealing and swearing falsely by God's name.

Question 4

Why are those two sins significant?

Answer

They represent violations against both other people and God, showing that God's moral law governs every part of life.

Question 5

What happened when the curse entered the house of the sinner?

Answer

It remained there and brought complete destruction.

Question 6

What was the ephah?

Answer

It was a measuring basket commonly used in trade and commerce.

Question 7

Who was inside the basket?

Answer

A woman who symbolically represented Wickedness.

Question 8

What happened to Wickedness?

Answer

She was forced back into the basket and covered with a heavy lead lid.

Question 9

What does the lead cover teach us?

Answer

It shows that wickedness remains under God's authority and can be restrained by Him.

Question 10

Who carried the basket away?

Answer

Two women with wings like those of a stork carried it away.

Question 11

Where was the basket taken?

Answer

It was taken to the land of Shinar.

Question 12

Why is Shinar significant?

Answer

Shinar is associated with Babel and Babylon, places that symbolize organized human rebellion, pride, and idolatry.

Question 13

What is the main lesson of the second vision?

Answer

God intends to remove wickedness from among His people.

Question 14

What is the central message of Zechariah 5?

Answer

God judges sin according to His Word and will ultimately remove wickedness from among His people.

XII. FINAL THOUGHT

Zechariah Chapter 5 reminds us that restoration and holiness cannot be separated.

God had promised to rebuild Jerusalem.

He had cleansed Joshua.

He had promised to empower Zerubbabel.

But now He confronted the sin still present among the people.

The flying scroll declared:

God sees sin.

The curse entering the house declared:

Sin has consequences.

The woman in the basket declared:

Wickedness is real.

The lead cover declared:

God can restrain wickedness.

The journey to Shinar declared:

God intends to remove wickedness from His holy people.

This chapter therefore asks us a serious question:

Are we asking God to bless what He is trying to cleanse?

Sometimes we pray for restoration while protecting the very sin that caused the destruction.

Sometimes we ask God to rebuild while refusing to repent.

Sometimes we want blessing without holiness.

Zechariah 5 will not allow that contradiction.

God restores.

But God also purifies.

God forgives.

But God also transforms.

God comforts.

But God also confronts.

So when God exposes sin, do not hide it.

When His Word confronts you, do not resist it.

When He begins removing wickedness, do not fight to keep what He is taking away.

Let the flying scroll speak.

Let the basket be carried away.

Let God purify what He intends to use for His glory.

Key Verse

“This is the curse that goes out over the whole land.” — Zechariah 5:3

Key Phrase

God exposes sin, judges wickedness, and removes evil from among His people.

Zechariah Chapter 6 — The Four Chariots and the Crown of the Branch

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Zechariah Chapter 6 brings the prophet’s night visions to a dramatic conclusion.

The chapter opens with four chariots moving out from between two bronze mountains. These chariots represent heavenly agents sent out under God’s authority to carry out His purposes throughout the earth.

Then the scene changes.

Zechariah is instructed to take silver and gold, make a crown, and place it on the head of Joshua the high priest.

This act is deeply symbolic.

Joshua was a priest, not a king.

Yet he is crowned.

Why?

Because Joshua is being used as a picture of Someone greater to come:

The Branch.

This coming Branch will build the temple of the Lord.

He will sit on a throne.

He will rule.

He will also serve as priest.

In one Person, kingship and priesthood will be perfectly united.

That points unmistakably to Jesus Christ.

Zechariah 6 therefore moves from **God's rule over the nations** to **the future rule of the Messiah**.

Its central message is:

The Lord governs history, judges the nations, and will establish His perfect Priest-King through the Branch.

I. THE FOUR CHARIOTS — GOD'S SPIRITS SENT OUT

Zechariah 6:1

"I looked up again and saw four chariots coming out from between two bronze mountains."

Zechariah sees four chariots.

Chariots in the ancient world were instruments of war, speed, authority, and conquest.

These chariots emerge from between two bronze mountains.

Bronze in Scripture is often associated with strength, durability, and judgment.

The image therefore suggests heavenly forces emerging under divine authority to carry out judgment.

Cross References in Simple American English

Revelation 6:1 — John saw heavenly horsemen released as part of God's judgment upon the earth.

1 Kings 7:15 — Bronze pillars were used in Solomon’s temple, emphasizing strength and permanence.

Psalms 68:17 — God is pictured as surrounded by countless heavenly chariots.

Spiritual Lesson

The nations may appear to control history, but heaven remains in command.

Application

Do not interpret world events as though God is absent.

Human rulers act, but God remains sovereign.

Zechariah 6:2

“The first chariot had red horses, the second had black horses.”

Different colored horses appear again, similar to Zechariah’s earlier vision.

The specific colors may suggest different aspects of divine activity or judgment.

Red can suggest conflict or bloodshed.

Black can suggest mourning, famine, or judgment.

But the primary focus is not the colors themselves.

The important point is that the chariots are commissioned by God.

Cross References in Simple American English

Revelation 6:4 — A red horse is associated with conflict and bloodshed.

Revelation 6:5 — A black horse is associated with scarcity and judgment.

2 Kings 6:17 — God opened the servant’s eyes to see heavenly horses and chariots surrounding Elisha.

Key Truth

God has resources and agents that human beings cannot see.

Zechariah 6:3

“The third had white horses, and the fourth had dappled horses—all strong.”

The remaining chariots are pulled by white and dappled horses.

White can symbolize victory or purity.

The dappled horses may suggest variety in judgment or mission.

All of the horses are described as strong.

God's messengers are fully equipped to accomplish what He commands.

Cross References in Simple American English

Revelation 19:11 — Christ appears on a white horse in righteousness and victory.

Joel 2:4 — An invading army is compared to powerful horses moving quickly.

Judges 5:22 — Horses are pictured as charging powerfully in battle.

Spiritual Lesson

God's purposes are never weakened by lack of strength.

Application

What God sends, God equips.

Zechariah 6:4

“I asked the angel who was speaking with me, ‘What are these, my lord?’”

Zechariah again asks for understanding.

He does not assume the meaning.

This repeated pattern throughout the visions shows spiritual humility.

Cross References in Simple American English

Daniel 7:19 — Daniel asked for the meaning of the symbols in his vision.

Ezekiel 37:18 — Ezekiel was asked to explain the meaning of a prophetic sign.

Revelation 7:13 — John received interpretation concerning a vision he did not fully understand.

Principle

Good Bible study asks what the text means before deciding what we want it to mean.

Zechariah 6:5

“He replied, ‘These are the four spirits of heaven, going out from standing before the Lord of all the earth.’”

The angel identifies the chariots as the **four spirits of heaven**.

The expression may also be understood as heavenly winds or agents.

They stand before the Lord and then go out from His presence.

They are not independent powers.

They serve the Lord.

He is called:

“the Lord of all the earth.”

That title is important.

God is not merely the God of Judah.

He is sovereign over every nation.

Cross References in Simple American English

Revelation 7:1 — Four angels are associated with the four winds of the earth.

Daniel 7:2 — Daniel saw the four winds of heaven stirring the nations.

Psalms 104:4 — God makes His angels and spiritual servants instruments of His purposes.

Key Truth

God’s authority is universal.

Application

No nation exists outside His rule.

No government is beyond His reach.

Zechariah 6:6

“The chariot with the black horses goes toward the north country, the white follow after them, and the dappled go toward the south.”

The chariots are sent in different directions.

The north country is especially significant.

From Israel’s perspective, major enemies often came from the north.

Assyria and Babylon had both threatened Israel through northern approaches.

The south would point toward Egypt and surrounding regions.

God’s judgment reaches the places where hostile powers have arisen.

Cross References in Simple American English

Jeremiah 1:14 — Disaster against Judah was described as coming from the north.

Daniel 11:6 — Daniel describes conflicts involving northern and southern kingdoms.

Isaiah 43:6 — God commands north and south to release His scattered people.

Spiritual Lesson

God knows the direction from which opposition comes.

Zechariah 6:7

“The strong horses went out, eager to patrol the earth. And He said, ‘Go, walk to and fro throughout the earth.’ So they did.”

The strong horses are eager to carry out their assignment.

They move throughout the earth under God’s command.

The phrase **“to and fro”** emphasizes complete movement and inspection.

Nothing is outside their assigned reach.

Cross References in Simple American English

Job 1:7 — Satan said he had been going throughout the earth.

2 Chronicles 16:9 — The eyes of the Lord search throughout the whole earth.

Revelation 6:6 — God’s judgments operate under controlled authority.

Key Principle

God’s oversight of the earth is complete.

Application

Nothing taking place in the world escapes His attention.

Zechariah 6:8

“Then the angel called out to me, ‘Look, those going toward the north have quieted My Spirit in the north country.’”

The mission toward the north has brought satisfaction to God’s Spirit.

The idea of **quieting His Spirit** suggests that judgment has been carried out and divine anger has been satisfied.

Babylon and the powers associated with the north had once been instruments of judgment.

Now God's justice toward them would also be carried out.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ezekiel 5:13 — God's anger is described as being satisfied after judgment is completed.

Ezekiel 16:42 — God speaks of His wrath coming to rest after justice has been carried out.

Isaiah 12:1 — God's anger can be turned away and replaced by comfort.

Spiritual Lesson

God's judgment is never uncontrolled anger.

It is righteous justice.

Application

God will not allow evil to continue forever.

II. THE CROWNING OF JOSHUA — A PICTURE OF THE BRANCH

Zechariah 6:9

"The word of the Lord came to me."

The visions now transition into a symbolic prophetic action.

God directly instructs Zechariah concerning what he must do next.

Cross References in Simple American English

Jeremiah 1:4 — The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah.

Ezekiel 1:3 — God's word came to Ezekiel with divine authority.

1 Samuel 15:10 — The Lord spoke to Samuel concerning His purposes.

Principle

Prophetic action must be grounded in divine revelation.

Zechariah 6:10

“Take silver and gold from the exiles Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have come from Babylon. Go the same day to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah.”

Some returned exiles brought silver and gold.

They were participating materially in the work of restoration.

God instructed Zechariah to use these precious metals for a symbolic purpose.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ezra 1:6 — People contributed silver, gold, goods, and offerings for the rebuilding work.

Ezra 8:25 — Silver and gold were entrusted for service connected with the temple.

Haggai 2:8 — God declares that all silver and gold ultimately belong to Him.

Spiritual Lesson

Resources placed in God’s hands can become part of His larger purpose.

Zechariah 6:11

“Make a crown from the silver and gold and place it on the head of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest.”

This is highly unusual.

Joshua is the high priest.

Priests did not normally wear royal crowns.

Kings from David’s line ruled.

Priests from Aaron’s line served in the sanctuary.

The offices were distinct.

Yet Joshua is crowned.

This act was symbolic.

Joshua was not being made king.

He was being used as a prophetic picture of the coming Messiah, who would unite kingship and priesthood perfectly.

Cross References in Simple American English

Exodus 29:6 — Aaron the high priest wore a sacred headpiece for priestly service.

Psalms 21:3 — God is pictured placing a crown of pure gold upon the king.

Revelation 19:12 — Christ appears wearing many crowns, showing supreme royal authority.

Key Truth

Joshua's crown points beyond Joshua.

Application

Biblical symbols often reach their fullest meaning in Christ.

Zechariah 6:12

“Tell him, ‘This is what the Lord of Hosts says: Here is the man called The Branch. He will branch out from where He is and will build the temple of the Lord.’”

The focus now moves directly to **the Branch**.

This is the same Messianic title introduced in Zechariah 3.

The Branch is the promised descendant of David.

He will rise.

He will build.

He will accomplish God's redemptive purpose.

The phrase **“He will branch out”** pictures growth emerging from what appears small.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 11:1 — A shoot would come from the family line of Jesse, and a Branch would grow from his roots.

Jeremiah 23:5 — God promised a righteous Branch from David who would reign wisely.

John 2:19 — Jesus spoke of raising the temple of His body, pointing toward His death and resurrection.

Christ Connection

The Branch is Jesus Christ.

Application

God's greatest work often emerges from what the world overlooks.

Zechariah 6:13

“He will build the temple of the Lord, He will receive honor, and He will sit and rule on His throne. He will also be a priest on His throne, and there will be perfect harmony between the two.”

This is one of the clearest Messianic statements in Zechariah.

The Branch will:

Build the temple.

Receive glory.

Sit on a throne.

Rule.

Serve as priest.

This is extraordinary.

Under the Old Testament system, king and priest were separate offices.

But the Messiah will unite both.

He will be:

King and Priest.

The phrase **“perfect harmony between the two”** means there will be no conflict between royal authority and priestly ministry.

In Christ, rule and intercession are perfectly united.

Cross References in Simple American English

Hebrews 7:1 — Melchizedek is presented as both king and priest, foreshadowing Christ.

Psalms 110:4 — The Messiah is declared to be a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 8:1 — Jesus is our great High Priest who is seated at the right hand of God’s throne.

Key Doctrine

Jesus Christ is both King and High Priest.

Application

The One who rules us is also the One who represents us before God.

III. THE CROWN AS A MEMORIAL

Zechariah 6:14

“The crown will be kept in the temple of the Lord as a memorial to Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen son of Zephaniah.”

The crown was not to remain on Joshua’s head.

It was to be preserved as a memorial.

This proves that Joshua’s crowning was symbolic rather than permanent.

The crown pointed forward.

Every time people saw it, they were reminded of God’s promise concerning the Branch.

Cross References in Simple American English

Exodus 12:14 — Passover was established as a memorial of God’s deliverance.

Joshua 4:7 — Memorial stones reminded future generations of God’s mighty work.

Numbers 16:40 — Objects were preserved as reminders of God’s holiness and authority.

Spiritual Lesson

God uses memorials to keep His promises before His people.

Application

Remember what God has done.

Remember what God has promised.

IV. THOSE FAR AWAY WILL COME

Zechariah 6:15

“Those who are far away will come and help build the temple of the Lord, and you will know that the Lord of Hosts has sent me to you. This will happen if you carefully obey the voice of the Lord your God.”

The chapter ends by widening the vision.

Those **far away** will come and participate.

Historically, this may include Jews still scattered among the nations.

Prophetically, it also points beyond Israel toward the inclusion of the nations in God's redemptive work.

The final sentence emphasizes obedience.

God's people are called to respond faithfully to His revealed Word.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 60:10 — Foreigners would help rebuild Jerusalem's walls.

Ephesians 2:13 — Those who were once far away have been brought near through Christ.

Isaiah 1:19 — Those willing to obey God will enjoy His blessing.

Key Truth

God's redemptive plan reaches those who are far away.

Application

No one is too distant for God to bring near.

V. MAJOR THEMES OF ZECHARIAH 6

1. God Rules Over the Nations

The chariots move under His command.

He is the Lord of all the earth.

2. God Judges Evil

The chariots carry out His righteous purposes among the nations.

3. God's Spirit Is Satisfied by Justice

The north country is quieted after judgment has been completed.

4. The Branch Is the Messiah

The Branch is the promised Davidic ruler who fulfills God's redemptive plan.

5. Christ Is King

He sits on a throne and rules.

6. Christ Is Priest

He represents His people before God.

7. Christ Unites Kingship and Priesthood

What remained separate in Israel's institutions is perfectly united in Jesus Christ.

8. Christ Builds God's True Temple

The Messiah builds the people among whom God dwells.

9. The Nations Are Included

Those far away are brought near and participate in God's work.

10. Obedience Remains Necessary

God's grace never eliminates the call to obedience.

VI. CHRIST IN ZECHARIAH 6

Zechariah 6 is one of the strongest Christ-centered chapters in the book.

1. Christ Is the Branch

He comes from David's line.

He fulfills the promises of the prophets.

2. Christ Is the Builder

He builds the true temple of God.

The New Testament presents believers as living stones built together into a spiritual house.

3. Christ Is the King

He sits on the throne.

He possesses authority.

He reigns.

4. Christ Is the Priest

He intercedes.

He represents His people.

He offers the sufficient sacrifice.

5. Christ Is the Priest-King

The two offices meet in Him.

Authority and mercy are perfectly united.

Justice and grace meet in Him.

Rule and intercession meet in Him.

VII. THE PRIEST-KING THEME

The crowning of Joshua is intentionally unusual.

Under the Mosaic system:

Priests came from Levi.

Kings came from Judah.

The offices were normally separate.

But the Branch would unite them.

This prepares us for the New Testament teaching about Jesus.

Jesus is from the tribe of Judah.

He is the Son of David.

He is King.

Yet Hebrews also identifies Him as the great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek.

He does not merely rule over us.

He also represents us.

He does not merely command.

He also intercedes.

He does not merely wear the crown.

He also carried the cross.

That is the beauty of the Messiah.

VIII. GOD GOVERNS HISTORY

The four chariots teach an important doctrine:

History is not random.

Empires do not rise outside God's knowledge.

Nations do not fall outside His authority.

Wars do not surprise Him.

Political power does not intimidate Him.

God allows human beings genuine responsibility, but His sovereign purposes remain greater than human plans.

Application

When the world feels unstable, remember:

The Lord still rules the earth.

IX. THOSE WHO ARE FAR AWAY

Verse 15 offers a beautiful glimpse of God's worldwide saving purpose.

Those far away will come.

This theme becomes clearer throughout Scripture.

The gospel would go beyond Jerusalem.

Beyond Judea.

Beyond Israel.

To the nations.

Paul later tells Gentile believers that they were once far away but have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

Key Principle

The gospel turns outsiders into members of God's household.

X. KEY LESSONS FROM ZECHARIAH 6

1. God governs the nations.

The four chariots move under His command.

2. God has heavenly agents who carry out His purposes.

The visible world is not the whole picture.

3. God judges wickedness.

His justice will eventually be satisfied.

4. The Branch is Jesus Christ.

The promised Messiah fulfills the hope of this chapter.

5. Christ is both King and Priest.

He reigns and intercedes.

6. Christ builds the true temple.

He gathers and forms the people of God.

7. God remembers faithful service.

The crown became a memorial to those who contributed.

8. Those far away can be brought near.

God's salvation reaches beyond national boundaries.

9. Obedience matters.

God's promises call for faithful response.

XI. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Zechariah 6 challenges us to ask:

Do I truly believe God rules over the nations?

Am I more afraid of political powers than I am confident in God?

Do I understand Jesus not only as Savior but as King?

Do I understand Him as my great High Priest?

Am I submitting to His rule?

Am I trusting His intercession?

Do I believe God can bring those far away near to Himself?

Am I faithfully obeying what He has revealed?

XII. QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What did Zechariah see coming from between the two bronze mountains?

Answer

He saw four chariots pulled by different colored horses.

Question 2

What did the four chariots represent?

Answer

They represented heavenly agents or spirits sent out from before the Lord to carry out His purposes throughout the earth.

Question 3

Why is God called the Lord of all the earth?

Answer

Because His authority extends over every nation, government, and people.

Question 4

What was significant about the north country?

Answer

It was historically associated with major enemies such as Babylon and represented a region where divine judgment would be carried out.

Question 5

What does it mean that God's Spirit was quieted?

Answer

It means His righteous judgment had been carried out and His wrath had been satisfied.

Question 6

What was Zechariah told to make?

Answer

He was told to make a crown from silver and gold.

Question 7

Whose head received the crown?

Answer

Joshua the high priest.

Question 8

Why was Joshua's crowning unusual?

Answer

Because Joshua was a priest, not a king. The act was symbolic and pointed toward the coming Messiah.

Question 9

Who is the Branch?

Answer

The Branch is the promised Messiah, fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Question 10

What will the Branch do?

Answer

He will build the temple of the Lord, receive glory, sit on the throne, rule, and serve as priest.

Question 11

What does it mean that He will be a priest on His throne?

Answer

It means the Messiah will perfectly unite kingship and priesthood in one Person.

Question 12

How is this fulfilled in Jesus?

Answer

Jesus is both the King from David's line and the great High Priest who intercedes for His people.

Question 13

Why was the crown kept in the temple?

Answer

It served as a memorial of God's promise concerning the coming Branch.

Question 14

Who are those who are far away?

Answer

Historically, they include scattered people returning to participate in God's work. Prophetically, the language also anticipates God drawing people from the nations.

Question 15

What is the central message of Zechariah 6?

Answer

God governs history, judges the nations, and promises the coming Messiah who will perfectly rule as both King and Priest.

XIII. FINAL THOUGHT

Zechariah Chapter 6 begins with chariots moving across the earth and ends with the promise of people coming from far away.

At the center stands the Branch.

The chapter tells us:

God rules the nations.

God judges evil.

God directs history.

God keeps His promises.

And God has appointed a King.

But this King is unlike any other king.

He is also Priest.

He wears the crown.

He sits on the throne.

He builds the temple.
He receives glory.
He intercedes for His people.
He unites authority with mercy.
He unites justice with grace.
He unites kingship with priesthood.
That King is Jesus Christ.
When nations shake, He remains King.
When guilt troubles the conscience, He remains Priest.
When God's people need protection, He rules.
When they need intercession, He represents them.
When they need a future, He builds.
And when those far away seem beyond hope, He brings them near.

Key Verse

**"He will sit and rule on His throne. He will also be a priest on His throne." —
Zechariah 6:13**

Key Phrase

The Branch is Jesus Christ—the perfect King, Priest, and Builder of God's people.

Zechariah Chapter 7 — True Fasting and Obedience

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Zechariah Chapter 7 addresses a question that sounds religious but exposes something much deeper. The people wanted to know whether they should continue observing a traditional fast. God answered by questioning the motive behind the fast itself. Their real problem was not whether they should fast. Their real problem was whether their hearts were truly turned toward Him.

For seventy years, the people had mourned over the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. But God asked a searching question:

“Was it really for Me that you fasted?”

This chapter teaches that religious activity means very little when the heart remains unchanged.

God is not impressed by ceremony without obedience.

He desires:

Justice.

Mercy.

Compassion.

Integrity.

A listening heart.

The chapter also looks back at the tragic history of Israel's rebellion and explains why judgment came.

The people refused to listen when God spoke.

Eventually, when they cried out, God refused to listen to them.

The message is sobering:

Outward religion cannot replace inward obedience.

I. A QUESTION ABOUT FASTING

Zechariah 7:1

“In the fourth year of King Darius, on the fourth day of the ninth month, the month of Kislev, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah.”

This message came approximately two years after the visions recorded earlier in the book.

The temple rebuilding project was progressing.

The people were moving closer to restoration.

But spiritual questions remained.

Once again, the important phrase is:

“The word of the Lord came.”

The issue would not be settled by tradition or human preference.

God Himself would answer.

Cross References in Simple American English

Haggai 2:10 — God gave Haggai a message during the reign of Darius concerning the spiritual condition of the people.

Nehemiah 1:1 — Nehemiah also received important news during the month of Kislev.

Daniel 1:21 — Daniel continued serving through changing kingdoms, showing God's faithfulness across generations.

Spiritual Lesson

Questions about worship should be answered by God's Word rather than human tradition alone.

Application

When religious practices become familiar, ask:

What does God actually desire?

Zechariah 7:2

“The people of Bethel sent Sherezer and Regem-Melech with their men to seek the Lord’s favor.”

A delegation came from Bethel.

Their purpose was to seek God's favor.

This sounds commendable.

Bethel had a complicated history.

It had once been associated with worship of God but later became a center of idolatrous worship in the northern kingdom.

Now people from Bethel were seeking direction from the Lord.

Cross References in Simple American English

1 Kings 12:29 — Jeroboam placed one of his golden calves at Bethel.

2 Kings 17:28 — A priest was sent to Bethel to teach people about the Lord after the northern kingdom had fallen.

Jeremiah 26:19 — People sometimes sought God's favor by responding seriously to prophetic warnings.

Spiritual Lesson

A religious history does not guarantee present faithfulness.

Application

Places, churches, and people can have spiritual history while still needing renewed devotion to God.

Zechariah 7:3

“By asking the priests of the house of the Lord Almighty and the prophets: ‘Should we keep mourning and fasting in the fifth month, as we have done for many years?’”

The people had observed a fast in the fifth month for many years.

This fast commemorated the destruction of the temple by Babylon.

But now the temple was being rebuilt.

So the question seemed reasonable:

Should we keep fasting?

Yet God would reveal that the deeper issue was not whether the fast continued.

The issue was why they had fasted in the first place.

Cross References in Simple American English

Joel 1:14 — God's people were called to a sacred fast during a time of national crisis.

2 Samuel 12:16 — David fasted and prayed during a time of deep sorrow.

Esther 4:16 — Esther called the Jews to fast during a time of danger.

Key Principle

A good religious practice can become empty when the heart is not involved.

Application

Fasting, praying, giving, and worship are valuable only when they flow from genuine devotion.

II. GOD’S RESPONSE TO EMPTY RITUALS

Zechariah 7:4

“Then the word of the Lord Almighty came to me.”

Before answering the people's question, God shifts the focus.

They wanted a simple yes-or-no answer.

God instead examined their hearts.

Cross References in Simple American English

Jeremiah 14:11 — God responded directly to Jeremiah concerning the people's spiritual condition.

Isaiah 58:3 — The people complained about fasting, but God exposed their wrong motives.

Amos 5:4 — God called His people to seek Him rather than depend upon empty religion.

Spiritual Lesson

God often answers the question beneath our question.

Zechariah 7:5

“Tell all the people of the land and the priests: When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months for seventy years, was it really for Me that you fasted?”

This is the central question.

“Was it really for Me?”

The people had fasted for seventy years.

That is a long religious tradition.

But length of practice does not prove sincerity.

The fifth-month fast remembered the temple's destruction.

The seventh-month fast likely remembered the assassination of Gedaliah after Jerusalem's fall.

Yet God asks whether these observances were genuinely centered on Him.

Were they mourning over sin?

Or merely mourning over consequences?

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 58:5 — God rejected fasting that was merely outward and did not produce genuine humility.

Matthew 6:16 — Jesus warned people not to fast merely to impress others.

Jeremiah 25:11 — Judah's seventy years of desolation came because of persistent rebellion.

Key Truth

Religious activity can become self-centered.

Application

Ask:

Do I worship God because I love Him?

Or because I want something from Him?

Zechariah 7:6

“And when you eat and drink, are you not doing it simply for yourselves?”

God exposes the heart further.

Their fasting had been self-centered.

Their feasting was also self-centered.

Whether abstaining or enjoying food, the focus remained on themselves.

The issue was not food.

The issue was motive.

Cross References in Simple American English

1 Corinthians 10:31 — Whether you eat or drink, do everything for the glory of God.

Deuteronomy 8:10 — After eating and being satisfied, God's people were commanded to bless the Lord.

Luke 12:19 — The rich fool lived only for his own comfort and pleasure.

Principle

Even ordinary activities should be lived for God's glory.

Application

True spirituality is not limited to church services.

It affects eating.

Working.

Resting.

Spending.

Relationships.

Everything.

Zechariah 7:7

“Should you not have listened to the words proclaimed by the earlier prophets when Jerusalem was prosperous and full of people, with its towns around it, and when the Negev and the western foothills were still inhabited?”

God reminds them that the earlier prophets had warned previous generations before disaster came.

The problem had never been lack of revelation.

They had heard.

They simply had not obeyed.

Jerusalem had once been prosperous.

The surrounding regions had been inhabited.

Yet prosperity did not protect them from the consequences of rebellion.

Cross References in Simple American English

Jeremiah 33:13 — Judah's towns were once places of normal life and activity.

Isaiah 1:19 — God promised blessing to those willing to obey Him.

2 Chronicles 36:15 — God repeatedly sent prophets because He had compassion on His people.

Spiritual Lesson

Warning before judgment is an expression of God's mercy.

Application

Do not wait for consequences before taking God's Word seriously.

III. THE CALL FOR JUSTICE AND MERCY

Zechariah 7:8

“Again the word of the Lord came to Zechariah.”

God now explains what He had always wanted from His people.

The answer is not more ceremony.

It is obedient character.

Cross References in Simple American English

Jonah 3:1 — God's Word came again to Jonah, giving another opportunity for obedience.

Ezekiel 3:16 — God's Word came to Ezekiel with responsibility to speak faithfully.

1 Kings 17:2 — Elijah acted in response to the word of the Lord.

Key Principle

God's expectations have always been clearly revealed.

Zechariah 7:9

“This is what the Lord Almighty says: Administer true justice. Show mercy and compassion to one another.”

Here God identifies the kind of religion He desires.

True justice.

Mercy.

Compassion.

Justice means dealing honestly and fairly.

Mercy means showing kindness to those in need.

Compassion means allowing another person's suffering to move us to action.

Cross References in Simple American English

Micah 6:8 — God requires His people to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him.

Isaiah 1:17 — God's people are commanded to seek justice and defend the oppressed.

Hosea 6:6 — God desires faithful love more than empty sacrifice.

Key Truth

True worship affects the way we treat people.

Application

A person cannot mistreat others all week and then assume religious activity on Sunday makes everything right.

Zechariah 7:10

“Do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the foreigner, or the poor. Do not plot evil against one another in your hearts.”

God specifically identifies vulnerable people.

The widow.

The fatherless.

The foreigner.

The poor.

These groups often lacked social power and protection.

God commanded His people not to exploit them.

Then He moves even deeper:

“Do not plot evil against one another in your hearts.”

God does not judge only outward behavior.

He sees motives.

Cross References in Simple American English

Exodus 22:21 — Israel was commanded not to mistreat or oppress foreigners.

Deuteronomy 24:17 — God's people were forbidden from denying justice to foreigners and orphans.

James 1:27 — Pure religion includes caring for orphans and widows in their trouble.

Spiritual Lesson

God's concern for justice reaches both behavior and motives.

Application

Ask not only:

What am I doing?

Also ask:

What am I planning and desiring in my heart?

IV. ISRAEL'S HARD-HEARTED REBELLION

Zechariah 7:11

“But they refused to pay attention. They stubbornly turned their backs and covered their ears.”

The previous generation had heard God's commands.

But they deliberately refused to listen.

Three actions describe their rebellion:

They refused to pay attention.

They turned their backs.

They covered their ears.

This was not ignorance.

It was resistance.

Cross References in Simple American English

Acts 7:57 — Stephen's hearers covered their ears because they did not want to hear the truth.

Nehemiah 9:29 — Israel repeatedly acted proudly and refused to listen to God's commands.

Jeremiah 7:24 — The people followed their own stubborn hearts rather than obeying God.

Key Truth

Repeated resistance to truth produces spiritual hardness.

Application

Every time we hear truth, we respond somehow.

We either soften toward God or harden ourselves against Him.

Zechariah 7:12

“They made their hearts as hard as stone and would not listen to the law or to the words the Lord Almighty had sent by His Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the Lord Almighty was very angry.”

This verse explains the seriousness of their rebellion.

Their hearts became **hard as stone**.

They resisted both:

The Law.

The prophetic Word.

Notice also that God says He sent His message:

“by His Spirit through the earlier prophets.”

This is an important statement about the inspiration of Scripture.

The prophets spoke, but the Holy Spirit was behind the message.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ezekiel 11:19 — God promised to remove the heart of stone and give His people a responsive heart.

Ezekiel 36:26 — God promised a new heart and a new spirit.

Hebrews 3:15 — Believers are warned not to harden their hearts when they hear God's voice.

Key Doctrine

The Holy Spirit spoke through the prophets.

Application

Rejecting God's Word is ultimately resistance to God Himself.

Zechariah 7:13

“When I called, they would not listen; so when they called, I would not listen,” says the Lord Almighty.”

This is one of the most sobering statements in the chapter.

God called.

They refused.

Later they called.

God refused.

This does not mean God is unwilling to hear genuine repentance.

Rather, it describes judicial consequences for persistent rebellion.

They wanted God's help without wanting God's authority.

Cross References in Simple American English

Proverbs 1:24 — Wisdom warns that those who continually refuse instruction may eventually cry out too late.

Isaiah 1:15 — God refused to accept prayers from people whose lives remained full of injustice.

Micah 3:4 — Wicked leaders would cry to God, but He would not answer because of their evil actions.

Key Principle

We should not expect to ignore God's voice while demanding that He respond to ours.

Application

Prayer and obedience belong together.

Zechariah 7:14

“I scattered them with a whirlwind among nations they did not know. The land they left behind was so desolate that no one traveled through it. They turned the pleasant land into a wilderness.”

The chapter ends by explaining the consequences of rebellion.

God scattered His people among foreign nations.

The land became desolate.

The pleasant land became wilderness.

Notice the final wording:

“They turned the pleasant land into a wilderness.”

God judged them, but their rebellion brought the destruction.

Sin destroys what God intended for blessing.

Cross References in Simple American English

Leviticus 26:33 — God warned Israel that continued rebellion would result in scattering among the nations.

Jeremiah 9:10 — Jeremiah mourned because the land had become desolate.

2 Kings 25:21 — Judah was carried away from its land into exile.

Spiritual Lesson

Sin can turn blessing into desolation.

Application

Never underestimate the destructive power of persistent disobedience.

V. MAJOR THEMES OF ZECHARIAH 7

1. Religious Ritual Is Not Enough

Fasting can be spiritual.

But fasting without genuine devotion is empty.

2. God Examines Motives

The question was not only:

Did you fast?

The question was:

Was it for Me?

3. True Worship Produces Justice

God connects worship with how we treat others.

4. God Cares for the Vulnerable

Widows, orphans, foreigners, and the poor matter deeply to Him.

5. The Heart Matters

God forbids not only outward oppression but inward plots of evil.

6. Repeated Disobedience Hardens the Heart

The people eventually made their hearts like stone.

7. The Holy Spirit Speaks Through Scripture

God sent His words by His Spirit through the prophets.

8. Ignoring God's Voice Has Consequences

Those who repeatedly refused to listen eventually experienced judgment.

VI. FASTING IN THE BIBLE

Zechariah 7 does not condemn fasting itself.

Scripture contains many examples of legitimate fasting.

People fasted during:

Repentance.

Grief.

National crisis.

Prayer.

Seeking God's guidance.

The problem was not fasting.

The problem was **self-centered fasting**.

True Fasting

True fasting should:

Turn our attention toward God.

Accompany sincere prayer.

Lead to repentance.

Produce humility.

Increase dependence upon God.

False Fasting

False fasting:

Seeks attention.

Becomes tradition without devotion.

Focuses on self.

Leaves sinful behavior unchanged.

Key Principle

The spiritual value of fasting depends upon the heart behind it.

VII. TRUE RELIGION ACCORDING TO ZECHARIAH 7

God's answer in verses 9–10 gives a practical definition of authentic faith.

Administer True Justice

Be fair.

Be honest.

Do what is right.

Show Mercy

Do not give people only what they deserve.

Show kindness.

Show Compassion

Enter into the suffering of others.

Protect the Vulnerable

Use strength to help rather than exploit.

Refuse Evil in the Heart

Holiness begins internally.

Spiritual Lesson

True religion is not merely ceremonial.

It is relational and moral.

VIII. GOD'S CONCERN FOR THE VULNERABLE

Throughout Scripture, God repeatedly identifies Himself as the defender of those who are easily exploited.

The widow often lacked financial protection.

The fatherless lacked family security.

The foreigner lacked social standing.

The poor lacked economic power.

God commanded His people to care for them.

Application

A society's spiritual health can often be measured by how it treats people with little power.

The same is true of churches.

And individuals.

IX. THE DANGER OF A HARD HEART

The progression in verses 11–12 is important.

First they refused attention.

Then they turned away.

Then they stopped listening.

Then their hearts became hard.

Hardness usually develops gradually.

A person hears God's Word.

He resists.

He hears again.

He resists again.

Eventually, resistance becomes habit.

Warning

Never make a habit of saying no to God.

X. CHRIST IN ZECHARIAH 7

Zechariah 7 primarily confronts hypocrisy and rebellion, but its themes lead us toward Christ.

1. Christ Condemned Empty Religion

Jesus repeatedly confronted religious leaders who practiced outward rituals while neglecting justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

2. Christ Shows Perfect Compassion

Jesus cared for the poor, sick, rejected, widowed, and outcast.

He demonstrated the compassion God required from Israel.

3. Christ Gives a New Heart

Israel's heart became hard as stone.

Through the new covenant, God promises heart transformation.

Christ provides the salvation through which sinners receive new life.

4. Christ Perfectly Obeyed the Father

Where Israel refused God's voice, Jesus could say that He always did what pleased the Father.

XI. KEY LESSONS FROM ZECHARIAH 7

1. Religious activity without sincerity is empty.

God looks beyond ceremony to the heart.

2. Motives matter.

The question is not merely what we do, but why we do it.

3. True worship produces righteous living.

Justice, mercy, and compassion are essential.

4. God cares deeply for vulnerable people.

His people must do the same.

5. Sin begins in the heart.

God forbids plotting evil before it becomes action.

6. Repeated disobedience hardens the heart.

Resistance can become spiritual insensitivity.

7. God speaks through His Word by His Spirit.

Scripture must be taken seriously.

8. Ignoring God's voice brings consequences.

The people refused Him until judgment came.

XII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Zechariah 7 challenges us to ask:

Am I practicing religion mainly from habit?

Do I worship God for Him, or mostly for what I hope to receive?

Is there a difference between my public worship and private life?

Do I treat others justly?

Do I show mercy?

Am I compassionate toward people who are vulnerable?

Is there anyone I am plotting against inwardly?

Have I become resistant to something God has repeatedly shown me?

Is my heart becoming softer or harder toward His Word?

XIII. QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did the people send representatives to Jerusalem?

Answer

They wanted to ask whether they should continue fasting and mourning in the fifth month.

Question 2

What event had the fifth-month fast remembered?

Answer

It remembered the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by Babylon.

Question 3

What question did God ask about their fasting?

Answer

He asked whether they had truly been fasting for Him.

Question 4

Why was their fasting inadequate?

Answer

Because much of it had become self-centered ritual rather than genuine repentance and devotion.

Question 5

What did God say He really wanted from His people?

Answer

True justice, mercy, compassion, protection of the vulnerable, and hearts free from evil intentions.

Question 6

Which vulnerable groups are specifically mentioned?

Answer

Widows, orphans, foreigners, and the poor.

Question 7

How did the earlier generations respond to God's Word?

Answer

They refused to listen, turned their backs, covered their ears, and hardened their hearts.

Question 8

Who had spoken through the earlier prophets?

Answer

The Holy Spirit had sent God's Word through them.

Question 9

What happened after the people continually refused to listen?

Answer

When they later cried out, God did not answer them in the way they demanded.

Question 10

Why were the people scattered among the nations?

Answer

Their persistent rebellion and refusal to obey God brought covenant judgment.

Question 11

What happened to the land?

Answer

The pleasant land became desolate like a wilderness.

Question 12

What is the central message of Zechariah 7?

Answer

God desires sincere obedience, justice, mercy, and compassion rather than empty religious ritual.

XIV. FINAL THOUGHT

Zechariah Chapter 7 begins with a religious question:

“Should we keep fasting?”

God answers with a much deeper question:

“Was it really for Me?”

That question reaches far beyond fasting.

Why do we pray?

Why do we attend church?

Why do we give?

Why do we serve?

Why do we preach?

Why do we sing?

Why do we read Scripture?

Why do we fast?

Is it truly for God?

Or has religion become something centered on ourselves?

Zechariah 7 reminds us that God is not satisfied with outward forms while the heart remains unchanged.

He wants worship that produces justice.

Devotion that produces mercy.

Faith that produces compassion.

Religion that reaches the widow.

The orphan.

The foreigner.

The poor.

He wants ears that listen.

Hearts that remain soft.

Lives that obey.

The previous generation refused His voice.

They turned away.

They covered their ears.

They hardened their hearts.

And eventually the pleasant land became a wilderness.

That tragedy leaves us with a warning:

Do not harden your heart when God speaks.

Listen while He is calling.

Obey while His Word is before you.

Let worship become life.

Let fasting become devotion.

Let faith become compassion.

And let outward religion flow from a heart that truly belongs to God.

Key Verse

“Administer true justice. Show mercy and compassion to one another.” — Zechariah 7:9

Key Phrase

God desires obedient hearts, not empty rituals.

Zechariah Chapter 8 — Restoration, Truth, and Peace in Jerusalem

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Zechariah Chapter 8 is one of the most encouraging chapters in the book.

Chapter 7 looked backward at Israel's rebellion, hard-heartedness, and judgment.

Chapter 8 looks forward.

God speaks about restoration.

He promises to return to Zion.

He promises truth in Jerusalem.

He promises safety for the elderly.

He promises children playing in the streets.

He promises agricultural blessing.

He promises that fasting will become feasting.

And He promises that people from many nations will come seeking the Lord.

The chapter moves from **judgment to restoration**, from **fear to courage**, from **mourning to joy**, and from **Israel alone to the nations seeking God**.

Its central message is:

The God who disciplines His people is also the God who restores them in truth, righteousness, peace, and blessing.

I. GOD'S JEALOUS LOVE FOR ZION

Zechariah 8:1

“Again the word of the Lord Almighty came to me, saying:”

The chapter begins with divine revelation.

Zechariah is not offering political optimism.

He is delivering God's promise.

The repeated phrase **“the Lord Almighty says”** dominates this chapter and emphasizes that restoration depends upon God's authority.

Cross References in Simple American English

Jeremiah 1:2 — The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah with divine authority.

Ezekiel 6:1 — God gave Ezekiel a message to proclaim.

Hosea 1:1 — The Lord spoke through Hosea during the reigns of Israel's kings.

Spiritual Lesson

Our hope must rest on what God says rather than what circumstances suggest.

Zechariah 8:2

“This is what the Lord Almighty says: I am zealous for Zion with great passion, and I am very angry on her behalf.”

God's zeal for Zion expresses His covenant commitment.

This is not sinful human jealousy.

It is God's holy determination to protect what belongs to Him and fulfill His purposes.

Jerusalem had suffered greatly.

But God had not stopped caring.

His anger was now directed toward the forces that had opposed His people.

Cross References in Simple American English

Joel 2:18 — The Lord became jealous for His land and showed compassion toward His people.

Isaiah 9:7 — The zeal of the Lord would accomplish His promised kingdom purposes.

2 Kings 19:31 — God's zeal would preserve a remnant and bring His purposes to completion.

Key Truth

God's discipline does not mean He has stopped loving His people.

Application

Do not interpret correction as abandonment.

Zechariah 8:3

“I have returned to Zion and will dwell in Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the Lord Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain.”

God makes two remarkable promises.

“I have returned to Zion.”

And:

“I will dwell in Jerusalem.”

The city's identity would change.

It would be known for:

Truth.

Holiness.

Jerusalem had once become corrupt.

Now God promises transformation.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 1:26 — Jerusalem would again be called a city of righteousness and faithfulness.

Ezekiel 48:35 — The restored city would be known by the truth that the Lord is there.

Joel 3:17 — Zion would be holy because the Lord dwells there.

Spiritual Lesson

God's restoration is not merely physical.

He restores character.

Application

True revival does not simply rebuild buildings.

It produces truth and holiness.

II. A VISION OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY

Zechariah 8:4

“The Lord Almighty says: ‘Once again old men and women will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each leaning on a staff because of their age.’”

This is a beautiful picture of peace.

In a violent society, people often die young.

In a peaceful society, people can grow old.

The elderly sitting safely in public places show that fear has been removed.

The staff is not a symbol of weakness here.

It is evidence of long life.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 65:20 — God's future blessing includes long life.

Job 5:26 — A faithful person is pictured reaching old age in fullness.

Psalms 92:14 — The righteous can continue flourishing even in old age.

Spiritual Lesson

Peace allows life to flourish.

Application

God values every generation, including the elderly.

Zechariah 8:5

“The streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing there.”

Children playing safely in the streets picture normal life, security, joy, and hope.

War empties streets.

Fear keeps children indoors.

Peace fills public spaces with life.

The city that had once been devastated would again hear laughter.

Cross References in Simple American English

Jeremiah 30:19 — God promised that songs of thanksgiving and joyful voices would again be heard.

Matthew 19:14 — Jesus welcomed children and declared that the kingdom belongs to those who receive it humbly.

Psalms 128:3 — Children are pictured as signs of blessing within the family.

Key Truth

Restoration produces life where destruction once ruled.

Application

Never assume that devastation must have the final word.

Zechariah 8:6

“Though this may seem impossible to the remnant of this people in those days, is it too hard for Me?” declares the Lord Almighty.

To the remnant, these promises sounded impossible.

They looked around and saw weakness.

God looked ahead and saw restoration.

The question is rhetorical:

“Is it too hard for Me?”

The answer is no.

Cross References in Simple American English

Genesis 18:14 — God asked Abraham whether anything was too difficult for the Lord.

Jeremiah 32:17 — Jeremiah declared that nothing is too hard for God.

Luke 1:37 — Nothing will be impossible with God.

Key Principle

Human impossibility does not limit divine ability.

Application

Do not confuse:

I cannot

with

God cannot.

III. GOD WILL GATHER HIS PEOPLE

Zechariah 8:7

“I will save My people from the lands of the east and the west.”

God promises regathering.

His people had been scattered.

Now He would bring them home.

East and west express the broad scope of God's gathering work.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 43:5 — God promised to gather His children from east and west.

Psalms 107:3 — The redeemed are gathered from many lands and directions.

Isaiah 11:11 — God promised to recover His scattered people from distant nations.

Spiritual Lesson

No distance is too great for God to overcome.

Zechariah 8:8

“I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem. They will be My people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness.”

This verse describes covenant restoration.

The greatest blessing is not merely returning to Jerusalem.

It is renewed relationship with God.

“They will be My people.”

“I will be their God.”

And this relationship will be characterized by:

Truth.

Righteousness.

Cross References in Simple American English

Jeremiah 31:33 — God promised to write His law on the hearts of His people and be their God.

Ezekiel 37:27 — God promised to dwell among His people and make them His own.

Revelation 21:3 — God's final dwelling with humanity is described with the same covenant language.

Key Truth

Restoration is ultimately about relationship with God.

IV. STRENGTH TO REBUILD

Zechariah 8:9

“The Lord Almighty says: ‘Take courage, you who hear these words today from the prophets who spoke when the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid, so that the temple might be rebuilt.’”

God tells the builders:

Take courage.

The work had been difficult.

Progress had been slow.

Opposition had been real.

But God's Word should strengthen their hands.

Cross References in Simple American English

Haggai 2:4 — God told Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the people to be strong and work because He was with them.

Ezra 5:2 — Zerubbabel and Joshua resumed rebuilding the temple with prophetic encouragement.

Haggai 1:14 — The Lord stirred the spirit of the leaders and people to work on His house.

Spiritual Lesson

God's promises should strengthen God's workers.

Application

Encouragement is not a substitute for work.

It gives strength to continue working.

Zechariah 8:10

“Before that time there was no work for people or animals. No one could go about their business safely because of conflict, for I had set everyone against their neighbor.”

The earlier period had been marked by economic hardship and social instability.

There was little productivity.

There was little safety.

Relationships were damaged.

This was part of the consequence of spiritual rebellion.

Cross References in Simple American English

Haggai 1:6 — The people worked hard but experienced little return because God's house had been neglected.

Haggai 2:16 — Harvest expectations repeatedly fell short.

Judges 5:6 — In dangerous times, normal travel became unsafe.

Spiritual Lesson

Sin affects more than private spirituality.

It can damage society, economy, relationships, and security.

Zechariah 8:11

“But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as I did before,” declares the Lord Almighty.

These words mark a dramatic change.

“But now.”

The season of judgment would not last forever.

God would deal differently with the restored remnant.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 40:2 — Jerusalem's time of judgment was declared complete.

Jeremiah 31:28 — God promised that just as He had watched over judgment, He would watch over rebuilding.

Hosea 2:23 — God promised mercy and restored covenant relationship.

Key Truth

God can bring a new season after judgment.

V. A TIME OF BLESSING

Zechariah 8:12

“The seed will grow well, the vine will give its fruit, the ground will yield its crops, and the heavens will send their dew. I will give all these blessings to the remnant of this people.”

Agricultural restoration would follow.

Seed.

Vines.

Crops.

Dew.

These were essential to survival in an agricultural society.

God was promising fruitfulness where there had been scarcity.

Cross References in Simple American English

Leviticus 26:4 — God promised rain, crops, and fruitfulness in connection with covenant blessing.

Haggai 2:19 — God announced that blessing would begin from that day forward.

Ezekiel 34:26 — God promised showers of blessing.

Spiritual Lesson

God is able to replace barrenness with fruitfulness.

Zechariah 8:13

“Just as you were once a curse among the nations, O Judah and Israel, so I will save you, and you will become a blessing. Do not be afraid, but take courage.”

The nations had looked at Judah's destruction as an example of disaster.

But God promised reversal.

They had become associated with curse.

Now they would become associated with blessing.

This echoes God's original promise to Abraham.

Cross References in Simple American English

Genesis 12:2 — God promised Abraham that He would bless him and make him a blessing.

Deuteronomy 28:37 — Disobedience would cause Israel to become an object of horror among the nations.

Isaiah 19:24 — God's future purposes include Israel becoming a blessing among the nations.

Key Principle

God can reverse shame.

Application

Your past does not have to define God's future work.

VI. GOD'S CALL TO TRUTH AND JUSTICE

Zechariah 8:14

“The Lord Almighty says: ‘Just as I was determined to punish you when your fathers angered Me and I did not relent.’”

God reminds them that His earlier judgment had been certain.

He had warned their ancestors.

They rebelled.

Judgment came exactly as promised.

Cross References in Simple American English

Jeremiah 44:27 — God declared that judgment against persistent rebellion would surely come.

Lamentations 2:17 — The Lord carried out what He had planned and warned about.

Ezekiel 24:14 — God declared that He would act according to His righteous judgment.

Spiritual Lesson

God's warnings are as reliable as His promises.

Zechariah 8:15

“So now I am determined to do good again to Jerusalem and Judah. Do not be afraid.”

The same certainty that once stood behind judgment now stands behind restoration.

God says:

“I am determined to do good.”

What an encouraging statement.

Cross References in Simple American English

Jeremiah 29:11 — God declared His plans for His people included hope and a future.

Jeremiah 32:41 — God promised to rejoice in doing good to His restored people.

Isaiah 41:10 — God's people are told not to fear because He is with them.

Key Truth

God's goodness is intentional.

Application

When God promises restoration, fear should give way to faith.

Zechariah 8:16

“These are the things you must do: Speak the truth to one another, render true and sound judgment in your courts.”

God's blessings do not remove moral responsibility.

The restored people are commanded to live according to the character God desires.

First:

Speak truth.

Second:

Practice justice.

Truth must govern conversation.

Justice must govern public life.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ephesians 4:25 — Believers are commanded to put away lying and speak truth to one another.

Deuteronomy 16:18 — Judges were commanded to make righteous decisions.

Proverbs 12:17 — Truthful testimony promotes justice.

Spiritual Lesson

A restored community must be built on truth.

Zechariah 8:17

“Do not plot evil against each other, and do not love to swear falsely. For I hate all these things,” declares the Lord.

God addresses both outward actions and inward desires.

Do not plan evil.

Do not love falsehood.

God is not morally neutral.

He says:

“I hate all these things.”

Cross References in Simple American English

Proverbs 6:16 — Scripture lists several things the Lord hates, including deceit and plans for evil.

Leviticus 19:11 — God's people are commanded not to lie or deceive one another.

Malachi 2:16 — God condemns treachery and faithlessness.

Key Principle

God's blessing never means He becomes indifferent to holiness.

VII. FASTS TURNED INTO FEASTS

Zechariah 8:18

“The word of the Lord Almighty came to me again.”

The question about fasting from Chapter 7 is finally answered directly.

God had first addressed the people's motives.

Now He reveals the future of those fasts.

Zechariah 8:19

“The fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months will become joyful and glad occasions and happy festivals for Judah. Therefore, love truth and peace.”

Several fasts had commemorated tragic events connected with Jerusalem's destruction.

God promises that mourning will become celebration.

The fasts will become feasts.

Sorrow will become joy.

But the promise comes with an ethical command:

Love truth and peace.

Cross References in Simple American English

Esther 9:22 — Days of sorrow were turned into days of joy and celebration.

Isaiah 61:3 — God promises beauty instead of ashes and joy instead of mourning.

Psalms 30:11 — God can turn mourning into dancing.

Key Truth

God can transform reminders of sorrow into testimonies of grace.

Application

Some of the places of your deepest pain may one day become reminders of God's faithfulness.

VIII. NATIONS WILL SEEK THE LORD

Zechariah 8:20

“The Lord Almighty says: ‘Many peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will yet come.’”

The vision expands beyond Jerusalem.

Other peoples will come.

God's plan was never limited to restoring one city for its own sake.

Jerusalem's restoration would become connected with God's witness to the nations.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 2:2 — Nations will come to the mountain of the Lord.

Micah 4:1 — Many peoples will be drawn toward God's presence and truth.

Isaiah 60:3 — Nations will come to the light God gives.

Spiritual Lesson

God blesses His people so that His name may be known beyond them.

Zechariah 8:21

“The people of one city will go to another and say, ‘Let us go at once to seek the Lord Almighty and to pray before Him.’ And they will reply, ‘I will go also.’”

This is a picture of contagious spiritual desire.

One group invites another:

“Let us go.”

The response is:

“I will go also.”

People will encourage one another to seek God.

Cross References in Simple American English

Psalms 122:1 — David rejoiced when others said, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.”

Isaiah 2:3 — Nations encourage one another to go to the Lord and learn His ways.

Jeremiah 50:5 — God's people ask the way to Zion and turn their faces toward Him.

Application

Our faith should make others want to seek God.

Zechariah 8:22

“Many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord Almighty and to pray before Him.”

The nations do not come merely to admire Jerusalem.

They come to seek the Lord.

This is the important point.

The attraction is God's presence.

Cross References in Simple American English

1 Kings 8:41 — Solomon prayed for foreigners who would come because they heard about God's great name.

Isaiah 56:7 — God's house would be called a house of prayer for all nations.

Micah 4:2 — Many nations will come to learn God's ways.

Key Truth

The ultimate mission of God's people is to point others toward God.

IX. GOD'S PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE

Zechariah 8:23

“The Lord Almighty says: ‘In those days ten men from every language and nation will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, “We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.””’

The chapter ends with an extraordinary picture.

People from many nations will seek association with God's people because they have heard:

“God is with you.”

Ten men likely symbolizes a significant number.

People from every language and nation will desire to participate in the blessing associated with God's presence.

The emphasis is not upon human superiority.

It is upon divine presence.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 45:14 — Nations would recognize that God was truly among His people.

Matthew 9:20 — A woman touched the edge of Jesus' garment in faith.

Ruth 1:16 — Ruth told Naomi that her people would become her people and her God would become Ruth's God.

Key Principle

The greatest testimony God's people can possess is:

God is with them.

Application

People should not merely notice our buildings, programs, or personalities.

They should recognize evidence of God's presence.

X. MAJOR THEMES OF ZECHARIAH 8

1. God Loves Zion with Covenant Zeal

His discipline did not cancel His commitment.

2. God Returns to Dwell with His People

His presence is the foundation of restoration.

3. Restoration Produces Truth and Holiness

Jerusalem becomes the City of Truth and the Holy Mountain.

4. Peace Restores Ordinary Life

Old people sit safely.

Children play freely.

These simple scenes reveal profound blessing.

5. Nothing Is Too Hard for God

What looked impossible to the remnant was easy for the Lord Almighty.

6. God Gathers the Scattered

He saves from east and west and restores covenant relationship.

7. God Strengthens His Workers

The people are told repeatedly:

Take courage.

8. God Turns Barrenness into Blessing

Seed grows.

Vines produce.

Ground yields crops.

9. God Turns a Curse into a Blessing

Judah's shame among the nations would be reversed.

10. Restoration Requires Truth and Justice

God's people must speak truth and practice righteousness.

11. God Turns Fasting into Feasting

Mourning is transformed into celebration.

12. The Nations Will Seek God

God's purpose extends far beyond Jerusalem.

XI. CHRIST IN ZECHARIAH 8

Zechariah 8 contains several themes that find their greatest fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

1. Christ Is God Dwelling Among His People

God promises:

“I will dwell in Jerusalem.”

The New Testament reveals God dwelling among humanity through Jesus Christ.

The Word became flesh and lived among us.

2. Christ Is the Truth

Jerusalem is called the **City of Truth**.

Jesus later declares:

“I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

All true restoration must be grounded in Him.

3. Christ Brings Peace

The peaceful streets of Jerusalem point toward the greater peace of Messiah's kingdom.

Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

4. Christ Gathers the Scattered

Jesus came not only to save individuals but to gather a people for God.

Through the gospel, people from every nation are brought near.

5. Christ Brings the Nations to God

Zechariah sees nations coming to seek the Lord.

The gospel fulfills this movement as Christ sends His disciples to make disciples of all nations.

XII. “IS IT TOO HARD FOR ME?”

Zechariah 8:6 deserves special attention.

The remnant looked at God's promises and thought:

Impossible.

The city was weak.

The population was small.

The economy had struggled.

The temple was unfinished.

Enemies surrounded them.

God asked:

“Is it too hard for Me?”

That question reaches beyond Zechariah.

Abraham heard something similar when Sarah was promised a son.

Jeremiah heard the same principle while Jerusalem faced destruction.

Mary learned it when told she would bear the Messiah.

Key Principle

God is not limited by the obstacles that limit us.

XIII. THE CITY GOD DESIRES

Zechariah 8 presents a remarkable picture of a healthy society.

It contains:

Truth.

Holiness.

Long life.

Children.

Safety.

Agricultural prosperity.

Justice.

Peace.

Honest speech.

Worship.

International witness.

This tells us something important.

Biblical restoration affects every part of life.

God is not interested only in religious ceremonies.

He cares about:

Families.

Neighborhoods.

Courts.

Businesses.

Children.

Elderly people.

Public safety.

Truthful speech.

Peaceful relationships.

Biblical faith touches everything.

XIV. FROM FASTING TO FEASTING

The people had asked whether they should continue fasting.

God's answer is greater than a simple yes or no.

He says:

The days that reminded you of disaster will become days of celebration.

That is redemption.

God does not merely remove sorrow.

He can transform the meaning of sorrow.

The memory remains.

But grace changes what the memory represents.

Spiritual Lesson

God can transform a testimony of loss into a testimony of restoration.

XV. “GOD IS WITH YOU”

The final words of the chapter reveal what should distinguish God's people.

Not wealth.

Not political power.

Not popularity.

Not impressive buildings.

Not human influence.

But:

“We have heard that God is with you.”

That is the testimony every church should desire.

That is the testimony every believer should desire.

People should encounter:

Truth.

Love.

Holiness.

Grace.

Justice.

Peace.

And through those things recognize the presence of God.

XVI. KEY LESSONS FROM ZECHARIAH 8

1. God's love for His people is strong and faithful.

He remains committed to His purposes.

2. God's presence is the heart of restoration.

The greatest promise is that He will dwell among His people.

3. Nothing is too difficult for God.

Human impossibility cannot defeat divine power.

4. God gathers scattered people.

He restores those who seem far away.

5. God encourages His people to keep building.

Faith must produce courageous action.

6. God can reverse seasons of hardship.

Scarcity can become abundance.

7. God can turn shame into blessing.

Judah would no longer be known as a curse.

8. God requires truth and justice.

Blessing never removes the call to holiness.

9. God can turn mourning into celebration.

Fasts become feasts.

10. God's salvation reaches the nations.

People from many languages and countries will seek Him.

11. God's presence should be visible among His people.

Others should be able to say:

“God is with you.”

XVII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Zechariah 8 challenges us to ask:

Do I believe God can restore what looks impossible?

Am I living in truth?

Am I pursuing peace?

Do I speak honestly to others?

Am I practicing justice?

Have I allowed fear to stop me from doing God's work?

Do I believe God can turn my season of mourning into joy?

Does my life make other people want to know God?

Would anyone looking at my life say:

“God is with you”?

XVIII. QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What does God's zeal for Zion reveal?

Answer

It reveals His strong covenant love, His commitment to His people, and His determination to restore them.

Question 2

What would Jerusalem eventually be called?

Answer

The City of Truth, and the mountain of the Lord would be called the Holy Mountain.

Question 3

What do the elderly sitting in the streets represent?

Answer

They represent long life, security, stability, and peace.

Question 4

What do children playing in the streets represent?

Answer

They represent safety, joy, restored community life, and hope for the future.

Question 5

Why did God's promises seem impossible?

Answer

The returned remnant was small, weak, and surrounded by difficult circumstances.

Question 6

How did God answer their doubts?

Answer

He asked whether anything was too hard for Him.

Question 7

From where would God gather His people?

Answer

From the lands of the east and west, representing a broad regathering from distant places.

Question 8

What is the greatest part of God's restoration promise?

Answer

The restored people would once again belong to God, and He would be their God in truth and righteousness.

Question 9

Why were the people told to take courage?

Answer

Because God had promised to bless and complete the rebuilding work.

Question 10

How would their economic circumstances change?

Answer

The seed would prosper, the vine would produce fruit, the land would yield crops, and heaven would provide dew.

Question 11

What would Judah become instead of a curse?

Answer

God promised that Judah and Israel would become a blessing.

Question 12

What ethical commands accompanied God's promises?

Answer

They were commanded to speak truth, practice sound justice, reject evil plans, and refuse false oaths.

Question 13

What would happen to the days of fasting?

Answer

They would become joyful festivals and occasions of gladness.

Question 14

What were the people commanded to love?

Answer

Truth and peace.

Question 15

Who would eventually come seeking the Lord?

Answer

Many peoples and powerful nations.

Question 16

What would people from other nations say to God's people?

Answer

“We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.”

Question 17

What is the central message of Zechariah 8?

Answer

God promises to restore His people with His presence, truth, peace, blessing, and justice, while drawing people from the nations to seek Him.

XIX. FINAL THOUGHT

Zechariah Chapter 8 begins with God's passionate declaration:

“I am zealous for Zion.”

It ends with people from the nations saying:

“We have heard that God is with you.”

Between those statements is the story of restoration.

The ruined city becomes the City of Truth.

The deserted streets become filled with elderly people and children.

The scattered people are gathered.

The fearful workers are told to take courage.

The barren land becomes fruitful.

The people once known as a curse become a blessing.

The fasts of mourning become festivals of joy.

And the nations begin seeking the Lord.

This is what God does.

He restores.

He gathers.

He strengthens.

He blesses.

He transforms.

He turns mourning into joy.

But His restoration also demands a changed people.

Speak truth.

Practice justice.

Reject evil.

Love peace.

God does not restore His people merely so they can enjoy better circumstances.

He restores them so they can reflect His character and display His presence.

That is why the chapter ends with one of the greatest possible testimonies:

“God is with you.”

May that be true of our lives.

May people see truth in us.

May they see peace.

May they see justice.

May they see compassion.

May they see courage.

And above all, may they recognize the presence of God.

Key Verse

“Is it too hard for Me?” declares the Lord Almighty. — Zechariah 8:6

Key Phrase

God restores His people so that truth, peace, blessing, and His presence become visible to the nations.

Zechariah Chapter 9 — The Coming King and the Salvation of Zion

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Zechariah Chapter 9 marks an important transition in the book.

The earlier chapters focused heavily on the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the temple, the cleansing of the priesthood, and the restoration of the remnant.

Chapter 9 looks farther ahead.

The prophet begins with judgment against surrounding nations, but the chapter quickly moves toward one of the clearest Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament:

“See, your King comes to you... humble and riding on a donkey.”

This prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus entered Jerusalem before His crucifixion.

But the chapter does not stop with His humble arrival.

It also looks toward His worldwide reign, the liberation of prisoners, the defense of His people, and the final beauty and abundance of His kingdom.

The movement of the chapter is striking:

Proud nations fall.

God protects His people.

The King arrives.

Peace spreads to the nations.

Prisoners are released.

The Lord fights for His people.

His people become jewels in His crown.

The central message is:

Human kingdoms rise and fall, but God’s righteous King will come, save His people, establish peace, and reign to the ends of the earth.

I. JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS

Zechariah 9:1

“The burden of the word of the Lord is upon the land of Hadrach, and Damascus is its resting place, for the eyes of all people—and of all the tribes of Israel—are toward the Lord.”

The word **burden** refers to a weighty prophetic message, usually involving judgment.

The prophecy begins in the region north of Israel.

Hadrach and Damascus represent areas of Syria that would come under divine judgment.

The verse also emphasizes that the eyes of humanity are ultimately accountable to the Lord.

He sees the nations.

The nations are under His authority.

Cross References in Simple American English

Amos 1:3 — God pronounced judgment against Damascus because of its cruelty.

Isaiah 17:1 — Isaiah foretold that Damascus would lose its strength and glory.

Jeremiah 49:23 — Jeremiah announced judgment upon Damascus and surrounding regions.

Spiritual Lesson

No nation exists outside God’s moral authority.

Application

Political strength does not exempt a people from accountability to God.

Zechariah 9:2

“Hamath also will share this judgment, and Tyre and Sidon, though they are very wise.”

The judgment moves southward.

Hamath, Tyre, and Sidon were influential cities.

Tyre especially was famous for commerce, wealth, maritime power, and human wisdom.

But wisdom without submission to God cannot save.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ezekiel 28:3 — The ruler of Tyre boasted in his wisdom and understanding.

Amos 1:9 — God judged Tyre for its treachery.

Isaiah 23:1 — Isaiah announced judgment against the wealthy city of Tyre.

Key Truth

Human wisdom is powerless when it becomes proud and independent of God.

Application

Intelligence is a gift.

Pride in intelligence is dangerous.

Zechariah 9:3

“Tyre built herself a stronghold, heaping up silver like dust and gold like the dirt of the streets.”

Tyre trusted in two things:

Fortification.

Wealth.

Its island fortress was famous for being difficult to conquer.

Its commercial empire brought enormous riches.

From a human perspective, Tyre appeared secure.

But wealth can create the illusion of safety.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ezekiel 28:5 — Tyre increased its wealth through trade and became proud because of its riches.

Isaiah 23:8 — Tyre was influential and wealthy among the nations.

Job 22:24 — Gold is compared to dust to show its abundance and temporary value.

Spiritual Lesson

What looks secure to humanity can be fragile before God.

Application

Never make wealth or human defenses your ultimate refuge.

Zechariah 9:4

“But the Lord will dispossess her and strike her power in the sea; she will be consumed by fire.”

Tyre’s wealth and defenses would not save her.

The Lord Himself would bring her down.

Historically, Tyre endured repeated attacks, and Alexander the Great eventually conquered the island city in 332 B.C.

He built a causeway to the island and destroyed much of its strength.

The prophecy emphasizes the larger point:

God can bring down what people believe is unconquerable.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ezekiel 26:3 — God said many nations would come against Tyre.

Isaiah 23:11 — God stretched out His hand over the sea and shook kingdoms.

Amos 1:10 — God promised fire against the walls of Tyre.

Key Principle

No fortress can resist God forever.

Zechariah 9:5

“Ashkelon will see it and be afraid; Gaza will writhe in sorrow, and Ekron’s hope will wither. The king will perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon will be left uninhabited.”

The fall of Tyre would terrify the Philistine cities.

If powerful Tyre could fall, their confidence would disappear.

Ashkelon, Gaza, and Ekron represented important Philistine centers.

Their political strength would be broken.

Cross References in Simple American English

Amos 1:6 — God announced judgment on Gaza.

Zephaniah 2:4 — Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron were warned of coming destruction.

Jeremiah 47:5 — Jeremiah described mourning coming upon Gaza and Ashkelon.

Spiritual Lesson

Confidence built on other human powers collapses when those powers fall.

Zechariah 9:6

“A foreigner will occupy Ashdod, and the pride of the Philistines will be cut off.”

The pride of Philistia would be broken.

The people who had long opposed Israel would lose political and cultural dominance.

A mixed or foreign population would occupy Ashdod.

Cross References in Simple American English

Zephaniah 2:5 — God pronounced judgment on the Philistine coast.

Amos 1:8 — God promised to cut off rulers from Philistine cities.

Isaiah 14:29 — Philistia was warned not to celebrate too quickly over temporary relief.

Key Truth

National pride does not last forever.

Zechariah 9:7

“I will remove the blood from their mouths and their detestable things from between their teeth. Those who remain will belong to our God and become leaders in Judah, and Ekron will be like the Jebusites.”

This verse is remarkable because judgment gives way to transformation.

The Philistines were associated with pagan worship and practices that were offensive to God.

Yet God says a remnant would be purified.

Those who remained would **belong to our God**.

This is not only destruction.

It is redemption.

The mention of the Jebusites recalls a people once opposed to Israel who were eventually incorporated into life around Jerusalem.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 56:7 — God promised that people from outside Israel could come worship Him.

2 Samuel 5:7 — David conquered the Jebusite stronghold of Jerusalem.

Acts 15:17 — God's redemptive plan includes Gentiles seeking the Lord.

Spiritual Lesson

God can transform former enemies into worshipers.

Application

Never assume that someone is beyond the reach of God's grace.

II. GOD PROTECTS HIS HOUSE

Zechariah 9:8

“I will encamp around My house to guard it against marauding forces. No oppressor will march through My people again, for now I Myself have seen it with My eyes.”

God promises personal protection.

He says:

“I will encamp around My house.”

The language pictures the Lord Himself forming a defensive camp around His people.

The phrase:

“I Myself have seen it with My eyes”

emphasizes His awareness.

He has seen their oppression.

He has not forgotten.

Cross References in Simple American English

Psalms 34:7 — The angel of the Lord surrounds those who fear Him and delivers them.

Isaiah 31:5 — The Lord protects Jerusalem like birds hovering over their young.

Nehemiah 4:9 — God's people prayed and set a guard while rebuilding Jerusalem.

Key Truth

God sees the suffering of His people.

Application

Divine protection does not mean believers never face hardship.

It means no hardship falls outside God's knowledge or purpose.

III. THE COMING KING OF PEACE

Zechariah 9:9

“Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! See, your King comes to you, righteous and victorious, yet humble and riding on a donkey—on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

This is one of the most important Messianic prophecies in Scripture.

Jerusalem is told to rejoice because:

Her King is coming.

Notice His characteristics.

He is:

Righteous.

Victorious.

Humble.

And He rides on a donkey.

Kings could ride powerful warhorses when presenting military strength.

A donkey was associated with humility and peaceful kingship.

Jesus deliberately fulfilled this prophecy when He entered Jerusalem.

Cross References in Simple American English

Matthew 21:5 — Matthew identifies Jesus' entry into Jerusalem as the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy.

John 12:15 — John also records that Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey.

Genesis 49:11 — Judah's royal blessing includes imagery involving a donkey and the coming ruler.

Christ Connection

Jesus is the King of Zechariah 9:9.

His triumphal entry was not an accidental resemblance.

It was a deliberate Messianic fulfillment.

Application

Jesus is not merely a teacher.

He is King.

The proper response is not admiration alone.

It is submission.

Zechariah 9:10

“I will remove the chariots from Ephraim and the warhorses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.”

The King comes humbly, but His reign is universal.

He removes the instruments of war.

Chariots disappear.

Warhorses disappear.

Battle bows are broken.

His kingdom brings peace.

His rule extends:

“from sea to sea.”

“to the ends of the earth.”

This goes far beyond the first-century entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem.

It looks toward the complete reign of Messiah.

Cross References in Simple American English

Psalms 72:8 — The Messianic King will rule from sea to sea and to the ends of the earth.

Micah 5:10 — God promises to remove warhorses and chariots.

Isaiah 9:6 — The Messiah is called the Prince of Peace.

Key Doctrine

Christ’s kingdom is universal.

Application

Human governments may be temporary.

Christ's rule will be complete.

IV. DELIVERANCE FOR PRISONERS OF HOPE

Zechariah 9:11

“As for you, because of the blood of My covenant with you, I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit.”

The basis of deliverance is covenant.

The phrase **“blood of My covenant”** recalls Israel's covenant relationship established through sacrifice.

A waterless pit could be used as a prison.

Joseph had been placed in such a pit.

God promises liberation.

Cross References in Simple American English

Exodus 24:8 — Moses sprinkled the blood of the covenant on the people.

Matthew 26:28 — Jesus spoke of His blood as the blood of the covenant poured out for forgiveness.

Genesis 37:24 — Joseph was thrown into an empty pit without water.

Christ Connection

The language of covenant blood ultimately points toward Jesus Christ.

His blood establishes the new covenant and provides freedom from the deeper prison of sin.

Application

Our hope rests not in our ability to free ourselves but in God's covenant grace.

Zechariah 9:12

“Return to your stronghold, you prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you.”

What a remarkable description:

“Prisoners of hope.”

They were prisoners in one sense.

But hope had captured them even more strongly than their circumstances.

God calls them back to a place of security.

He promises restoration.

Cross References in Simple American English

Job 42:10 — God restored Job’s fortunes after his suffering.

Isaiah 61:7 — God promised double blessing in place of former shame.

Joel 3:16 — The Lord will be a refuge and stronghold for His people.

Spiritual Lesson

Believers can be surrounded by hardship and still be held by hope.

Application

Do not become a prisoner of fear when God calls you a prisoner of hope.

Zechariah 9:13

“For I will bend Judah as My bow and fill it with Ephraim. I will rouse your sons, Zion, against your sons, Greece, and wield you like a warrior’s sword.”

God now describes His people as weapons in His hand.

Judah is the bow.

Ephraim is the arrow.

Zion becomes a sword.

The reference to Greece is striking.

At the time of Zechariah, Persia ruled the region.

Yet Greek power would later rise.

This likely looks forward to later conflicts between Jewish people and Greek rulers, especially the period surrounding the Maccabean revolt against Seleucid oppression.

Cross References in Simple American English

Daniel 8:21 — Daniel identifies Greece as a major coming kingdom.

Joel 3:6 — The Greeks are mentioned in connection with the selling of God's people.

Isaiah 49:2 — God's servant is compared to a sharpened weapon in His hand.

Spiritual Lesson

God can use weak people as instruments against powerful enemies.

V. THE LORD'S VICTORY AND SALVATION

Zechariah 9:14

“Then the Lord will appear over them; His arrow will flash like lightning. The Sovereign Lord will sound the trumpet and march in the storms of the south.”

God is pictured as a divine warrior.

He appears above His people.

His arrow flashes.

The trumpet sounds.

The storm moves forward.

The imagery communicates overwhelming divine intervention.

Cross References in Simple American English

Habakkuk 3:11 — God's weapons are pictured flashing with divine brightness.

Psalms 18:14 — God sends out arrows and scatters His enemies.

Joel 2:1 — The trumpet announces the coming day of the Lord.

Key Truth

God is not powerless in the face of evil.

Zechariah 9:15

“The Lord Almighty will shield them. They will destroy and overcome with sling stones. They will drink and roar as with wine, they will be filled like a sacrificial bowl, like the corners of the altar.”

The Lord shields His people.

Victory comes under divine protection.

The imagery of sacrificial bowls and altar corners suggests a battlefield so complete that the scene is described with the language of sacrifice.

The verse is vivid and severe.

The point is not uncontrolled violence.

It is the certainty of divine victory over hostile power.

Cross References in Simple American English

1 Samuel 17:49 — David defeated Goliath using a sling stone.

Exodus 27:2 — The altar had projecting corners associated with sacrifice.

Isaiah 49:26 — God promises to overthrow those who violently oppress His people.

Spiritual Lesson

God’s victory is decisive.

Zechariah 9:16

“The Lord their God will save His people on that day as the Shepherd saves His flock. They will sparkle in His land like jewels in a crown.”

The imagery suddenly changes.

The divine warrior becomes a Shepherd.

God saves His people as a shepherd saves sheep.

Then they are described as:

“jewels in a crown.”

The people who had once been scattered, humiliated, and oppressed become precious ornaments in God’s land.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ezekiel 34:12 — God promises to search for and rescue His scattered sheep.

Isaiah 62:3 — God's people are pictured as a beautiful crown in His hand.

Malachi 3:17 — God says His faithful people will belong to Him like treasured possessions.

Key Truth

God does not merely tolerate His redeemed people.

He treasures them.

Application

Your value is ultimately determined by belonging to God, not by how the world evaluates you.

Zechariah 9:17

“How great is His goodness, and how great His beauty! Grain will make the young men thrive, and new wine the young women.”

The chapter ends not with warfare but with wonder.

“How great is His goodness.”

“How great His beauty.”

The emphasis returns to blessing.

The land is fruitful.

The people flourish.

God's goodness produces abundance and joy.

Cross References in Simple American English

Psalms 27:13 — David expected to see the goodness of the Lord.

Joel 2:19 — God promised grain, new wine, and oil to His restored people.

Psalms 144:12 — Young men and women are pictured flourishing under God's blessing.

Spiritual Lesson

The final goal of God's salvation is not merely escape from danger.

It is life under His goodness.

VI. MAJOR THEMES OF ZECHARIAH 9

1. God Judges Human Pride

Tyre had wisdom.

Wealth.

Fortifications.

None of them could stop God.

2. God Can Redeem Former Enemies

The Philistine remnant would become part of God's people.

3. God Protects His People

He personally encamps around His house.

4. The Messiah Is King

Zechariah plainly announces:

“Your King comes to you.”

5. The Messiah Is Humble

He rides on a donkey rather than displaying human pride.

6. The Messiah Brings Peace

His reign removes war and extends throughout the earth.

7. Covenant Blood Brings Deliverance

Prisoners are released because of the blood of the covenant.

8. God's People Are Prisoners of Hope

Hard circumstances do not destroy covenant hope.

9. God Fights for His People

His intervention brings victory.

10. God Shepherds His People

The Warrior is also the Shepherd.

11. God Treasures His People

They are jewels in His crown.

VII. CHRIST IN ZECHARIAH 9

Zechariah 9 contains one of the strongest Messianic portraits in the Old Testament.

1. Christ Is the Coming King

Zechariah says:

“Your King comes to you.”

The New Testament directly applies this prophecy to Jesus.

2. Christ Is Righteous

Unlike sinful human rulers, Jesus rules in perfect righteousness.

3. Christ Is Humble

He entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey.

The eternal King came without worldly display.

4. Christ Is Victorious

His humility does not indicate weakness.

He comes possessing salvation and victory.

5. Christ Brings Peace to the Nations

His kingdom ultimately extends to the ends of the earth.

6. Christ Establishes the Covenant Through His Blood

Jesus said:

“This is My blood of the covenant.”

The language of Zechariah 9:11 finds profound fulfillment in Him.

7. Christ Is the Shepherd

Jesus identifies Himself as the Good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep.

VIII. ZECHARIAH 9:9 AND THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Zechariah 9:9 deserves special attention because of its direct New Testament fulfillment.

Centuries after Zechariah wrote these words, Jesus approached Jerusalem.

He deliberately rode on a young donkey.

The crowds welcomed Him.

Matthew and John both identify the event with this prophecy.

The symbolism was unmistakable.

Jesus was publicly presenting Himself as Israel’s promised King.

But He came humbly.

He did not enter on a warhorse.

He came in peace.

Yet the same King who first came in humility will ultimately rule with universal authority.

Key Principle

The first coming revealed the humility of the King.

The final fulfillment will reveal the full extent of His reign.

IX. THE KING WHO BREAKS THE BOW

Human rulers often establish kingdoms through warfare.

Zechariah's King is different.

He removes:

Chariots.

Warhorses.

Battle bows.

Then He proclaims peace.

His kingdom does not ultimately depend on the weapons of men.

Spiritual Lesson

The peace of Christ is not merely the temporary absence of conflict.

It comes through the righteous reign of the rightful King.

X. PRISONERS OF HOPE

Few expressions in Zechariah are more memorable than:

“Prisoners of hope.”

A prisoner is someone held by something he cannot easily escape.

God tells His people to let hope hold them that tightly.

They had reasons for discouragement.

They had experienced exile.

Loss.

War.

Humiliation.

Yet God's promises gave them reason to hope.

Application

The believer should be so firmly held by God's promises that despair cannot easily carry him away.

XI. THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT

Verse 11 connects deliverance to blood.

This theme runs throughout Scripture.

In Exodus, blood confirmed the covenant.

In the sacrificial system, blood represented atonement.

At the Last Supper, Jesus said His blood established the new covenant.

At the cross, that blood was shed.

Key Doctrine

Our deliverance is costly.

Salvation is free to us because Christ paid the price.

XII. WARRIOR AND SHEPHERD

Zechariah 9 presents two pictures of God that might initially seem opposite.

He is a Warrior.

He is a Shepherd.

As Warrior, He defeats the enemy.

As Shepherd, He rescues the flock.

These are not contradictions.

They are two sides of divine salvation.

God judges what destroys His people.

God protects those who belong to Him.

XIII. KEY LESSONS FROM ZECHARIAH 9

1. Human pride eventually falls.

Wealth, intelligence, and fortifications cannot replace God.

2. God can turn enemies into worshipers.

The Philistine remnant would belong to Him.

3. God personally watches over His people.

He sees their oppression.

4. Jesus is the promised King.

His triumphal entry directly fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy.

5. The King is humble but victorious.

Humility and authority are perfectly united in Christ.

6. Christ's kingdom is a kingdom of peace.

His rule will ultimately reach the ends of the earth.

7. Covenant blood provides freedom.

Deliverance comes through God's redemptive covenant.

8. Believers are prisoners of hope.

God's promises are stronger than our circumstances.

9. God fights for His people.

The final victory belongs to Him.

10. God treasures His people.

They are jewels in His crown.

XIV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Zechariah 9 challenges us to ask:

What am I trusting for security?

Do I depend more on wealth or wisdom than on God?

Have I submitted to Jesus as King?

Do I admire His humility while resisting His authority?

Am I living as a prisoner of fear or a prisoner of hope?

Do I trust the blood of Christ as the basis of my deliverance?

Do I believe God sees what His people suffer?

Do I see myself as part of the Shepherd's flock?

Do I believe God can transform former enemies into members of His people?

XV. QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What does the word “burden” communicate in Zechariah 9:1?

Answer

It refers to a serious prophetic message, especially one involving divine judgment.

Question 2

Why could Tyre not depend on its wisdom and wealth?

Answer

Because neither intelligence, money, nor fortifications could protect it from God's judgment.

Question 3

What happened to the pride of the Philistines?

Answer

God promised to cut it off and remove their corrupt practices.

Question 4

What surprising promise is made concerning the Philistine remnant?

Answer

Those who remained would belong to God and be incorporated among His people.

Question 5

How does God describe His protection in verse 8?

Answer

He says He will personally encamp around His house and guard His people.

Question 6

Who is the King in Zechariah 9:9?

Answer

The King is the promised Messiah, fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Question 7

How did Jesus fulfill Zechariah 9:9?

Answer

He entered Jerusalem humbly, riding on a young donkey.

Question 8

What kind of kingdom does the Messiah establish?

Answer

A kingdom characterized by righteousness, peace, and worldwide rule.

Question 9

What does the blood of the covenant represent?

Answer

It represents the sacrificial basis of God's covenant relationship and ultimately points toward the blood of Christ.

Question 10

What is a “prisoner of hope”?

Answer

It is someone whose confidence in God's promises remains stronger than present circumstances.

Question 11

What is significant about the reference to Greece?

Answer

It anticipates later historical conflict involving Greek power and God's people.

Question 12

How is the Lord pictured in verses 14–15?

Answer

He is pictured as a powerful divine Warrior who intervenes for His people.

Question 13

How is He pictured in verse 16?

Answer

He is pictured as a Shepherd who saves His flock.

Question 14

What do the jewels in a crown symbolize?

Answer

They symbolize the beauty, value, and preciousness of God's redeemed people.

Question 15

What is the central message of Zechariah 9?

Answer

God judges proud nations, protects His people, sends the humble Messianic King, establishes peace through Him, and saves His people through covenant grace.

XVI. FINAL THOUGHT

Zechariah Chapter 9 begins with cities that appear powerful.

Tyre has wealth.

Fortresses.

Wisdom.

Prestige.

But none of those can save her.

Then the chapter turns toward Jerusalem.

And instead of another earthly empire, God introduces a King unlike every other king.

He is righteous.

He is victorious.

Yet He is humble.

He rides on a donkey.

Centuries later, Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem exactly that way.

The prophecy became history.

But Zechariah's vision reaches farther still.

The King who came humbly will establish peace.

His rule will reach the ends of the earth.

Prisoners will be freed because of covenant blood.

God will defend His people.

The Shepherd will save His flock.

And those who once seemed scattered and insignificant will shine like jewels in His crown.

That gives God's people a reason to hope.

We are not prisoners of circumstances.

We are not prisoners of fear.

We are not prisoners of the kingdoms of this world.

In Christ, we are called:

Prisoners of hope.

So rejoice, daughter of Zion.

Your King has come.

Your King will reign.

Your Shepherd will save.

And His goodness and beauty will be seen throughout His kingdom.

Key Verse

“Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! See, your King comes to you, righteous and victorious, yet humble and riding on a donkey.” — Zechariah 9:9

Key Phrase

The humble King has come, and His righteous reign will bring salvation, peace, and hope to His people.

Zechariah Chapter 10 — The Lord Strengthens and Restores His People

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Zechariah Chapter 10 continues the message of hope begun in the previous chapter.

The Lord has promised a coming King.

He has promised victory.

He has promised peace.

Now He speaks about restoring and strengthening His scattered people.

The chapter begins with a command to seek the Lord rather than idols.

Then God condemns false shepherds who failed His people.

He promises to care for His flock personally, strengthen Judah, restore the descendants of Joseph, gather those who have been scattered, defeat the powers that oppressed them, and enable His people to walk in His name.

A major theme runs through the whole chapter:

God Himself is the source of His people's strength.

Human leaders fail.

Idols lie.

False prophets deceive.

Political powers rise and fall.

But the Lord remains faithful.

The chapter moves from **false sources of hope** to **the true Shepherd**, from **scattering** to **gathering**, and from **weakness** to **strength in the Lord**.

Its central message is:

The Lord rejects false shepherds, gathers His scattered people, restores them in compassion, and gives them strength to walk faithfully in His name.

I. GOD SENDS THE RAIN

Zechariah 10:1

“Ask the Lord for rain in the season of the spring rains. The Lord makes the storm clouds and gives showers of rain to all people, so that every field produces grass.”

The chapter begins with a simple command:

Ask the Lord.

Agricultural life depended heavily upon seasonal rain.

The spring rains were especially important for bringing crops to maturity.

Israel had historically been tempted to look toward pagan fertility gods for rain and agricultural prosperity.

God reminds them that rain does not come from idols.

The Lord creates the storm clouds.

The Lord sends the showers.

The Lord makes the fields fruitful.

Cross References in Simple American English

Deuteronomy 11:14 — God promised to send rain in its proper season so the people could gather grain, new wine, and oil.

James 5:18 — Elijah prayed again, and God sent rain upon the land.

Joel 2:23 — God's people are told to rejoice because He sends the seasonal rains faithfully.

Spiritual Lesson

God is the true source of provision.

Application

When you have a need, seek God rather than placing ultimate confidence in human substitutes.

Zechariah 10:2

“The idols speak lies, the fortune-tellers see false visions, and they tell deceitful dreams. Their comfort is worthless. That is why the people wander like sheep, troubled and helpless, because they have no shepherd.”

The contrast with verse 1 is sharp.

God gives real rain.

Idols give lies.

False spiritual leaders offered visions, dreams, and words of comfort.

But their promises were empty.

The result was confusion.

The people wandered **like sheep without a shepherd**.

This is one of Scripture's most important pictures of spiritual helplessness.

Sheep need guidance.

Protection.

Provision.

Leadership.

Without a trustworthy shepherd, they become vulnerable.

Cross References in Simple American English

Jeremiah 14:14 — God condemned prophets who spoke false visions and lies that He had not given them.

Matthew 9:36 — Jesus looked at the crowds with compassion because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

Ezekiel 34:5 — Israel's sheep were scattered because there was no faithful shepherd.

Key Truth

False teaching never truly comforts.

It eventually leaves people confused and spiritually vulnerable.

Application

Do not judge spiritual teaching merely by whether it sounds encouraging.

Ask whether it is true.

II. GOD'S ANGER AGAINST FALSE SHEPHERDS

Zechariah 10:3

“My anger burns against the shepherds, and I will punish the leaders. For the Lord Almighty will care for His flock, the people of Judah, and make them like His proud warhorse in battle.”

God turns His attention toward the shepherds.

These shepherds represent leaders responsible for guiding the people.

Instead of serving faithfully, they had failed.

God says His anger burns against them.

Leadership brings accountability.

But the verse also contains a wonderful promise:

The Lord Himself will care for His flock.

The neglected sheep will become like a strong warhorse.

The change is dramatic.

Weak sheep become strong for battle because the Lord visits and strengthens them.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ezekiel 34:2 — God condemned shepherds who fed themselves instead of caring for the flock.

Jeremiah 23:2 — God promised judgment against shepherds who scattered His sheep.

Jeremiah 3:15 — God promised to give His people faithful shepherds who would lead them with knowledge and understanding.

Spiritual Lesson

God holds spiritual leaders accountable for how they treat His people.

Application

Leadership in God's work is stewardship, not ownership.

Zechariah 10:4

“From Judah will come the cornerstone, the tent peg, the battle bow, and every ruler.”

This verse contains several strong images.

From Judah will come:

The cornerstone.

The tent peg.

The battle bow.

The ruler.

Each image communicates strength and stability.

The cornerstone gives structure to a building.

The tent peg gives stability.

The battle bow represents strength in conflict.

The ruler provides leadership.

In its fullest Messianic sense, this points toward the coming ruler from Judah.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 28:16 — God promised to place a precious and dependable cornerstone in Zion.

Ephesians 2:20 — Jesus Christ is described as the chief cornerstone.

Genesis 49:10 — The ruler's authority is promised through the tribe of Judah.

Christ Connection

Jesus Christ is the ultimate Cornerstone who comes from Judah.

Application

Everything stable in God's kingdom rests upon Christ.

Zechariah 10:5

“Together they will be like mighty warriors who trample their enemies in the mud of the streets in battle. They will fight because the Lord is with them, and their enemies on horses will be put to shame.”

The people who had once wandered helplessly now become mighty warriors.

Why?

Not because they suddenly became naturally superior.

The verse gives the reason:

“Because the Lord is with them.”

That changes everything.

Enemies may have horses.

God's people have the presence of God.

Cross References in Simple American English

Micah 7:10 — God's enemies will eventually be brought low and trampled down.

Psalms 18:42 — David described his enemies being crushed like dust and mud.

Isaiah 41:15 — God promised to make His weak people into a powerful instrument in His hand.

Key Principle

The presence of God is greater than the resources of the enemy.

Application

Do not measure spiritual strength only by visible resources.

III. GOD'S RESTORATION OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL

Zechariah 10:6

“I will strengthen Judah and save the descendants of Joseph. I will bring them back because I have compassion on them. It will be as though I had never rejected them, for I am the Lord their God, and I will answer them.”

This is one of the strongest restoration promises in the chapter.

God mentions both:

Judah — representing the southern kingdom.

Joseph — representing the northern tribes, especially Ephraim and Manasseh.

The promise therefore reaches toward the restoration of the whole covenant people.

Notice the verbs:

I will strengthen.

I will save.

I will bring them back.

The reason is equally important:

“Because I have compassion on them.”

Restoration flows from God's mercy.

Cross References in Simple American English

Jeremiah 31:20 — God speaks tenderly of Ephraim and declares that His heart yearns with compassion.

Hosea 1:10 — Those once called “not My people” would again be called children of the living God.

Romans 11:2 — God has not rejected the people whom He foreknew.

Spiritual Lesson

God's compassion is greater than His people's failure.

Application

Restoration begins not with our worthiness but with God's mercy.

Zechariah 10:7

“The people of Ephraim will become like mighty warriors, and their hearts will rejoice as if from wine. Their children will see it and be glad; their hearts will rejoice in the Lord.”

Restoration produces both strength and joy.

Ephraim would become courageous.

But the deepest joy would not be in military success.

It would be:

“in the Lord.”

The blessing also reaches the next generation.

Their children would see and rejoice.

Cross References in Simple American English

Psalms 104:15 — Wine is described as something that gladdens the human heart.

Judges 6:34 — The Spirit of the Lord empowered Gideon for courageous leadership.

Jeremiah 31:13 — God promised to turn mourning into joy and comfort His people.

Key Truth

True restoration produces joy centered on God.

Application

The greatest legacy we can give the next generation is a life that rejoices in the Lord.

Zechariah 10:8

“I will whistle for them and gather them in, for I have redeemed them. They will be as numerous as before.”

The image is striking.

God whistles or signals for His scattered people.

Like a shepherd calling animals, He summons them home.

Why can He gather them?

Because:

“I have redeemed them.”

Redemption means they belong to Him.

The scattered people are not forgotten.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 5:26 — God whistles for distant nations and they respond quickly.

Isaiah 43:5 — God promises to gather His children from east and west.

Ezekiel 37:21 — God promises to gather Israel from the nations and bring them back to their land.

Spiritual Lesson

The Redeemer knows how to gather those who belong to Him.

Zechariah 10:9

**“Though I scatter them among the nations, they will remember Me in faraway places.
They and their children will live and return.”**

Scattering had been part of judgment.

But even in distant nations, God would not allow His people to disappear from His purposes.

They would remember Him.

Their children would live.

They would return.

The language emphasizes preservation across generations.

Cross References in Simple American English

Deuteronomy 30:3 — God promised to gather His people again after scattering them.

Leviticus 26:40 — Even in exile, God's people could confess their sins and return to Him.

Nehemiah 1:9 — God promised to gather His people even from the farthest places if they returned to Him.

Key Principle

Distance from the land does not place anyone beyond God's reach.

Application

God can restore people even after long seasons of wandering.

IV. GOD'S DELIVERANCE

Zechariah 10:10

“I will bring them back from Egypt and gather them out of Assyria. I will bring them to Gilead and Lebanon, until there is no more room for them.”

Egypt and Assyria represent major historical places of oppression and exile.

God promises a new exodus-like gathering.

The return will be so abundant that Gilead and Lebanon will seem unable to contain the population.

This is a picture of overflowing restoration.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 11:11 — God promised to gather His remnant from Assyria, Egypt, and other lands.

Hosea 11:11 — God's people would return trembling from Egypt and Assyria.

Micah 7:14 — God's flock is pictured feeding again in Gilead and Bashan.

Spiritual Lesson

God can restore more fully than people expect.

Zechariah 10:11

“They will pass through the sea of trouble; the waves will be struck down and the depths of the Nile will dry up. The pride of Assyria will be humbled, and the power of Egypt will fall.”

This verse uses exodus imagery.

The sea is overcome.

Waters are struck down.

Proud nations lose their strength.

The message recalls God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt through the Red Sea.

No obstacle will prevent the regathering.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 11:15 — God promises to dry up waters and make a way for His returning people.

Exodus 14:22 — Israel passed through the sea on dry ground.

Isaiah 19:5 — The waters of Egypt are pictured drying up under divine judgment.

Key Truth

The God who made a way through the sea before can make a way again.

Application

Do not assume that an obstacle is impossible simply because there appears to be no path through it.

Zechariah 10:12

“I will strengthen My people in the Lord, and they will walk in My name,” declares the Lord.

The chapter ends exactly where its deepest message has been leading.

God promises strength.

But notice the phrase:

“in the Lord.”

Their strength will not be independent strength.

It will be strength rooted in relationship with God.

Then:

“They will walk in My name.”

To walk in God's name means to live under His authority, reflect His character, and belong openly to Him.

Cross References in Simple American English

Micah 4:5 — God's people declare that they will walk in the name of the Lord forever.

Philippians 4:13 — Paul says that he can endure all things through Christ who strengthens him.

Psalms 20:7 — Some trust in military power, but God's people trust in His name.

Key Principle

God does not merely strengthen His people to survive.

He strengthens them to walk faithfully with Him.

Application

The goal of divine strength is obedient living.

V. MAJOR THEMES OF ZECHARIAH 10

1. God Is the True Source of Provision

Rain comes from Him.

Fruitfulness comes from Him.

Blessing comes from Him.

2. Idols and False Prophets Cannot Deliver

They speak lies and offer worthless comfort.

3. God Judges False Shepherds

Leaders who exploit or neglect His people are accountable to Him.

4. God Himself Shepherds His Flock

When human shepherds fail, the Lord does not abandon His sheep.

5. The Cornerstone Comes from Judah

This points toward the Messiah.

Jesus Christ is the true Cornerstone.

6. God Strengthens His People

Weak sheep become mighty warriors because the Lord is with them.

7. God Restores with Compassion

His mercy is the basis of restoration.

8. God Gathers the Scattered

No distance is too far.

No nation is beyond His reach.

9. God Defeats Oppressive Powers

Assyria's pride and Egypt's strength are brought down.

10. God Enables His People to Walk in His Name

Restoration ends in faithful living.

VI. THE FALSE SHEPHERDS AND THE TRUE SHEPHERD

The shepherd theme is especially important in Zechariah.

Israel's leaders were supposed to care for God's people.

Instead, many failed.

Some exploited the flock.

Others ignored danger.

Others offered false spiritual guidance.

God says:

“My anger burns against the shepherds.”

But then He promises:

“The Lord Almighty will care for His flock.”

This prepares us for Jesus.

In John 10, Jesus says:

“I am the Good Shepherd.”

The false shepherds use the sheep.

The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

VII. CHRIST IN ZECHARIAH 10

1. Christ Is the Cornerstone

Zechariah says the cornerstone comes from Judah.

Jesus came from Judah.

The New Testament identifies Him as the chief Cornerstone.

Everything in God's redeemed community is built upon Him.

2. Christ Is the True Shepherd

The people wandered because they lacked a faithful shepherd.

Jesus saw the crowds in the same condition and had compassion on them.

He is the Shepherd who gathers, protects, feeds, and saves.

3. Christ Gathers the Scattered

Jesus speaks of gathering His sheep into one flock under one Shepherd.

The gathering language of Zechariah points toward God's broader redemptive purpose.

4. Christ Gives Strength

The believer's strength does not ultimately come from personality, ability, or circumstance.

It comes through union with Christ.

VIII. THE CORNERSTONE, TENT PEG, AND BATTLE BOW

Zechariah 10:4 gives several images worth examining.

The Cornerstone

The cornerstone gives alignment and stability.

Christ is the foundation of God's people.

The Tent Peg

A strong peg holds a tent securely in place.

This pictures stability.

The Battle Bow

The bow represents power in conflict.

The Ruler

The ruler represents authority and leadership.

Together the images reveal a coming figure from Judah who brings:

Stability.

Strength.

Victory.

Leadership.

These themes converge ultimately in Christ.

IX. GOD'S COMPASSION AND RESTORATION

Verse 6 is especially tender.

God says He will restore them:

“Because I have compassion on them.”

God's restoration is not reluctant.

He is not forced to show mercy.

Compassion flows from His character.

The people had failed.

They had experienced judgment.

Yet God still called Himself:

“The Lord their God.”

Spiritual Lesson

Discipline does not erase covenant compassion.

X. “I WILL WHISTLE FOR THEM”

Verse 8 gives one of the most personal pictures in the chapter.

God calls.

His people respond.

The Shepherd knows His flock.

He can find them in distant places.

He can summon them home.

This reminds us of Jesus' words that His sheep hear His voice.

Application

The voice of the true Shepherd leads home.

False voices scatter.

Christ gathers.

XI. A NEW EXODUS

The language in verses 10–11 deliberately recalls the Exodus.

Egypt appears again.

The sea appears again.

Waters are struck down again.

Enemies lose their strength again.

The original Exodus was not merely a historical event.

It became a pattern of God's saving power.

Key Principle

The God who delivered before remains able to deliver again.

XII. KEY LESSONS FROM ZECHARIAH 10

1. Seek God for what only God can provide.

Do not look to idols for what belongs to the Lord alone.

2. False spiritual guidance produces wandering.

Truth matters because people need faithful direction.

3. God holds leaders accountable.

Shepherds answer to the Owner of the flock.

4. God personally cares for His people.

He does not abandon them when leaders fail.

5. Christ is the Cornerstone from Judah.

Our stability is found in Him.

6. God's presence creates courage.

His people fight because He is with them.

7. Restoration flows from divine compassion.

God's mercy gives hope to those who have failed.

8. The Redeemer gathers His scattered people.

Distance cannot defeat His purpose.

9. God can make a path through impossible obstacles.

The sea of trouble cannot stop Him.

10. True strength leads to faithful walking.

God strengthens His people so that they will walk in His name.

XIII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Zechariah 10 challenges us to ask:

Where do I look first when I need provision?

Am I trusting something other than God for security?

Am I listening to spiritual voices that tell me what I want to hear instead of what is true?

If I lead others, am I shepherding them faithfully?

Do I see Jesus as my true Shepherd?

Is Christ really the cornerstone of my life?

Am I allowing past rejection or failure to make me doubt God's compassion?

Do I believe God can gather people who have wandered far away?

What “sea of trouble” am I afraid I cannot cross?

Am I walking in God's name or merely asking Him for strength?

XIV. QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why were the people told to ask the Lord for rain?

Answer

Because God alone is the true source of provision and fruitfulness.

Question 2

What did the idols and fortune-tellers provide?

Answer

They gave lies, false visions, deceitful dreams, and worthless comfort.

Question 3

Why were the people wandering like sheep?

Answer

They lacked faithful shepherds and had been misled by false spiritual guidance.

Question 4

Why was God angry with the shepherds?

Answer

They had failed to care properly for His people and had led them badly.

Question 5

What did God promise to do for His flock?

Answer

He promised to care for them personally and strengthen them.

Question 6

What comes from Judah according to verse 4?

Answer

The cornerstone, tent peg, battle bow, and ruler.

Question 7

How does the cornerstone point toward Christ?

Answer

Jesus came from Judah and is identified in the New Testament as the chief Cornerstone of God's people.

Question 8

Why would Judah's people become mighty warriors?

Answer

Because the Lord would be with them.

Question 9

Why would God restore Judah and Joseph?

Answer

Because He had compassion on them.

Question 10

What does the phrase “as though I had never rejected them” emphasize?

Answer

It emphasizes the completeness and tenderness of God's restoration.

Question 11

What does God mean when He says He will whistle for His people?

Answer

It pictures the Shepherd calling and gathering His scattered flock.

Question 12

Why can God gather them?

Answer

Because He has redeemed them and they belong to Him.

Question 13

What happens even when God's people are scattered among the nations?

Answer

They remember Him, survive, and eventually return.

Question 14

What do Egypt and Assyria represent in the restoration promise?

Answer

They represent major historical places of oppression and exile from which God would gather His people.

Question 15

What is the meaning of passing through the “sea of trouble”?

Answer

It pictures God's ability to lead His people through overwhelming obstacles, recalling the Exodus.

Question 16

How does Zechariah 10 end?

Answer

God promises to strengthen His people in the Lord so that they will walk in His name.

Question 17

What is the central message of Zechariah 10?

Answer

God rejects false sources of hope, cares for His flock, restores His scattered people with compassion, defeats their enemies, and strengthens them to walk faithfully in His name.

XV. FINAL THOUGHT

Zechariah Chapter 10 begins with rain and ends with walking.

At the beginning, God tells His people:

Ask the Lord.

At the end, He promises:

They will walk in My name.

Between those statements is the story of restoration.

False gods lie.

False prophets deceive.

False shepherds fail.

But God remains faithful.

He sends the rain.

He cares for the flock.

He provides the Cornerstone.

He strengthens Judah.

He restores Joseph.

He gathers the scattered.

He redeems those who belong to Him.

He makes a way through the sea of trouble.

He humbles proud enemies.

And He gives His people strength.

That is the message believers need when human leadership disappoints and circumstances become uncertain.

Your Shepherd has not lost you.

Your Redeemer has not forgotten you.

Your Cornerstone has not moved.

Your God is still able to call you home.

So do not place your hope in idols.

Do not trust false voices.

Do not measure God's faithfulness by human failure.

Look to the Lord.

Ask Him for the rain.

Follow the Shepherd.

Stand upon the Cornerstone.

Trust His compassion.

And when He gives you strength, use that strength for its intended purpose:

Walk in His name.

Key Verse

“I will strengthen My people in the Lord, and they will walk in My name,” declares the Lord. — Zechariah 10:12

Key Phrase

The Lord gathers, restores, and strengthens His people so they can walk faithfully in His name.

Zechariah Chapter 11 — The Rejected Shepherd and the Broken Covenant

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Zechariah Chapter 11 is one of the darkest and most prophetic chapters in the book.

Earlier chapters spoke of restoration, blessing, the coming King, the gathering of God's people, and the strengthening of the remnant. Chapter 11 turns to the consequences of rejecting God's shepherding care.

The chapter presents several powerful pictures:

Falling cedars.

Weeping shepherds.

A flock marked for slaughter.

Two staffs named Favor and Union.

Thirty pieces of silver.

A foolish shepherd.

These images reveal both historical judgment and prophetic truth.

At the center of the chapter is the rejection of the true Shepherd.

God had cared for His people.

He had protected them.

He had warned them.

He had sent prophets.

Yet the flock rejected faithful shepherding.

That rejection is prophetically connected with the later rejection of Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd.

One of the most striking prophecies in the chapter concerns the payment of **thirty pieces of silver**.

Centuries later, Judas Iscariot would betray Jesus Christ for exactly thirty pieces of silver.

Zechariah 11 therefore teaches a sobering truth:

When people reject the true Shepherd, they eventually become vulnerable to false shepherds.

The chapter can be divided into five major sections:

1. **Judgment on the Land — verses 1–3**
 2. **The Flock Doomed for Slaughter — verses 4–6**
 3. **The Two Staffs — verses 7–9**
 4. **The Broken Covenant and Thirty Pieces of Silver — verses 10–14**
 5. **The Foolish Shepherd — verses 15–17**
-

I. JUDGMENT ON THE LAND

Zechariah 11:1

“Open your doors, Lebanon, so that fire may devour your cedars.”

Lebanon was famous throughout the ancient world for its magnificent cedar forests.

The cedar represented:

Strength.

Height.

Beauty.

Durability.

Majesty.

But God announces that fire will consume even the cedars of Lebanon.

This is a picture of overwhelming judgment.

What appears strongest to mankind is not strong enough to resist God.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 10:34 — God will cut down the great forests of Lebanon, showing that human pride and strength can fall before Him.

Ezekiel 31:3 — Assyria was compared to a magnificent cedar of Lebanon because of its greatness and power.

Jeremiah 22:7 — God warned that destroyers would come and cut down the finest cedars.

Principle

Human greatness is temporary.

Spiritual Lesson

Anything built on pride can eventually fall.

Application

Do not place ultimate confidence in:

Wealth.

Political power.

Buildings.

Reputation.

Human leadership.

Only God is permanently secure.

Zechariah 11:2

“Wail, cypress tree, for the cedar has fallen, the mighty are ruined! Wail, oaks of Bashan, for the dense forest has been cut down.”

The destruction spreads.

The cedar falls.

Then the cypress mourns.

The mighty trees of Bashan are cut down.

The picture is one of complete devastation.

If the greatest have fallen, the lesser have no reason for pride.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 2:13 — God will humble the proud cedars of Lebanon and the mighty oaks of Bashan.

Amos 2:9 — God reminded Israel that He had destroyed enemies who were tall like cedars and strong like oaks.

Ezekiel 27:6 — The valuable oaks of Bashan were used in the construction of ships, showing the strength and wealth connected with the region.

Key Truth

God is able to bring down what humans consider untouchable.

Application

Never judge security by outward appearance alone.

Zechariah 11:3

“Listen! The shepherds are crying because their glory is ruined. Listen! The lions are roaring because the lush thickets of the Jordan are destroyed.”

The devastation affects both leaders and the natural environment around them.

The shepherds cry because their pasture and prosperity are gone.

The lions roar because their habitat has disappeared.

Everything connected with security and abundance is being removed.

The word **shepherds** can also point symbolically toward rulers and leaders.

Their **glory** has collapsed.

Cross References in Simple American English

Jeremiah 25:34 — God tells corrupt shepherds and leaders to cry because judgment is coming upon them.

Jeremiah 49:19 — A lion is pictured coming from the thick growth near the Jordan.

Jeremiah 12:5 — The dangerous thickets of the Jordan are used as a picture of threatening circumstances.

Spiritual Lesson

When God judges pride, positions of leadership cannot provide protection.

II. THE FLOCK DOOMED FOR SLAUGHTER

Zechariah 11:4

“This is what the Lord my God says: ‘Shepherd the flock marked for slaughter.’”

Zechariah is instructed to act as a shepherd.

But this is no ordinary flock.

It is described as:

“the flock marked for slaughter.”

The people were moving toward judgment.

Zechariah's shepherding role becomes a prophetic picture of God's care for a people who were nevertheless resisting Him.

Cross References in Simple American English

Jeremiah 12:3 — Jeremiah asks God to separate the wicked like sheep being prepared for slaughter.

Psalms 44:22 — God's people are pictured as sheep being led toward slaughter.

Isaiah 53:7 — The suffering Servant is described as a lamb led to slaughter.

Key Principle

God can faithfully shepherd people even while warning them of coming judgment.

Zechariah 11:5

“Their buyers kill them and go unpunished; those who sell them say, ‘Praise the Lord, I am rich!’ Even their own shepherds have no pity on them.”

This is a terrible description of corrupt leadership.

The flock is treated like merchandise.

Buyers kill them.

Sellers profit from them.

Their shepherds have no compassion.

Even worse, those making money from exploitation say:

“Praise the Lord, I am rich!”

They use God's name to justify greed.

Cross References in Simple American English

Amos 8:4 — God condemns those who exploit and take advantage of the poor.

Ezekiel 34:3 — Israel's shepherds fed themselves instead of feeding and protecting the flock.

James 5:4 — God hears the cries of workers who have been cheated out of what they were owed.

Spiritual Lesson

Religious language cannot make greed holy.

Application

A ministry is corrupt when leaders use people primarily to enrich themselves.

Zechariah 11:6

“For I will no longer have compassion on the people of this land,” declares the Lord. “I will hand everyone over to their neighbors and their king. They will devastate the land, and I will not rescue them from their power.”

Persistent rebellion has consequences.

God had shown patience.

He had sent prophets.

He had repeatedly called His people to repentance.

But there comes a point when divine restraint is removed.

The people would experience the consequences of the path they had chosen.

Cross References in Simple American English

Judges 2:14 — Because Israel repeatedly rebelled, God allowed enemies to plunder them.

2 Kings 21:14 — God warned that persistent disobedience would cause His people to be handed over to their enemies.

Hosea 1:6 — God announced a withdrawal of compassion because of continued rebellion.

Key Truth

God's patience should never be mistaken for permission to continue in sin.

III. THE TWO STAFFS

Zechariah 11:7

“So I shepherded the flock marked for slaughter, especially the poor and oppressed of the flock. I took two staffs and named one Favor and the other Union, and I shepherded the flock.”

Zechariah takes two staffs.

They are given meaningful names.

The first is:

Favor.

The second is:

Union.

These staffs represent blessings connected with God's shepherding.

Favor

Favor represents God's gracious protection, care, and restraint.

Union

Union represents harmony and brotherhood among God's people.

Notice also Zechariah's concern for:

“the poor and oppressed of the flock.”

God's shepherding has special concern for those who are vulnerable.

Cross References in Simple American English

Psalms 23:1 — The Lord is the Shepherd who cares for and provides for His people.

Ezekiel 34:16 — God promises to search for the lost, restore the scattered, and strengthen the weak.

John 10:11 — Jesus identifies Himself as the Good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep.

Christ Connection

Zechariah's role points beyond himself toward Jesus Christ, the true Good Shepherd.

Zechariah 11:8

“In one month I got rid of three shepherds. The flock hated me, and I grew weary of them.”

The identity of these three shepherds is not clearly explained in the text.

Many interpretations have been suggested.

The safest conclusion is that the verse represents the removal of corrupt or opposing leadership.

But the more important statement is:

“The flock hated me.”

The faithful shepherd was rejected.

This anticipates a theme that reaches its ultimate expression in Jesus Christ.

Cross References in Simple American English

Jeremiah 15:6 — God describes becoming weary with His people's repeated rebellion.

Matthew 23:37 — Jesus longed to gather Jerusalem under His care, but the people refused.

John 10:20 — Some people rejected Jesus and falsely accused Him instead of receiving Him as Shepherd.

Spiritual Lesson

People sometimes reject faithful shepherding because they do not want to submit to truth.

Zechariah 11:9

“So I said, ‘I will not be your shepherd. Let the dying die, the perishing perish, and let those who remain eat one another’s flesh.’”

The rejection of the shepherd leads to severe consequences.

If the flock will not accept faithful leadership, the shepherding protection is withdrawn.

The result is:

Death.

Destruction.

Division.

Self-destruction.

The flock begins devouring itself.

Cross References in Simple American English

Hosea 4:17 — Ephraim had chosen idols so persistently that God told the prophet to leave them alone.

Jeremiah 15:2 — Those who continually rejected God would face different forms of judgment.

Matthew 15:14 — Jesus warned that blind leaders and blind followers would fall together.

Key Principle

Rejecting God's authority does not create true freedom.

It creates chaos.

IV. THE BROKEN COVENANT

Zechariah 11:10

“Then I took my staff called Favor and broke it, revoking the covenant I had made with all the nations.”

Zechariah breaks the staff called **Favor**.

This represents the withdrawal of protective favor.

The covenant language here pictures God's restraint of surrounding nations and His shepherding protection over the flock.

That protection was being removed because the Shepherd had been rejected.

Cross References in Simple American English

Genesis 15:18 — God established a covenant with Abraham and promised the land to his descendants.

Jeremiah 31:32 — Israel repeatedly violated the covenant God had made with them.

Ezekiel 34:25 — God promises a covenant of peace in which His flock will live securely.

Spiritual Lesson

Grace is precious and should never be treated with contempt.

Zechariah 11:11

“It was broken that day, and the poor of the flock who were watching me knew it was the word of the Lord.”

Some among the flock understood the significance of the prophet's actions.

The poor and oppressed were watching.

They recognized that the message came from God.

This reveals an important biblical pattern:

The humble often recognize truths the proud reject.

Cross References in Simple American English

Zephaniah 3:12 — God promises to preserve a humble and lowly people who trust Him.

Luke 2:8 — Shepherds were among the first people to hear the announcement of Jesus' birth.

Matthew 11:25 — Jesus said that God often reveals spiritual truth to the humble while the proud fail to understand.

Key Truth

A humble heart is often more receptive to God's Word than a proud mind.

Zechariah 11:12

“I said to them, ‘If you think it best, give me my wages; but if not, keep them.’ So they paid me thirty pieces of silver.”

Now comes one of the most astonishing prophetic details in Zechariah.

The Shepherd asks the people to determine what His service was worth.

Their answer:

Thirty pieces of silver.

Under the Law, thirty shekels of silver was associated with compensation for the death of a slave.

The amount communicates contempt.

The Shepherd had been treated as though His value were little more than the price of a slave.

Cross References in Simple American English

Matthew 26:15 — Judas asked what the religious leaders would give him to betray Jesus, and they paid him thirty pieces of silver.

Exodus 21:32 — Thirty pieces of silver was the compensation associated with the death of a slave.

Matthew 27:3 — After Jesus was condemned, Judas regretted his betrayal and returned the thirty pieces of silver.

Christ Connection

This prophecy points directly toward the betrayal of Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Lesson

The world can place a very low price on the One heaven values infinitely.

Zechariah 11:13

“And the Lord said to me, ‘Throw it to the potter—the magnificent price at which they valued me!’ So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord, to the potter.”

The Lord responds with irony:

“The magnificent price at which they valued Me!”

Thirty pieces of silver was an insultingly low valuation.

Notice the prophetic details:

Thirty pieces of silver.

Thrown into the house of the Lord.

Connected with the potter.

These details later appear in the events surrounding Judas' betrayal of Jesus.

Judas returned the thirty pieces of silver.

He threw them into the temple.

The religious leaders used the money to purchase the potter's field.

Cross References in Simple American English

Matthew 27:9 — Matthew connects the betrayal money and the potter's field with the prophetic Scriptures.

Jeremiah 18:2 — Jeremiah was sent to the potter's house where God taught him a spiritual lesson.

Jeremiah 32:9 — Jeremiah recorded a symbolic purchase involving silver and God's promises of restoration.

Key Truth

Christ's betrayal was not outside God's knowledge.

The prophetic pattern had already been revealed centuries earlier.

Zechariah 11:14

“Then I broke my second staff called Union, breaking the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.”

The first staff, Favor, has already been broken.

Now Union is broken.

This represents division.

When God's shepherding rule is rejected, relationships among people begin breaking down as well.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ezekiel 37:19 — God promised eventually to unite Judah and Joseph into one people again.

1 Kings 12:16 — Israel divided into northern and southern kingdoms after Solomon's reign.

Hosea 1:11 — God promised that Judah and Israel would one day be reunited under one leader.

Spiritual Lesson

Rebellion against God eventually produces division among people.

V. THE FOOLISH SHEPHERD

Zechariah 11:15

“Then the Lord said to me, ‘Take once more the equipment of a foolish shepherd.’”

Zechariah is now commanded to portray another kind of shepherd.

The true shepherd has been rejected.

A foolish shepherd follows.

That progression is extremely important.

Principle

When people reject truth, they become more vulnerable to deception.

Cross References in Simple American English

John 10:12 — Jesus describes the hired worker who abandons the sheep when danger comes.

1 Samuel 13:13 — Samuel described Saul's disobedient behavior as foolish.

Ezekiel 34:8 — God condemned shepherds who allowed His flock to become prey.

Zechariah 11:16

“For I am raising up a shepherd in the land who will not care for the lost, or seek the young, or heal the injured, or feed the healthy. Instead, he will eat the meat of the fat sheep and tear off their hooves.”

This shepherd is everything a shepherd should not be.

He does not:

Seek the lost.

Care for the young.

Heal the injured.

Feed the healthy.

Protect the flock.

Instead:

He consumes the sheep.

This is leadership turned completely upside down.

Instead of sacrificing himself for the sheep, he sacrifices the sheep for himself.

Some interpreters understand this foolish shepherd as pointing beyond immediate historical leaders toward a final deceptive ruler opposed to God.

Cross References in Simple American English

John 5:43 — Jesus warned that though He came in His Father's name and was rejected, another coming in his own name would be received.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 — Paul describes a final arrogant ruler who exalts himself against God.

Ezekiel 34:10 — God promises judgment against shepherds who feed themselves rather than caring for His flock.

Spiritual Lesson

False shepherds use people.

The Good Shepherd gives Himself for people.

Zechariah 11:17

“Woe to the worthless shepherd who abandons the flock! May the sword strike his arm and his right eye! His arm will be completely withered, and his right eye totally blinded.”

The foolish shepherd will eventually face judgment.

Two parts of his body are specifically targeted:

His arm.

His right eye.

The arm represents power.

The eye represents perception, direction, and leadership.

His strength will fail.

His ability to lead will be destroyed.

Cross References in Simple American English

Psalms 10:15 — David asks God to break the power of the wicked.

Jeremiah 23:1 — God pronounces judgment upon shepherds who destroy and scatter His sheep.

Job 38:15 — God breaks the power of the wicked.

Key Truth

Abusive leadership may survive temporarily, but it never escapes God's judgment.

VI. MAJOR THEMES OF ZECHARIAH 11

1. God Judges Pride

The mighty cedars fall.

Human greatness cannot resist divine judgment forever.

2. God Condemns Corrupt Shepherds

Leaders are responsible for how they treat God's people.

3. Religious Language Can Hide Greed

The corrupt leaders said:

“Praise the Lord, I am rich!”

Their wealth did not prove God's approval.

4. The True Shepherd Can Be Rejected

The flock hated the shepherd who cared for them.

5. Rejection of God Has Consequences

Favor is broken.

Union is broken.

Protection disappears.

Division follows.

6. The Thirty Pieces of Silver Point to Christ

The exact amount later appears in Judas' betrayal of Jesus.

7. The Potter Points Toward the Betrayal of Christ

The silver is connected with the temple and the potter, just as it later would be in the betrayal account.

8. Rejected Truth Leads to False Shepherds

The faithful shepherd is rejected.

The foolish shepherd follows.

9. God Judges Worthless Leadership

The foolish shepherd eventually loses both strength and sight.

VII. CHRIST IN ZECHARIAH 11

Zechariah 11 contains remarkable prophetic pictures of Jesus Christ.

1. Christ Is the Good Shepherd

Jesus declared:

“I am the Good Shepherd.”

He did what the false shepherds refused to do.

He sought the lost.

He healed the broken.

He fed the hungry.

He protected His sheep.

He gave His life for them.

2. Christ Was Rejected

The Shepherd in Zechariah was despised by the flock.

Jesus likewise came to His own and was rejected.

3. Christ Was Betrayed for Thirty Pieces of Silver

This is one of the clearest prophetic details in the chapter.

The amount stated by Zechariah appears exactly in the betrayal of Jesus.

4. The Silver Was Thrown into the Temple

Zechariah threw the silver into the house of the Lord.

Judas threw the betrayal money into the temple.

5. The Silver Became Connected With a Potter

The prophecy mentions the potter.

The betrayal money was later used to purchase a potter's field.

6. The True Shepherd Gives His Life

The foolish shepherd consumes the sheep.

Jesus does the opposite.

He says:

“The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep.”

VIII. THE THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER

The thirty pieces of silver deserve special attention because they provide one of the strongest connections between Zechariah and the events surrounding Christ's crucifixion.

The Shepherd is asked to be valued.

The people choose thirty pieces of silver.

That was the price associated with a slave.

Centuries later:

Judas went to the chief priests.

He asked:

“What will you give me if I betray Him to you?”

They counted out:

Thirty pieces of silver.

After Jesus was condemned, Judas returned the money.

The silver was thrown into the temple.

It was eventually used in connection with the potter's field.

The details are remarkable.

Spiritual Lesson

The world may undervalue Christ, but heaven knows His true worth.

IX. FAVOR AND UNION

The two staves teach an important spiritual lesson.

Favor

Favor represents God's gracious protection and blessing.

When Favor is broken, protection is removed.

Union

Union represents brotherhood and harmony.

When Union is broken, division results.

The order is significant.

First the relationship with God is damaged.

Then relationships among people fall apart.

Principle

Vertical rebellion eventually produces horizontal division.

X. THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND THE FOOLISH SHEPHERD

The contrast could not be stronger.

The Good Shepherd

Seeks the lost.

Cares for the weak.

Heals the injured.

Feeds the flock.

Protects the sheep.

Gives His life for them.

The Foolish Shepherd

Ignores the lost.

Neglects the young.

Refuses to heal.

Fails to feed.

Abandons the flock.

Consumes the sheep for his own benefit.

Key Truth

The character of a shepherd can be measured by what happens to the sheep under his care.

XI. A WARNING TO PASTORS AND SPIRITUAL LEADERS

Zechariah 11 carries a serious warning for anyone entrusted with spiritual leadership.

Pastors.

Teachers.

Elders.

Deacons.

Ministry leaders.

Parents.

Anyone responsible for guiding others.

God's people are not possessions.

They are His flock.

The shepherd must never use the sheep merely for:

Money.

Power.

Prestige.

Control.

Recognition.

Personal ambition.

Principle

Biblical shepherding asks:

How can I serve the flock?

Corrupt shepherding asks:

How can the flock serve me?

XII. A WARNING TO THE FLOCK

The chapter does not only condemn bad shepherds.

It also warns the sheep.

The flock rejected the faithful shepherd.

That means God's people must exercise discernment in two directions.

We must reject false shepherds.

But we must also recognize and receive faithful shepherding.

Sometimes people reject a good shepherd because truth makes them uncomfortable.

Application

Do not mistake correction for cruelty.

Do not mistake flattery for love.

The shepherd who always tells you what you want to hear may not be the shepherd who truly cares for your soul.

XIII. KEY LESSONS FROM ZECHARIAH 11

1. God's judgment reaches the mighty.

The strongest cedar cannot stand against Him.

2. Corrupt shepherds exploit the flock.

God condemns leaders who use people for selfish gain.

3. Prosperity does not automatically prove God's approval.

The exploiters became rich while doing evil.

4. The true Shepherd can be rejected.

Jesus Himself experienced rejection.

5. Rejecting God's leadership has consequences.

Favor and unity can be lost.

6. Christ was prophetically valued at thirty pieces of silver.

This was fulfilled in Judas' betrayal.

7. The temple and potter details point toward Christ's betrayal.

The prophecy contains remarkable correspondence with the New Testament account.

8. False shepherds follow the rejection of the true Shepherd.

People who reject truth become vulnerable to deception.

9. God holds spiritual leaders accountable.

No shepherd ultimately escapes God's evaluation.

10. Jesus is completely different from the foolish shepherd.

The false shepherd consumes the sheep.

Jesus died for them.

XIV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Zechariah 11 challenges us to ask:

Do I truly recognize Jesus as my Good Shepherd?

Am I listening to His voice?

Have I rejected biblical truth simply because it made me uncomfortable?

Do I confuse material success with spiritual faithfulness?

Do I evaluate spiritual leaders by Scripture?

If I lead others, do I serve them or use them?

Do I care about the weak, wounded, and lost?

Am I contributing to unity among God's people?

Have I allowed pride or rebellion to damage relationships?

Do I value Christ more highly than the world does?

Would I recognize a foolish shepherd if one appeared?

XV. QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY WITH ANSWERS

Question 1

What is the overall theme of Zechariah Chapter 11?

Answer

The chapter describes judgment upon corrupt leaders and a rebellious people, the rejection of the true Shepherd, the breaking of Favor and Union, the prophetic payment of thirty pieces of silver, and the rise of a foolish shepherd after the faithful Shepherd is rejected.

Question 2

What do the falling cedars of Lebanon represent?

Answer

They represent the downfall of strength, pride, greatness, and powerful leadership under God's judgment. Even what appears mighty cannot stand when God determines to judge it.

Question 3

Why are the shepherds crying in verse 3?

Answer

They are mourning because their prosperity, security, influence, and glory have been destroyed.

Question 4

What does the flock marked for slaughter represent?

Answer

It represents people who are moving toward severe judgment because of rebellion and failed leadership.

Question 5

What was wrong with the shepherds in verse 5?

Answer

They did not care about the flock. They exploited the people for personal gain and showed no compassion toward those they were supposed to protect.

Question 6

Why is the statement “Praise the Lord, I am rich” so serious?

Answer

It shows religious hypocrisy. The leaders were treating financial gain as evidence of God's blessing even though their riches came through exploitation.

Question 7

What does God teach us about spiritual leadership in this chapter?

Answer

Spiritual leaders are responsible to care for God's people rather than use them. God holds shepherds accountable for how they treat His flock.

Question 8

What were the names of Zechariah's two staffs?

Answer

The first staff was called **Favor**, and the second was called **Union**.

Question 9

What did the staff called Favor symbolize?

Answer

Favor symbolized God's gracious protection, care, blessing, and restraint over His people.

Question 10

What did the staff called Union symbolize?

Answer

Union symbolized brotherhood, harmony, and unity among God's people, particularly between Judah and Israel.

Question 11

Why did Zechariah stop shepherding the flock?

Answer

The flock rejected and hated the shepherd. Their persistent resistance brought the withdrawal of shepherding protection.

Question 12

What lesson do we learn from the flock rejecting the shepherd?

Answer

People can reject the very truth, guidance, and protection they desperately need. Rebellion against faithful shepherding eventually brings serious consequences.

Question 13

What happened when the staff called Favor was broken?

Answer

It symbolized the withdrawal of God's protective favor and restraint.

Question 14

Who recognized that Zechariah's actions represented the Word of the Lord?

Answer

The poor and oppressed members of the flock who were watching understood that the symbolic actions came from God.

Question 15

How much was the Shepherd paid?

Answer

He was paid thirty pieces of silver.

Question 16

Why were thirty pieces of silver significant?

Answer

Thirty pieces of silver were associated with the compensation value of a slave under Old Testament law. The amount therefore expressed contempt for the Shepherd.

Question 17

How does the thirty pieces of silver prophecy point toward Jesus Christ?

Answer

Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus for exactly thirty pieces of silver, fulfilling the prophetic pattern found in Zechariah 11.

Question 18

What did Zechariah do with the thirty pieces of silver?

Answer

He threw them into the house of the Lord, where they were associated with the potter.

Question 19

How was this connected with the betrayal of Jesus?

Answer

Judas returned the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the temple. The religious leaders later used the money to purchase the potter's field.

Question 20

What happened when Zechariah broke the staff called Union?

Answer

It symbolized the breaking of brotherhood and unity between Judah and Israel.

Question 21

What happens after the true Shepherd is rejected?

Answer

A foolish shepherd appears. This teaches that rejection of faithful truth can leave people vulnerable to false and destructive leadership.

Question 22

How is the foolish shepherd described?

Answer

He does not seek the lost, care for the young, heal the wounded, or feed the flock. Instead, he exploits and consumes the sheep for himself.

Question 23

How does the foolish shepherd differ from Jesus Christ?

Answer

The foolish shepherd sacrifices the sheep for himself. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, sacrifices Himself for the sheep.

Question 24

What judgment comes upon the worthless shepherd?

Answer

His arm is withered and his right eye is blinded, symbolizing the destruction of his power and his ability to lead.

Question 25

What does the withered arm symbolize?

Answer

The arm symbolizes strength and power. Its destruction shows that God will remove the false shepherd's ability to dominate the flock.

Question 26

What does the blinded right eye symbolize?

Answer

The eye represents perception and leadership. Blindness shows the loss of discernment, direction, and governing ability.

Question 27

What does Zechariah 11 teach pastors and church leaders?

Answer

It teaches that God's people belong to God, not to leaders. Shepherds must protect, feed, heal, guide, and care for the flock rather than exploit it for money, control, recognition, or personal advancement.

Question 28

What does Zechariah 11 teach believers about choosing spiritual leaders?

Answer

Believers should judge leaders by biblical faithfulness, character, concern for the flock, and obedience to God rather than charisma, popularity, wealth, or promises of personal prosperity.

Question 29

Why is the rejection of the true Shepherd so serious?

Answer

Because rejecting the Shepherd means rejecting the protection, guidance, truth, and blessing that come through His leadership. Continued rejection opens the door to confusion, division, and deception.

Question 30

Who is the ultimate Good Shepherd?

Answer

Jesus Christ is the ultimate Good Shepherd. He seeks the lost, cares for the weak, protects His people, lays down His life for the sheep, and gives eternal life to those who belong to Him.

Question 31

How does Zechariah 11 point to the crucifixion story?

Answer

The chapter prophetically anticipates the rejection of the Shepherd, His valuation at thirty pieces of silver, the money being thrown into the house of the Lord, and its association with a potter—all details closely connected with Judas' betrayal of Jesus.

Question 32

What is one of the strongest warnings of this chapter?

Answer

One of the strongest warnings is that when people repeatedly reject the true Shepherd, they can become vulnerable to foolish and destructive shepherds.

Question 33

What is one of the strongest encouragements in the chapter?

Answer

The chapter points us toward Jesus Christ, who is completely different from corrupt shepherds. He does not exploit His sheep. He gave Himself for them.

Question 34

What should believers learn from the staffs Favor and Union?

Answer

We should recognize that God's gracious favor and unity among His people are precious gifts that should never be treated casually.

Question 35

What is the central message of Zechariah Chapter 11?

Answer

The central message is that rejecting God's true Shepherd brings judgment, loss of favor, division, and vulnerability to false leadership, while the prophetic details point directly toward Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd who was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver.

XVI. FINAL THOUGHT

Zechariah Chapter 11 begins with destruction.

The cedars fall.

The shepherds cry.

The flock suffers.

But the greatest tragedy of the chapter is not the fall of forests.

It is the rejection of the Shepherd.

The Shepherd comes to care for the flock.

He carries two staves:

Favor.

Union.

He offers protection.

He offers guidance.

He offers unity.

Yet the flock rejects Him.

Then comes one of the most startling moments in Old Testament prophecy.

The Shepherd asks:

What am I worth to you?

Their answer:

Thirty pieces of silver.

Centuries later, Judas Iscariot stood before the religious leaders and asked what they would pay him to betray Jesus Christ.

Their answer was the same:

Thirty pieces of silver.

The Shepherd had come.

The Shepherd had healed.

The Shepherd had taught.

The Shepherd had fed the hungry.

The Shepherd had sought the lost.

The Shepherd had shown compassion.

Yet He was valued at the price of a slave.

Judas threw the silver into the temple.

The money became connected with a potter's field.

Zechariah had described the prophetic pattern centuries earlier.

But the chapter contains another warning.

After the faithful Shepherd is rejected, a foolish shepherd appears.

That is spiritually significant.

When people reject truth, they do not become neutral.

They become more vulnerable to deception.

When they reject the Good Shepherd, they become easier prey for bad shepherds.

That makes the question of Zechariah 11 deeply personal:

Whose voice are you following?

Jesus said that His sheep hear His voice.

He does not exploit the flock.

He does not abandon the wounded.

He does not ignore the lost.

He does not consume the sheep.

He gives His life for them.

That is the difference between the Good Shepherd and every false shepherd.

The foolish shepherd takes from the sheep.

Jesus gives Himself for the sheep.

The foolish shepherd abandons the flock.

Jesus says:

“I am the Good Shepherd.”

So listen to His voice.

Follow His Word.

Trust His leadership.

Value Him above everything.

And never forget:

The One who was once valued at thirty pieces of silver is actually the priceless Son of God, the Good Shepherd, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords.

Key Verse

“So they paid me thirty pieces of silver.” — Zechariah 11:12

Key Phrase

The true Shepherd was rejected and valued at thirty pieces of silver, but Jesus Christ remains the Good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep.

Zechariah Chapter 12 — Jerusalem: A Cup of Trembling and a Fountain of Grace

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Zechariah Chapter 12 is one of the most important prophetic chapters in the Old Testament.

It looks forward to a time when Jerusalem will become the center of intense conflict among the nations, yet God will personally intervene to defend His people.

The chapter begins by emphasizing who God is.

He is the One who:

Stretches out the heavens.

Lays the foundation of the earth.

Forms the human spirit within mankind.

The God making these promises is therefore not limited by military power, political alliances, or human circumstances.

He is the Creator.

He controls history.

He knows the nations.

He watches Jerusalem.

And He has the power to accomplish everything He promises.

But the greatest moment in the chapter is not military victory.

It is spiritual awakening.

God promises to pour out:

“a spirit of grace and prayer.”

Then comes one of the clearest Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament:

“They will look on Me, the One they have pierced.”

The New Testament directly connects this verse with Jesus Christ and His crucifixion.

The chapter therefore moves from:

Conflict to deliverance.

Weakness to strength.

Attack to divine protection.

Blindness to recognition.

Piercing to mourning.

Judgment to grace.

Its central message is:

God will defend Jerusalem, pour out His Spirit of grace, and bring His people to mourn over the One who was pierced.

I. GOD’S POWER AND JERUSALEM’S DESTINY

Zechariah 12:1

“This is the prophecy of the Lord concerning Israel. The Lord—the one who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him—declares:”

Before God reveals what He will do, He reminds the reader who He is.

He is Creator of:

The heavens.

The earth.

Human life.

This establishes the foundation for everything that follows.

If God created the universe, then defending Jerusalem is not difficult for Him.

If He formed the human spirit, then He can also transform human hearts.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 42:5 — God created the heavens, spread out the earth, and gives life and breath to the people who live on it.

Genesis 2:7 — God formed man from the dust and breathed life into him.

Isaiah 44:24 — The Lord says He made all things, stretched out the heavens, and formed the earth by Himself.

Key Truth

The God of prophecy is the God of creation.

Application

Never evaluate God's promises according to human limitations.

Zechariah 12:2

"I will make Jerusalem like a cup of trembling for all the surrounding nations. When they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem, they themselves will stagger."

Jerusalem becomes a **cup of trembling**.

The image is of intoxicating judgment.

The nations believe they are surrounding Jerusalem for victory.

Instead, they become overwhelmed by their own attack.

The cup they expect Jerusalem to drink becomes the cup that makes them stagger.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 51:17 — Jerusalem had once drunk the cup of God's judgment and staggered under it.

Jeremiah 25:15 — God used the picture of a cup of wrath that caused nations to stagger.

Ezekiel 23:33 — The cup of judgment brings fear, sorrow, and destruction.

Spiritual Lesson

Those who oppose God's purposes can become victims of the very destruction they intended for others.

Application

Never assume that numerical superiority guarantees victory against God.

Zechariah 12:3

“On that day, I will make Jerusalem an immovable stone for all the nations. Anyone who tries to lift it will injure themselves, though all the nations of the earth gather against it.”

The imagery changes from a cup to a heavy stone.

Jerusalem becomes impossible to move safely.

Those attempting to lift it injure themselves.

The prophecy describes broad international opposition:

“all the nations of the earth.”

Yet the united strength of the nations cannot overturn what God has determined to preserve.

Cross References in Simple American English

Matthew 21:44 — Jesus said that those who fall upon the stone will be broken and those upon whom it falls will be crushed.

Psalms 2:2 — The kings and rulers of the earth gather together against the Lord and His Anointed One.

Isaiah 60:12 — Nations that refuse God's rule ultimately face judgment.

Key Principle

Human coalitions cannot cancel divine purposes.

Application

God does not need favorable odds.

II. GOD STRIKES THE NATIONS AND STRENGTHENS HIS PEOPLE

Zechariah 12:4

“On that day,” declares the Lord, “I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness. But I will watch over Judah, while striking the horses of the nations with blindness.”

Military strength collapses under divine intervention.

Horses represented battlefield power.

God strikes:

The horses with panic.

The riders with madness.

The armies with confusion.

But while He judges the attackers, He says:

“I will watch over Judah.”

The contrast is intentional.

God confuses the enemy while watching His people.

Cross References in Simple American English

2 Kings 6:18 — God struck enemy forces with blindness in answer to Elisha’s prayer.

Deuteronomy 28:28 — Madness and blindness appear among covenant judgments.

Exodus 15:1 — God defeated Pharaoh’s horses and riders in the sea.

Spiritual Lesson

God knows how to weaken what appears powerful.

Zechariah 12:5

“The leaders of Judah will say in their hearts, ‘The people of Jerusalem are strong because the Lord Almighty is their God.’”

The leaders recognize the real source of Jerusalem's strength.

Not walls.

Not armies.

Not military equipment.

Not political alliances.

Their strength comes from:

“The Lord Almighty.”

Cross References in Simple American English

Psalms 46:1 — God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in trouble.

Isaiah 12:2 — God is salvation, strength, and song.

Nehemiah 8:10 — The joy of the Lord gives strength to His people.

Key Truth

The strength of God's people is God Himself.

Application

Faith recognizes the difference between having resources and having the Lord.

Zechariah 12:6

“On that day I will make the governors of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume all the surrounding peoples on the right and on the left, but Jerusalem will remain secure in her place.”

God transforms Judah's leaders into instruments of judgment.

A firepot among wood quickly spreads flame.

A torch among dry grain produces rapid destruction.

The imagery communicates decisive victory.

Meanwhile:

“Jerusalem will remain secure.”

Cross References in Simple American English

Obadiah 1:18 — The house of Jacob is pictured as fire consuming hostile powers.

Judges 15:4 — Samson used fire among grain fields to bring destruction against the Philistines.

Isaiah 10:17 — The Holy One is pictured as a flame consuming wickedness.

Spiritual Lesson

When God strengthens His people, weakness can become power.

III. THE GLORY OF DAVID AND GOD'S PROTECTION

Zechariah 12:7

“The Lord will save the tents of Judah first, so that the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will not think themselves greater than Judah.”

God deliberately saves the ordinary people of Judah first.

The **tents of Judah** suggest those living outside the fortified city.

They appear more vulnerable.

Yet God acts on their behalf first.

Why?

So Jerusalem and the royal house of David will have no reason for pride.

Cross References in Simple American English

1 Samuel 2:8 — God raises the poor and lifts the needy from humble places.

James 2:5 — God often chooses those considered poor by the world to become rich in faith.

Luke 1:52 — God brings down the proud and lifts up the humble.

Key Principle

God often works in ways that leave no room for human boasting.

Application

Never assume visible importance means greater importance to God.

Zechariah 12:8

“On that day, the Lord will defend the people of Jerusalem. The weakest among them will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the Lord going before them.”

God’s protection produces extraordinary strength.

Even the weakest becomes:

“like David.”

David was Israel’s famous warrior-king.

The house of David receives even greater strength.

The point is not that humans literally become divine.

Rather, God empowers them so extraordinarily that their strength reflects divine intervention.

Cross References in Simple American English

Exodus 23:20 — God promised to send His angel ahead of Israel to protect and guide them.

Isaiah 63:9 — God’s presence and messenger saved His people in their distress.

1 Samuel 17:45 — David faced Goliath in the name of the Lord Almighty.

Spiritual Lesson

God can make the weakest person strong enough for the assignment He gives.

Zechariah 12:9

“On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem.”

God now states His purpose directly.

He will act against the nations attacking Jerusalem.

The issue is not merely that Jerusalem has military enemies.

The deeper issue is that those nations have placed themselves against what God has purposed to protect.

Cross References in Simple American English

Joel 3:2 — God gathers nations for judgment concerning their treatment of His people.

Zephaniah 3:8 — God speaks of gathering nations and pouring out righteous judgment.

Psalms 2:9 — The Messiah possesses authority to break rebellious nations.

Key Truth

God ultimately has the final word over every hostile power.

IV. THE PIERCED ONE AND THE SPIRIT OF GRACE

Zechariah 12:10

“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and prayer. They will look on Me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only son. They will grieve bitterly for him, as one grieves for a firstborn.”

This is the theological center of the chapter.

Military deliverance is followed by spiritual awakening.

God says:

“I will pour out.”

Repentance begins with divine grace.

He pours out:

A spirit of grace.

A spirit of prayer.

Then the people look upon:

“Me, the one they have pierced.”

This statement is astonishing.

The Lord speaks.

Yet He identifies Himself with the One who has been pierced.

The New Testament explicitly applies this prophecy to Jesus Christ.

John 19 records that Jesus' side was pierced while He hung on the cross.

John then cites Zechariah:

“They will look on Him whom they pierced.”

The chapter therefore anticipates both:

The crucifixion of Christ.

And a future recognition of Him accompanied by deep repentance.

Cross References in Simple American English

John 19:37 — After Jesus was pierced at the cross, John identifies the event as fulfillment of the prophecy about looking upon the One who was pierced.

Revelation 1:7 — Christ will come with the clouds, every eye will see Him, including those associated with His piercing, and the peoples of the earth will mourn.

Amos 8:10 — God describes mourning as deep as grief over the death of an only son.

Christ Connection

Zechariah 12:10 is one of the clearest Old Testament prophecies connecting the Lord with the crucified Messiah.

Key Doctrine

Recognition of Christ produces repentance when accompanied by the Spirit of grace.

Application

True repentance is not merely regret about consequences.

It is grief over sin in light of the One whom sin has offended.

V. NATIONAL AND PERSONAL MOURNING

Zechariah 12:11

“On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning at Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo.”

The mourning will be enormous.

Hadadrimmon in the region of Megiddo is generally connected with the great national mourning that followed the death of King Josiah.

Josiah had been one of Judah’s godly kings.

His death produced deep national sorrow.

Zechariah says future mourning will be comparable in intensity.

Cross References in Simple American English

2 Kings 23:29 — King Josiah died in battle at Megiddo.

2 Chronicles 35:24 — Judah and Jerusalem mourned deeply for Josiah after his death.

Revelation 16:16 — Megiddo appears again in prophetic imagery connected with final conflict.

Spiritual Lesson

True repentance can involve profound grief over sin.

Zechariah 12:12

“The land will mourn, each clan by itself—with the clan of David and their wives, the clan of Nathan and their wives.”

The repentance is national, but it is also personal.

Each family mourns separately.

Even husbands and wives are distinguished.

This emphasizes individual responsibility before God.

The family of David represents royal leadership.

Nathan represents a branch of David's family line.

Cross References in Simple American English

2 Samuel 5:14 — Nathan is listed among David's sons.

Luke 3:31 — Nathan appears in the genealogy associated with Jesus.

1 Chronicles 3:5 — Nathan is identified among David's sons born in Jerusalem.

Key Truth

No one can repent for another person.

Application

Corporate revival must eventually become personal repentance.

Zechariah 12:13

“The clan of Levi and their wives, the clan of Shimei and their wives.”

Now the priestly tribe is included.

Levi represents religious leadership.

Shimei was a Levitical family.

This means repentance reaches both:

Royal leadership.

Religious leadership.

No social or spiritual position removes the need for repentance.

Cross References in Simple American English

Numbers 3:17 — Levi's sons included families responsible for service connected with worship.

Malachi 3:3 — God promises to purify the descendants of Levi.

Exodus 6:17 — Shimei is listed among the families of Levi.

Spiritual Lesson

Religious office does not eliminate the need for personal repentance.

Zechariah 12:14

“And all the remaining clans, each with their wives.”

The mourning spreads throughout the nation.

No family is excluded.

The repetition emphasizes genuine, individualized repentance.

This is not simply mass emotion.

Each person is brought face-to-face with guilt and grief.

Cross References in Simple American English

Joel 2:13 — God calls His people to tear their hearts rather than merely their clothes and truly return to Him.

Genesis 50:10 — Joseph and others mourned deeply for Jacob.

Isaiah 22:12 — God called His people to weeping, mourning, and humility.

Key Principle

True repentance reaches the heart of the individual.

VI. MAJOR THEMES OF ZECHARIAH 12

1. God Is Creator and Sovereign

The chapter begins by reminding us that He created heaven, earth, and humanity.

2. Jerusalem Has a Significant Prophetic Role

The city becomes a cup of trembling and an immovable stone among the nations.

3. Human Coalitions Cannot Defeat God’s Purpose

Even when nations unite, God remains sovereign.

4. God Defends His People

He watches over Judah and strengthens Jerusalem.

5. God Makes the Weak Strong

The weakest becomes like David.

6. God Opposes the Nations That Attack Jerusalem

He personally intervenes in judgment.

7. Spiritual Restoration Requires Grace

God pours out the Spirit of grace before the people mourn.

8. The Pierced One Is the Messiah

The New Testament identifies Jesus as the One pierced in fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy.

9. Recognition of Christ Produces Mourning

The people grieve when they recognize the One they pierced.

10. Repentance Is Both Corporate and Personal

The nation mourns, but each family also mourns individually.

VII. CHRIST IN ZECHARIAH 12

Zechariah 12 contains one of the strongest Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament.

1. Christ Is the Pierced One

Jesus was literally pierced at the cross.

John directly quotes Zechariah 12:10 in connection with Christ's crucifixion.

2. The Pierced One Is Closely Identified With the Lord

God says:

“They will look on Me, the one they have pierced.”

This remarkable language supports the biblical revelation of Christ's divine identity.

3. Christ Is the Object of Future Recognition

The prophecy looks beyond the physical piercing itself toward a day when people recognize its significance.

4. Christ Produces Deep Repentance

When the pierced Messiah is truly recognized, the response is not indifference.

It is mourning.

5. Christ Is the Center of Grace

The Spirit of grace directs people toward the One who was pierced.

VIII. THE SPIRIT OF GRACE AND PRAYER

Zechariah 12:10 gives us an important theology of repentance.

God does not simply command the people to mourn.

He first says:

“I will pour out... a spirit of grace and prayer.”

Then they look.

Then they mourn.

The order matters.

God Gives Grace

Repentance begins with divine mercy.

God Awakens Prayer

The heart turns toward Him.

The People See the Pierced One

They recognize Christ and the seriousness of their sin.

Mourning Follows

True repentance appears.

Key Principle

Grace does not eliminate repentance.

Grace produces repentance.

IX. “THEY WILL LOOK ON ME”

The language of verse 10 is remarkable.

The Lord speaks in the first person:

“They will look on Me.”

Then He says:

“the One they have pierced.”

The New Testament identifies Jesus as that pierced One.

This passage therefore contributes to the biblical picture of the Messiah as more than merely a human ruler.

The One pierced is somehow identified with the Lord Himself.

That reaches its fullest explanation in the New Testament doctrine of Christ.

Jesus is truly man.

Jesus is truly divine.

X. REPENTANCE AS MOURNING

Modern discussions of repentance sometimes reduce it to merely changing one's mind.

Biblically, repentance includes a genuine change of mind that turns a person toward God.

But Zechariah shows that true repentance can also involve deep grief.

The people realize:

Who was pierced.

Why He was pierced.

What their sin means.

The result is mourning.

Spiritual Lesson

The closer we come to understanding the holiness of God and the cross of Christ, the less casually we will treat sin.

XI. WHY EACH FAMILY MOURNS SEPARATELY

Verses 12–14 repeatedly emphasize:

“each clan by itself.”

And:

“their wives.”

Why?

Because repentance cannot remain merely national or communal.

A nation can call a day of prayer.

A church can hold revival meetings.

A family can worship together.

But every individual must personally respond to God.

Key Truth

No one inherits repentance.

No one can believe for you.

No one can confess your sin for you.

Each person must personally respond to the Lord.

XII. THE WEAK MADE LIKE DAVID

Verse 8 presents another powerful theme.

The weakest will become like David.

David was not naturally impressive when God first chose him.

He was the youngest son.

He was a shepherd.

Yet God empowered him.

He faced Goliath not in his own strength but in the name of the Lord.

Application

Never despise weakness when God is present.

God can strengthen the weakest believer for whatever assignment He gives.

XIII. JERUSALEM AND THE NATIONS

Zechariah 12 describes a striking international conflict centered on Jerusalem.

The nations gather.

Jerusalem becomes a burden.

God intervenes.

The theological emphasis is not that Jerusalem possesses some independent power.

Its survival is entirely attributed to God.

This distinction matters.

The chapter glorifies:

Not Jerusalem's military power.

But:

The Lord Almighty.

Key Principle

The city survives because God acts.

XIV. FROM PHYSICAL DELIVERANCE TO SPIRITUAL DELIVERANCE

The first half of Zechariah 12 focuses largely on physical danger.

Armies attack.

God intervenes.

Enemies are defeated.

But the second half reveals the greater need.

The deepest enemy is not merely an attacking army.

It is sin.

Therefore the greatest victory of the chapter is not military.

It is spiritual.

People look upon the pierced One and repent.

Spiritual Lesson

Physical rescue can preserve life.

Only spiritual redemption can reconcile a sinner to God.

XV. KEY LESSONS FROM ZECHARIAH 12

1. God is powerful enough to fulfill every prophecy He gives.

He created heaven, earth, and humanity.

2. Jerusalem cannot be understood apart from God's purposes.

The city occupies an important role in this prophecy.

3. Human numbers do not intimidate God.

Even when nations gather together, He remains sovereign.

4. The Lord is the strength of His people.

Jerusalem's strength comes from God, not human ability.

5. God strengthens the weak.

The weakest can become like David when God acts.

6. God will judge persistent opposition to His purposes.

The nations attacking Jerusalem face divine intervention.

7. Repentance begins with grace.

God pours out the Spirit of grace and prayer.

8. Jesus is the pierced One.

John 19 directly connects Zechariah 12:10 with Christ's crucifixion.

9. The cross should produce humility and repentance.

Recognition of the pierced Messiah produces mourning.

10. True repentance is personal.

Every clan and individual must respond personally before God.

XVI. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Zechariah 12 challenges us to ask:

Do I truly believe that nothing is too difficult for the Creator?

Am I trusting human strength more than God?

Do I remember that the Lord is the true source of strength?

Have I personally looked in faith upon Jesus Christ, the One who was pierced?

Does the cross still move my heart?

Do I treat sin lightly?

Have I confused regret over consequences with true repentance?

Am I asking God for a spirit of grace and prayer?

Am I depending upon another person's faith instead of personally responding to God?

Do I believe God can make weakness into strength?

XVII. QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY WITH ANSWERS

Question 1

How does Zechariah 12 begin?

Answer

It begins by identifying the Lord as the Creator who stretched out the heavens, established the earth, and formed the human spirit within mankind.

Question 2

Why does God emphasize His creative power before giving this prophecy?

Answer

Because His power as Creator guarantees His ability to accomplish everything He promises concerning Jerusalem, the nations, judgment, deliverance, and spiritual restoration.

Question 3

What does it mean that Jerusalem will become a “cup of trembling”?

Answer

It means the nations that attack Jerusalem will become overwhelmed, confused, and shaken by the judgment of God.

Question 4

What does the image of Jerusalem as an immovable stone teach?

Answer

It teaches that the nations will try to move or destroy Jerusalem, but their attempts will bring injury and judgment upon themselves.

Question 5

Does Zechariah 12 teach that the nations will unite against Jerusalem?

Answer

Yes. Verse 3 describes a broad gathering of nations against Jerusalem, while emphasizing that God will defend the city.

Question 6

What happens to the horses and riders attacking Jerusalem?

Answer

God strikes the horses with panic and blindness and the riders with confusion or madness.

Question 7

What does God do for Judah while judging the enemy?

Answer

He watches over Judah and protects His people.

Question 8

Where does Jerusalem's strength come from?

Answer

Its strength comes from the Lord Almighty, not primarily from military strength, political power, or human resources.

Question 9

What do the firepot and flaming torch symbolize?

Answer

They symbolize the power God gives Judah to overcome the surrounding hostile forces.

Question 10

Why does God save the tents of Judah first?

Answer

He does so to prevent the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from becoming proud or thinking they are more important than the rest of Judah.

Question 11

What does the statement “the weakest among them will be like David” mean?

Answer

It means God will give extraordinary strength and courage even to those who would normally appear weak.

Question 12

Why is David used as the example of strength?

Answer

David became famous as a courageous warrior who defeated enemies such as Goliath through trust in the Lord.

Question 13

What does God promise regarding the nations attacking Jerusalem?

Answer

He promises to set out to destroy the nations that persist in attacking Jerusalem.

Question 14

What does God pour out in verse 10?

Answer

He pours out a spirit of grace and prayer upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Question 15

Why is the Spirit of grace important?

Answer

Because genuine repentance and spiritual awakening depend upon God's gracious work in the human heart.

Question 16

Who is the One who was pierced?

Answer

The New Testament explicitly identifies Jesus Christ as the pierced One described in Zechariah 12:10.

Question 17

Where does the New Testament connect Jesus with Zechariah 12:10?

Answer

John 19:37 quotes the prophecy after Jesus was crucified and His side was pierced.

Question 18

How does Revelation use this prophecy?

Answer

Revelation 1:7 speaks of Christ coming visibly and people seeing Him, including those connected with His piercing, while the peoples of the earth mourn.

Question 19

Why is the wording "They will look on Me, the one they have pierced" so important?

Answer

Because the Lord Himself is speaking, yet the New Testament identifies the pierced One as Jesus. This provides a powerful Old Testament connection between the Lord and the Messiah.

Question 20

How do the people respond when they recognize the pierced One?

Answer

They mourn deeply, like parents grieving the death of an only son or firstborn child.

Question 21

What does this mourning represent spiritually?

Answer

It represents deep repentance, grief over sin, and recognition of the One whom they rejected and pierced.

Question 22

What was significant about the mourning at Hadadrimmon near Megiddo?

Answer

It was associated with great national sorrow, especially the mourning connected with the death of King Josiah.

Question 23

Why does Zechariah repeatedly say that each family mourns separately?

Answer

To show that repentance must become personal. National or family identity cannot replace an individual's own response to God.

Question 24

Why are both the house of David and the tribe of Levi mentioned?

Answer

David represents royal and political leadership, while Levi represents priestly and religious leadership. Both groups need repentance.

Question 25

What does the mention of the wives separately emphasize?

Answer

It emphasizes individual responsibility. Even within families, each person must personally respond to God.

Question 26

What does Zechariah 12 teach about human strength?

Answer

Human military and political strength is limited. True strength comes from the Lord.

Question 27

What does Zechariah 12 teach about God's protection?

Answer

God is fully able to watch over, defend, and strengthen His people even when enemies appear overwhelmingly powerful.

Question 28

What does the chapter teach about repentance?

Answer

Repentance is produced by grace, involves recognizing the seriousness of sin, focuses upon the pierced Messiah, and becomes deeply personal.

Question 29

What does the chapter teach about Jesus Christ?

Answer

It prophetically presents Him as the One who would be pierced and later recognized, producing profound mourning and repentance.

Question 30

Why is John 19:37 important when interpreting Zechariah 12?

Answer

Because the apostle John directly applies Zechariah's prophecy to Jesus after His crucifixion, confirming the Messianic interpretation.

Question 31

What comes first in verse 10—grace or mourning?

Answer

Grace comes first. God pours out the Spirit of grace and prayer, then the people look upon the pierced One and mourn.

Question 32

What does that order teach us?

Answer

It teaches that genuine repentance is ultimately a response to God's gracious work rather than merely a human attempt to reform ourselves.

Question 33

What is more important in Zechariah 12: military victory or spiritual transformation?

Answer

Both are important in the prophecy, but spiritual transformation is ultimately greater because the chapter moves toward recognition of the pierced Messiah and genuine repentance.

Question 34

How can Zechariah 12 encourage a believer who feels weak?

Answer

It shows that God can make the weakest person strong, just as He promises that the weakest among Jerusalem will become like David.

Question 35

What should the cross of Christ produce in believers today?

Answer

It should produce gratitude, humility, worship, hatred of sin, repentance, and deeper love for the Savior who was pierced for sinners.

Question 36

Can religious heritage substitute for personal repentance?

Answer

No. The separate mourning of each clan and family demonstrates that every person must personally respond to God.

Question 37

What is the central message of Zechariah Chapter 12?

Answer

God will sovereignly defend Jerusalem against hostile nations, strengthen His people, pour out a Spirit of grace and prayer, and bring profound repentance as they recognize the pierced Messiah.

XVIII. FINAL THOUGHT

Zechariah Chapter 12 begins with the Creator.

It ends with people mourning before Him.

Between those two points is an extraordinary prophetic journey.

The nations gather.

Jerusalem appears surrounded.

Military forces assemble.

Humanly speaking, the situation looks impossible.

But then God acts.

The cup makes the nations stagger.

The stone cannot be moved.

The horses panic.

The riders are confused.

The weak become strong.

Jerusalem is defended.

Yet even that is not the greatest miracle in the chapter.

The greatest miracle happens in the heart.

God says:

“I will pour out... a spirit of grace and prayer.”

Then:

“They will look on Me, the One they have pierced.”

The eyes that once failed to recognize Him now see.

The hearts that once resisted Him now mourn.

The people recognize the pierced One.

Centuries after Zechariah wrote these words, Jesus Christ hung on a Roman cross.

A soldier pierced His side.

John stood near the cross.

Later, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John looked back at Zechariah's prophecy and wrote that this happened so the Scripture would be fulfilled:

“They will look on Him whom they pierced.”

The prophecy had found its Messiah.

But Zechariah also looks toward something still greater:

Recognition.

Grace.

Prayer.

Mourning.

Repentance.

That is the work of God.

He does not merely defeat enemies around us.

He conquers rebellion within us.

He does not merely protect from external danger.

He changes hearts.

And that is why the greatest promise in Zechariah 12 is not simply:

Jerusalem will survive.

It is:

They will look upon the pierced One.

The same truth applies personally.

Look to Christ.

Look to the One who was pierced.

Look to the Savior who bore sin.

Look to the King who died and rose again.

And when you see the cross clearly, do not treat sin casually.

Let grace produce repentance.

Let repentance produce prayer.

Let prayer produce worship.

And let the pierced Christ become the center of your hope.

Key Verse

“I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and prayer. They will look on Me, the one they have pierced.” — Zechariah 12:10

Key Phrase

God defends His people, pours out grace, and turns their eyes toward the pierced Messiah.

Zechariah Chapter 13 — The Fountain of Cleansing and the Refining Fire

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Zechariah Chapter 13 continues directly from the repentance described at the end of Chapter 12.

In Chapter 12, the people look upon the One they pierced and mourn.

In Chapter 13, God answers that mourning with cleansing.

A fountain is opened.

Idolatry is removed.

False prophecy is exposed.

The Shepherd is struck.

The sheep are scattered.

And a remnant is refined through fire.

The chapter therefore moves through several major themes:

Cleansing from sin.

Removal of false worship.

Judgment on deception.

The suffering of the Shepherd.

The refining of the remnant.

Renewed covenant fellowship with God.

One of the central truths of the chapter is that God does not merely forgive His people while leaving them unchanged.

He cleanses them.

Purifies them.

Separates them from idols.

Tests them.

Refines them.

And finally declares:

“They are My people.”

The chapter’s central message is:

God opens a fountain for cleansing, removes false worship, strikes the Shepherd, and refines a faithful remnant into a people who truly belong to Him.

I. A FOUNTAIN FOR CLEANSING

Zechariah 13:1

“On that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and the people of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.”

The chapter begins with one of the most beautiful images in Zechariah.

A **fountain** is opened.

This is not a stagnant pool.

A fountain suggests a continuing, abundant supply.

Its purpose is clear:

To cleanse from sin and impurity.

The mourning of Chapter 12 is now met with divine cleansing.

Repentance and forgiveness belong together.

God does not awaken conviction merely to leave people in guilt.

He provides cleansing.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ezekiel 36:25 — God promises to sprinkle clean water on His people and cleanse them from impurity and idols.

John 4:14 — Jesus speaks of the water He gives becoming a spring of eternal life within the believer.

Revelation 22:1 — John sees the river of the water of life flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb.

Christ Connection

The fountain ultimately points toward the cleansing God provides through Jesus Christ.

The New Testament teaches that the blood of Jesus cleanses believers from sin.

Spiritual Lesson

God provides the cleansing sinners cannot provide for themselves.

Application

Conviction should drive us toward God's provision, not toward despair.

II. IDOLS AND FALSE PROPHETS REMOVED

Zechariah 13:2

“On that day,” declares the Lord of hosts, “I will remove the names of the idols from the land, and they will never again be remembered. I will also banish the false prophets and the unclean spirit from the land.”

Cleansing is followed by removal.

God does not merely forgive idolatry.

He removes the idols.

He removes false prophets.

He removes the unclean spiritual influence behind deception.

Three forms of corruption disappear:

Idolatry.

False prophecy.

Unclean spiritual influence.

Cross References in Simple American English

Hosea 2:17 — God promises to remove the names of false gods from His people's mouths.

Micah 5:12 — God promises to destroy sorcery and occult practices from among His people.

Revelation 16:13 — Unclean spirits are pictured as deceptive spiritual forces working against God.

Key Truth

True restoration includes separation from what corrupted us.

Application

Forgiveness is not permission to preserve idols.

God's grace calls us away from them.

Zechariah 13:3

“If anyone still claims to prophesy, even his own father and mother who bore him will say, ‘You must die, because you speak lies in the name of the Lord.’ And they will pierce him through when he prophesies.”

This verse emphasizes how seriously false prophecy will be treated.

Under the Mosaic covenant, falsely claiming to speak in God's name was a serious offense.

The surprising detail is that even family loyalty would not be allowed to excuse deliberate spiritual deception.

The point is not a general instruction for private violence.

It reflects the covenant law and prophetic picture of a society so devoted to truth that even family ties would not override loyalty to God.

Cross References in Simple American English

Deuteronomy 13:6 — Israel was warned not to follow false worship even if it was promoted by a close family member.

Deuteronomy 18:20 — A prophet who falsely claimed to speak for God faced severe covenant judgment.

Matthew 10:21 — Jesus warned that allegiance to truth can even create division within families.

Spiritual Lesson

Truth about God is more important than personal loyalty to deception.

Zechariah 13:4

“On that day, every prophet will be ashamed of their visions. They will no longer wear a prophet’s garment to deceive.”

False prophets will no longer proudly advertise themselves.

They will be ashamed.

The prophetic garment had become a symbol that could be used to create a false appearance of spiritual authority.

God says the disguise will no longer work.

Cross References in Simple American English

2 Kings 1:8 — Elijah was recognized by his distinctive appearance and clothing.

Matthew 7:15 — Jesus warns about false prophets who come in sheep's clothing but inwardly are dangerous.

Micah 3:7 — False prophets will eventually be ashamed when their false visions are exposed.

Key Principle

Religious appearance cannot make a false message true.

Application

Do not judge a teacher by image, title, clothing, charisma, or reputation alone.

Test the message by Scripture.

Zechariah 13:5

“Instead, each will say, ‘I am not a prophet. I am a farmer; the land has been my livelihood since my youth.’”

The false prophet now denies the identity he once claimed.

Rather than boast about spiritual authority, he presents himself as an ordinary worker.

The image reveals shame and exposure.

Cross References in Simple American English

Amos 7:14 — Amos said he was not part of a professional prophetic guild but had worked with livestock and trees.

1 Kings 19:19 — Elisha was working as a farmer when Elijah called him.

Genesis 4:2 — Farming and working the ground were ordinary occupations from the earliest generations.

Spiritual Lesson

False spiritual status eventually collapses when truth exposes it.

Zechariah 13:6

“If someone asks him, ‘What are these wounds on your hands?’ he will answer, ‘I was wounded in the house of my friends.’”

This is a difficult verse.

In context, the most natural interpretation is that it continues the description of the disgraced false prophet.

The wounds may be associated with pagan or self-inflicted religious practices.

The false prophet attempts to explain them away.

This verse should be interpreted carefully and not automatically identified with the wounds of Christ, because verse 7 introduces the Messianic Shepherd more directly.

Cross References in Simple American English

John 20:27 — Thomas was invited to examine the wounds of the risen Jesus.

Psalms 41:9 — David speaks of betrayal by a close companion.

Isaiah 53:5 — The suffering Servant was wounded because of human sin.

Spiritual Lesson

Deception eventually becomes difficult to hide.

Application

Truth does not need a false identity to survive.

III. THE STRUCK SHEPHERD AND SCATTERED SHEEP

Zechariah 13:7

“Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, against the man who is close to Me!” declares the Lord of hosts. “Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn My hand against the little ones.”

This is the central Messianic verse of the chapter.

The Lord calls for the sword to awaken against:

“My Shepherd.”

But this is no ordinary shepherd.

He is described as:

“the man who is close to Me.”

The expression speaks of extraordinary nearness and relationship to God.

Then comes the command:

“Strike the Shepherd.”

The result:

“The sheep will be scattered.”

Jesus directly applied this prophecy to Himself on the night before His crucifixion.

Cross References in Simple American English

Matthew 26:31 — Jesus told His disciples that they would fall away because Scripture said, “I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.”

Mark 14:27 — Mark records Jesus applying this same prophecy to His arrest and the scattering of His disciples.

John 16:32 — Jesus warned that His disciples would scatter and leave Him alone.

Christ Connection

The Shepherd is Jesus Christ.

He is struck.

The disciples scatter.

The prophecy is fulfilled directly in the events surrounding the crucifixion.

Key Doctrine

Christ's suffering was not an accident of history.

It occurred within the sovereign redemptive plan of God.

Application

The cross demonstrates both the seriousness of sin and the depth of divine grace.

IV. THE REMNANT REFINED

Zechariah 13:8

“In all the land,” declares the Lord, “two-thirds will be cut off and perish, but one-third will be left in it.”

The language becomes severe again.

Judgment reduces the population dramatically.

Yet a remnant remains.

This is a recurring biblical theme.

God judges sin.

But He preserves a people for Himself.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ezekiel 5:12 — Ezekiel describes severe judgment dividing the people into portions.

Isaiah 6:13 — Even after great judgment, a holy remnant remains like a stump with life in it.

Amos 5:3 — Amos describes a severe reduction in Israel’s population because of judgment.

Spiritual Lesson

God's preservation of a remnant is an act of grace.

Zechariah 13:9

“I will bring this third through the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. 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.’”

The surviving remnant is not simply spared.

It is refined.

God brings them through fire.

The purpose of refining is not destruction.

It is purification.

Silver and gold are heated so impurities can be removed.

God uses trial to expose and purify faith.

The outcome is covenant relationship:

“They are My people.”

And:

“The Lord is our God.”

Cross References in Simple American English

Malachi 3:2 — God is compared to a refiner's fire who purifies His people.

1 Peter 1:7 — Trials test genuine faith like fire tests gold.

Isaiah 48:10 — God says He refines His people in the furnace of suffering.

Key Truth

God does not waste suffering.

Application

A trial can become a refining furnace in the hands of God.

V. MAJOR THEMES OF ZECHARIAH 13

1. God Provides Cleansing

The chapter begins with a fountain opened for sin and impurity.

2. Cleansing Leads to Purification

Idols and false spiritual influences are removed.

3. God Opposes Religious Deception

False prophecy is exposed and rejected.

4. The Shepherd Is Struck

The Messiah suffers according to God's redemptive plan.

5. The Sheep Are Scattered

Jesus directly applies this prophecy to His disciples abandoning Him.

6. Judgment Leaves a Remnant

Not everyone survives, but God preserves a people.

7. The Remnant Is Refined

Survival is followed by purification.

8. Refining Produces Covenant Fellowship

The chapter ends with mutual recognition:

“They are My people.”

“The Lord is our God.”

VI. CHRIST IN ZECHARIAH 13

1. Christ Provides Cleansing

The fountain of cleansing points toward the salvation God provides through Jesus.

The blood of Christ cleanses from sin.

2. Christ Is the Struck Shepherd

Jesus explicitly applied Zechariah 13:7 to Himself.

He is the Shepherd struck before the scattering of the disciples.

3. Christ Is Close to the Father

The Shepherd is described as the man close to God.

This fits the unique relationship between Jesus and the Father revealed in the New Testament.

4. Christ's Death Was According to Divine Purpose

The sword is called against the Shepherd.

The cross was carried out by wicked men, but it also fulfilled God's redemptive plan.

5. Christ Gathers the Scattered

The disciples scattered temporarily, but the risen Christ regathered and restored them.

VII. THE FOUNTAIN AND THE CROSS

Zechariah 13:1 says:

“A fountain will be opened.”

This fountain cleanses:

Sin.

Impurity.

The New Testament explains the basis of cleansing.

Jesus sheds His blood.

His sacrifice provides forgiveness.

The fountain is therefore a powerful picture of the abundant cleansing available through God's grace.

Spiritual Lesson

The same God who reveals sin provides the cleansing for sin.

VIII. CLEANSING AND SEPARATION

Notice the order of the chapter.

First:

Cleansing.

Then:

Idols removed.

Then:

False prophecy removed.

This teaches an important principle.

God does not cleanse His people so they can return comfortably to the same corruption.

Grace leads to separation from sin.

Key Principle

Forgiveness without transformation is not the full picture of biblical restoration.

IX. THE DANGER OF FALSE PROPHECY

Zechariah 13 takes false prophecy seriously.

Why?

Because claiming:

“God said”

when God did not speak is a grave offense.

False teaching misrepresents God.

It leads people in the wrong direction.

It gives false confidence.

It can destroy lives spiritually.

Application

Every spiritual claim should be tested carefully against Scripture.

X. “STRIKE THE SHEPHERD”

Verse 7 is remarkable because the striking of the Shepherd occurs within divine purpose.

Jesus later applies the text to Himself.

This means His arrest and crucifixion were not random tragedies.

They were part of the redemptive plan already anticipated in prophecy.

Key Doctrine

The cross involves both human responsibility and divine sovereignty.

Human beings acted wickedly.

God used those actions to accomplish redemption.

XI. THE SCATTERED DISCIPLES

Jesus quoted Zechariah 13:7 before His arrest.

He knew what would happen.

Peter would deny Him.

The disciples would flee.

The group would scatter.

Yet their scattering was not final.

After the resurrection:

Jesus appeared to them.

Restored Peter.

Recommissioned the disciples.

Sent them into the world.

Spiritual Lesson

Failure does not always mean final abandonment.

Christ can restore scattered disciples.

XII. THE REFINING FIRE

Fire can destroy.

But fire can also purify.

Zechariah 13 uses the second image.

God brings the remnant through fire in order to refine them.

The goal is not cruelty.

The goal is purity.

Silver must be heated.

Gold must be tested.

Faith is similar.

Trials expose what is genuine.

Application

Instead of only asking:

“How do I get out of this trial?”

We should sometimes also ask:

“What is God refining in me through this trial?”

XIII. “THEY ARE MY PEOPLE”

The chapter ends with covenant language.

God says:

“They are My people.”

The people answer:

“The Lord is our God.”

This is the goal of redemption.

Not merely:

Escape from judgment.

Removal of trouble.

Prosperity.

Safety.

The goal is relationship with God.

Key Truth

The greatest blessing is belonging to God.

XIV. KEY LESSONS FROM ZECHARIAH 13

1. God provides cleansing from sin.

The fountain is opened by Him.

2. True cleansing leads to changed worship.

Idols are removed.

3. God hates spiritual deception.

False prophecy is exposed.

4. Christ is the struck Shepherd.

Jesus directly fulfilled Zechariah 13:7.

5. The disciples' scattering was foretold.

Their failure did not surprise Christ.

6. God preserves a remnant.

Judgment does not cancel grace.

7. God refines those He preserves.

Trials can purify genuine faith.

8. Refining leads to deeper prayer.

The remnant calls upon God.

9. God answers His people.

He says, "They are My people."

10. The goal of redemption is covenant fellowship.

The people respond, "The Lord is our God."

XV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Zechariah 13 challenges us to ask:

Have I come to God for cleansing from sin?

Am I holding onto an idol that God wants removed?

Do I test spiritual claims by Scripture?

Am I more impressed by religious appearance than biblical truth?

Do I understand the significance of Jesus as the struck Shepherd?

Have I ever allowed failure to convince me that restoration is impossible?

What trial may God be using to refine me?

Am I becoming more pure or more bitter through difficulty?

Do I truly belong to God?

Can I honestly say:

“The Lord is my God”?

XVI. QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY WITH ANSWERS

Question 1

What is opened in Zechariah 13:1?

Answer

A fountain is opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Question 2

What is the purpose of the fountain?

Answer

Its purpose is to cleanse the people from sin and impurity.

Question 3

What does the fountain symbolize spiritually?

Answer

It symbolizes God's abundant provision for forgiveness and cleansing, ultimately fulfilled through the saving work of Jesus Christ.

Question 4

How does Zechariah 13 connect with Chapter 12?

Answer

Chapter 12 ends with mourning and repentance over the pierced One. Chapter 13 begins with God's provision of cleansing for those who repent.

Question 5

What does God promise to remove from the land?

Answer

He promises to remove idols, false prophets, and the unclean spiritual influence associated with deception.

Question 6

Why is the removal of idols important?

Answer

Because genuine restoration requires turning away from false objects of worship and returning fully to the Lord.

Question 7

How seriously does God treat false prophecy?

Answer

Very seriously. The passage reflects the severe covenant penalties attached to falsely claiming to speak in God's name.

Question 8

What does false prophecy do to people?

Answer

It misrepresents God, leads people away from truth, gives false confidence, and can produce serious spiritual harm.

Question 9

Why will false prophets be ashamed?

Answer

Because their claims and false visions will be exposed as lies.

Question 10

What does the prophet's garment symbolize in verse 4?

Answer

It represents the outward appearance or identity of a prophet that false teachers could use to gain authority and deceive people.

Question 11

What warning can believers learn from the prophet's garment?

Answer

We should never assume that outward religious appearance automatically proves spiritual truthfulness.

Question 12

What is the likely context of the wounds mentioned in verse 6?

Answer

In context, they most naturally belong to the false prophet and may reflect wounds connected with pagan or deceptive religious practices.

Question 13

Should Zechariah 13:6 automatically be interpreted as referring to Jesus?

Answer

No. Although some Christian interpretations have associated the verse with Christ, the immediate context strongly continues the discussion of false prophets. Verse 7 gives the clearer direct Messianic prophecy.

Question 14

Who is the Shepherd in Zechariah 13:7?

Answer

Jesus Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of the Shepherd in verse 7.

Question 15

How do we know Zechariah 13:7 refers to Jesus?

Answer

Jesus Himself quoted the verse in Matthew 26:31 and Mark 14:27 and applied it to His arrest and the scattering of His disciples.

Question 16

What happens to the Shepherd?

Answer

The Shepherd is struck.

Question 17

What happens to the sheep after the Shepherd is struck?

Answer

The sheep scatter.

Question 18

How was this fulfilled in the life of Jesus?

Answer

When Jesus was arrested, His disciples fled and were scattered, exactly as He had told them using Zechariah's prophecy.

Question 19

What is significant about the Shepherd being called “the man who is close to Me”?

Answer

It describes an extraordinary relationship between the Shepherd and the Lord, fitting the unique relationship between Jesus Christ and the Father.

Question 20

Does the striking of the Shepherd mean God approved of the wicked actions of those who crucified Jesus?

Answer

No. Those involved in Christ's crucifixion were morally responsible for their actions, yet God sovereignly used those actions to accomplish His redemptive plan.

Question 21

What happens to two-thirds of the land according to verse 8?

Answer

Two-thirds are cut off and perish under judgment.

Question 22

What happens to the remaining one-third?

Answer

They are preserved and then brought through a refining process.

Question 23

What does refining through fire symbolize?

Answer

It symbolizes testing, purification, and the removal of impurities from God's people.

Question 24

Why are silver and gold used as illustrations?

Answer

Precious metals are heated so impurities can be removed. In the same way, God can use trials to purify faith and character.

Question 25

Does every trial mean a person is being punished for a specific sin?

Answer

No. Scripture shows that trials can have many purposes, including testing, refining, strengthening, disciplining, teaching dependence, and displaying God's grace.

Question 26

What does the refined remnant do?

Answer

They call upon the name of the Lord.

Question 27

How does God respond when they call upon Him?

Answer

He answers them.

Question 28

What does God say about the refined remnant?

Answer

He says:

“They are My people.”

Question 29

How do the people respond?

Answer

They say:

“The Lord is our God.”

Question 30

What does this final exchange reveal?

Answer

It reveals restored covenant fellowship between God and His people.

Question 31

What is the relationship between cleansing and refining in this chapter?

Answer

Cleansing deals with sin and impurity, while refining describes God's ongoing work of purifying and strengthening His people through testing.

Question 32

What does Zechariah 13 teach about repentance?

Answer

Repentance is followed by God's cleansing and by separation from idols, lies, and spiritual corruption.

Question 33

What does Zechariah 13 teach about Jesus Christ?

Answer

It presents Him as the struck Shepherd whose death leads to the scattering of the sheep, a prophecy Jesus directly applied to Himself.

Question 34

What does the chapter teach about false religion?

Answer

God ultimately exposes and removes false worship, false prophecy, and deceptive spiritual claims.

Question 35

What does the chapter teach about suffering?

Answer

God can use suffering like refining fire to purify faith, remove spiritual impurities, and deepen covenant relationship with Him.

Question 36

What encouragement does this chapter give to someone who has failed?

Answer

The disciples themselves scattered after the Shepherd was struck, yet Christ later restored them. Failure does not have to be final when there is repentance and grace.

Question 37

What is the ultimate goal of God's refining work?

Answer

The goal is a people who truly belong to Him, call upon Him, receive His answer, and confess Him as their God.

Question 38

What is the central message of Zechariah Chapter 13?

Answer

God provides cleansing from sin, removes false worship and deception, fulfills His redemptive purpose through the struck Shepherd, and refines a faithful remnant into a people who truly belong to Him.

XVII. FINAL THOUGHT

Zechariah Chapter 13 begins with water and ends with fire.

First:

A fountain is opened.

Then:

A refining fire is kindled.

Both images describe God's work in His people.

The fountain cleanses.

The fire refines.

The fountain removes guilt and impurity.

The fire tests and purifies what remains.

Between these two images stands the Shepherd.

The Shepherd is struck.

The sheep scatter.

Centuries later, Jesus Christ quoted these very words before His arrest.

He knew the sword was coming.

He knew the disciples would flee.

He knew Peter would deny Him.

He knew the cross stood ahead.

Yet He went forward.

The Shepherd was struck.

The sheep scattered.

But that was not the end.

The Shepherd rose again.

The scattered disciples were gathered again.

Peter was restored.

The apostles were commissioned.

The gospel went to the nations.

That is grace.

Zechariah 13 reminds us that God's work is not merely about rescuing people from judgment.

He wants a purified people.

A truthful people.

A people without idols.

A people who reject deception.

A people refined by faith.

A people who call upon His name.

And finally a people about whom He can say:

“They are My people.”

And who can answer:

“The Lord is our God.”

That is the goal of redemption.

Not merely avoiding hell.

Not merely receiving blessing.

Not merely escaping suffering.

But belonging to God.

So come to the fountain.

Let God cleanse what sin has stained.

Let Him remove what competes for your worship.

Let His Word expose what is false.

Trust the Shepherd who was struck for the sheep.

And when the refining fire comes, do not assume God has abandoned you.

He may be purifying what He intends to keep.

Key Verse

“I will bring this third through the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on My name, and I will answer them.” — Zechariah 13:9

Key Phrase

God cleanses His people through grace, refines them through testing, and brings them into deeper covenant fellowship with Himself.

Zechariah Chapter 14 — The Day of the Lord and His Eternal Reign

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Zechariah Chapter 14 brings the book to a dramatic climax.

The chapter gathers together many of the great themes that have appeared throughout Zechariah:

Jerusalem under attack.

The Day of the Lord.

Divine intervention.

The coming of the Lord.

The Mount of Olives.

Living waters.

Universal kingship.

Judgment of hostile nations.

Worship among the nations.

Holiness to the Lord.

The chapter begins with Jerusalem facing severe distress.

The nations gather.

The city suffers.

Humanly speaking, the situation appears hopeless.

Then the Lord acts.

He goes out to fight.

His feet stand on the Mount of Olives.

The mountain splits.

The Lord comes with His holy ones.

Light breaks through darkness.

Living waters flow from Jerusalem.

And one of the greatest declarations in all prophetic Scripture appears:

“The Lord will be King over all the earth.”

The chapter ends with an equally powerful image:

“Holiness to the Lord.”

Even ordinary cooking pots become holy.

That is significant.

Zechariah does not end merely with victory.

It ends with holiness.

The final goal of God's kingdom is not simply that enemies are defeated.

It is that:

God reigns.

God is worshiped.

God's people are secure.

The nations acknowledge Him.

Every part of life becomes holy to the Lord.

The central message of Zechariah 14 is:

The Lord will come, defeat His enemies, reign as King over all the earth, gather the nations to worship Him, and establish a kingdom marked by holiness.

I. THE DAY OF THE LORD DECLARED

Zechariah 14:1

“Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, when your plunder will be divided in your midst.”

The chapter begins with urgency:

“Behold.”

The prophet calls attention to the coming **Day of the Lord**.

In Scripture, the Day of the Lord refers to a decisive time when God intervenes directly in judgment and salvation.

For Jerusalem, this day initially appears disastrous.

The city's possessions are plundered.

The enemy seems victorious.

But this is only the beginning of the story.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 13:6 — Isaiah warns that the Day of the Lord is coming as a time of powerful divine judgment.

Obadiah 1:15 — The Day of the Lord will come upon the nations, and people will receive according to what they have done.

Amos 5:18 — Amos warns that the Day of the Lord is not automatically a day of joy; for the rebellious it can be darkness and judgment.

Spiritual Lesson

The Day of the Lord exposes the difference between human expectations and God's purposes.

Application

Do not assume that apparent defeat means God has lost control.

Zechariah 14:2

“For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem for battle. The city will be taken, the houses plundered, and the women violated. Half the city will go into captivity, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city.”

This is one of the most severe verses in Zechariah.

Jerusalem experiences military catastrophe.

The city is invaded.

Homes are plundered.

People are abused.

Captivity follows.

Yet even in this judgment, a remnant remains.

The nations believe they are acting independently, but God says:

“I will gather.”

This does not make the cruelty of the invaders righteous.

It means their actions remain under God's sovereign authority and are ultimately drawn into His larger purpose of judgment and deliverance.

Cross References in Simple American English

Lamentations 5:11 — Jerusalem's fall involved terrible violence and abuse against its women.

2 Kings 25:9 — Babylon burned Jerusalem and destroyed its major buildings.

Micah 4:11 — Many nations gather against Zion, believing they will destroy her.

Key Truth

God's sovereignty does not remove human guilt, but human evil cannot escape His ultimate control.

II. THE LORD FIGHTS FOR JERUSALEM

Zechariah 14:3

“Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations, just as He has in the days of battle.”

The turning point comes with one word:

“Then.”

The nations attack.

Jerusalem suffers.

Then the Lord acts.

He fights.

The language recalls earlier moments in Israel's history when God intervened decisively on behalf of His people.

Cross References in Simple American English

Exodus 14:14 — Moses told Israel that the Lord would fight for them while they remained still.

Isaiah 42:13 — The Lord is pictured going out like a warrior and triumphing over His enemies.

Joshua 10:14 — God fought for Israel in a remarkable battle during Joshua's leadership.

Spiritual Lesson

God is never merely an observer of history.

Application

There are battles that human strength cannot win.

Zechariah 14:4

“On that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and the other half south.”

This is one of the most dramatic prophetic statements in the Old Testament.

The Lord's feet stand on the Mount of Olives.

The mountain splits.

A great valley appears.

Many Christians understand this as a direct prophecy connected with the visible return of Jesus Christ.

That interpretation is strengthened by Acts 1.

Jesus ascended from the vicinity of the Mount of Olives.

The angels then told His disciples that He would return in the same manner as they had seen Him go.

Cross References in Simple American English

Acts 1:11 — The angels told the disciples that Jesus would return in the same way they saw Him go into heaven.

Ezekiel 11:23 — The glory of the Lord moved to the mountain east of Jerusalem.

Revelation 16:18 — Final judgment includes an extraordinary earthquake unlike any previous one.

Christ Connection

The Mount of Olives forms an important connection between Christ's ascension and the expectation of His visible return.

Key Truth

The Lord who ascended will not remain absent forever.

Zechariah 14:5

“You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for it will reach to Azal. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and all His holy ones with Him.”

The newly formed valley becomes a means of escape.

The prophet compares the panic to a famous earthquake during the reign of Uzziah.

Then comes the great declaration:

“The Lord my God will come.”

And He does not come alone.

“All His holy ones” accompany Him.

Cross References in Simple American English

Amos 1:1 — Amos dates his ministry in relation to the famous earthquake during Uzziah's reign.

1 Thessalonians 3:13 — Paul speaks of the coming of the Lord Jesus with all His holy ones.

Jude 1:14 — Jude describes the Lord coming with countless holy ones to execute judgment.

Spiritual Lesson

The same God who provides escape also comes in glory.

III. THE UNIQUE DAY OF THE LORD

Zechariah 14:6

“On that day, there will be neither bright light nor total darkness.”

Normal patterns of light appear disrupted.

The Day of the Lord is unique.

Creation itself reflects the extraordinary nature of divine intervention.

Cross References in Simple American English

Joel 2:31 — The sun and moon are affected before the great Day of the Lord.

Amos 5:20 — The Day of the Lord is described as darkness for the rebellious.

Isaiah 60:19 — God's presence eventually replaces dependence upon ordinary light.

Spiritual Lesson

The Day of the Lord will not be an ordinary day.

Zechariah 14:7

“It will be a unique day—known only to the Lord—with no distinction between day and night. When evening comes, there will be light.”

The day is known fully only to the Lord.

Human beings cannot control its timing.

At the time when darkness normally deepens, light appears.

That is a fitting picture of God's intervention.

When humanity expects darkness, God brings light.

Cross References in Simple American English

Revelation 21:25 — The eternal city does not need normal darkness because God's glory illuminates it.

Mark 13:32 — Jesus said the exact timing of the final day is known by the Father.

Revelation 22:5 — God's servants will no longer need ordinary lamps or sunlight because the Lord gives them light.

Key Principle

God knows the timing of His purposes even when we do not.

IV. LIVING WATERS AND THE LORD'S REIGN

Zechariah 14:8

“On that day, living waters will flow out from Jerusalem, half toward the eastern sea and half toward the western sea, in both summer and winter.”

Water in the ancient Near East represented life.

These waters flow continuously.

Not only during the rainy season.

But:

Summer and winter.

The image communicates uninterrupted life and blessing flowing from God's presence.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ezekiel 47:1 — Ezekiel sees life-giving water flowing from the temple.

Revelation 22:2 — The river of life flows through the final city and nourishes life.

John 7:38 — Jesus describes living water flowing from those who believe in Him.

Christ Connection

The living waters find their deepest spiritual meaning in the life God gives through Christ and the Spirit.

Spiritual Lesson

Where God reigns, life flows.

Zechariah 14:9

“The Lord will be King over all the earth. On that day there will be one Lord, and His name alone will be worshiped.”

This is the great theological climax of the chapter.

The Lord will be King over all the earth.

Not merely Judah.

Not merely Jerusalem.

Not merely Israel.

All the earth.

His kingship becomes universally recognized.

Idolatry ends.

Competing loyalties disappear.

Cross References in Simple American English

Revelation 11:15 — The kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of the Lord and His Christ.

Deuteronomy 6:4 — Israel confesses that the Lord is one.

Philippians 2:10 — Every knee will bow before Jesus.

Key Doctrine

God's kingdom is universal.

Application

The question is not whether Christ will ultimately reign.

The question is whether we submit to Him now.

V. JERUSALEM RESTORED AND SECURE

Zechariah 14:10

“The land from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem, will become a plain. But Jerusalem will be raised up and inhabited in its place, from the Benjamin Gate to the

First Gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses."

The geography changes.

Jerusalem is elevated.

The city is restored and inhabited.

The detailed geographical references emphasize the reality and completeness of the restoration.

Cross References in Simple American English

Nehemiah 3:1 — The Tower of Hananel appears in the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls.

Jeremiah 31:38 — Jeremiah promised that Jerusalem would be rebuilt for the Lord.

Revelation 21:12 — The final holy city is pictured with secure gates and ordered structure.

Spiritual Lesson

God's restoration is not vague.

He restores what was devastated.

Zechariah 14:11

"It will be inhabited; never again will it be destroyed. Jerusalem will be secure."

The city that experienced siege becomes secure.

The city that experienced destruction becomes permanently inhabited.

The contrast is deliberate.

Cross References in Simple American English

Jeremiah 31:40 — Jerusalem is promised a future in which it will not again be uprooted or destroyed.

Isaiah 60:18 — Violence and destruction will no longer dominate the land.

Revelation 21:3 — God's dwelling with His people brings final security.

Key Truth

God's final restoration cannot be undone.

VI. THE PLAGUE ON THE NATIONS

Zechariah 14:12

“This is the plague with which the Lord will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot while they are still standing, their eyes will decay in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths.”

The description is severe.

It emphasizes the terrifying reality of divine judgment.

Human rebellion against God is not harmless.

The physical imagery communicates sudden, devastating judgment.

Cross References in Simple American English

Revelation 19:21 — The enemies of Christ are destroyed at His victorious appearing.

Isaiah 34:3 — Divine judgment against rebellious nations is described in severe physical terms.

Ezekiel 38:22 — God judges hostile armies with plague and supernatural destruction.

Spiritual Lesson

Divine patience should never be mistaken for indifference toward evil.

Zechariah 14:13

“On that day, panic from the Lord will cause them to seize each other by the hand, and neighbor will fight against neighbor.”

God brings confusion into the enemy ranks.

Instead of fighting Jerusalem, the attackers turn against one another.

This recalls several Old Testament battles where God caused enemies to destroy themselves.

Cross References in Simple American English

Judges 7:22 — Gideon's enemies turned their swords against one another.

1 Samuel 14:20 — Israel's enemies became confused and attacked each other.

Haggai 2:22 — God promises to overthrow kingdoms and military strength.

Key Principle

God can defeat an enemy from within.

Zechariah 14:14

“Judah will also fight at Jerusalem. The wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered—gold, silver, and clothing in great abundance.”

The wealth of attacking nations changes hands.

The plunderers become the plundered.

This is a reversal of verse 1.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 60:5 — The wealth of the nations is pictured coming toward God's restored people.

Haggai 2:8 — God declares that all silver and gold ultimately belong to Him.

Isaiah 61:6 — God's people are pictured benefiting from the wealth of nations under divine restoration.

Spiritual Lesson

God can reverse the outcome of human oppression.

Zechariah 14:15

“A plague will strike the horses, mules, camels, donkeys, and all the animals in their camps, just as it struck the people.”

The judgment reaches the entire military system of the invading armies.

Animals were essential to transportation, warfare, and supply.

Nothing sustaining the rebellion escapes.

Cross References in Simple American English

Exodus 9:3 — Egypt's livestock were struck during divine judgment.

Revelation 6:8 — Final judgment affects both human life and the created order.

1 Samuel 15:3 — Ancient warfare often involved judgment extending to the resources supporting hostile powers.

Key Truth

God's judgment can reach both the enemy and the systems that sustain its power.

VII. ALL NATIONS WORSHIP THE KING

Zechariah 14:16

“Then the survivors from all the nations that attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.”

This verse contains a remarkable reversal.

Some from the nations that attacked Jerusalem survive.

And what do they do?

They worship.

They go up to honor:

“The King, the Lord of hosts.”

Enemies become worshipers.

The Feast of Tabernacles celebrated God's provision, protection, and dwelling with His people.

Its observance fits beautifully with the kingdom theme of God dwelling among humanity.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 66:23 — All humanity is pictured coming to worship before the Lord.

Revelation 21:24 — The nations walk in the light of God's final city.

Leviticus 23:34 — Israel was commanded to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles as a remembrance of God's provision.

Spiritual Lesson

God's final kingdom includes people from the nations worshiping Him.

Zechariah 14:17

“If any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, they will have no rain.”

Worship is not presented as optional indifference.

The King deserves allegiance.

Those refusing to honor Him experience consequences.

Rain is withheld.

This recalls the covenant principle that agricultural blessing comes from God.

Cross References in Simple American English

Deuteronomy 11:17 — God warned Israel that rebellion could result in withheld rain.

1 Kings 17:1 — Elijah announced drought as judgment during Ahab's rebellion.

James 5:17 — James reminds believers that Elijah's prayer was connected with a long period without rain.

Key Truth

The King is not merely admired.

He is obeyed.

Zechariah 14:18

“If the people of Egypt do not go up and take part, they will face the plague that the Lord inflicts on all the nations who refuse to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.”

Egypt receives special mention because it historically depended heavily on the Nile rather than normal rainfall.

The message is that no nation can escape accountability by claiming different natural circumstances.

God can judge every nation appropriately.

Cross References in Simple American English

Exodus 9:14 — God told Pharaoh that His judgments would demonstrate that there was none like Him.

Ezekiel 29:14 — Egypt would be humbled under divine judgment.

Isaiah 19:1 — The Lord is pictured coming in judgment against Egypt.

Spiritual Lesson

No nation is outside the King's authority.

Zechariah 14:19

“This will be the punishment of Egypt and of all nations that refuse to go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.”

The principle is universal.

All nations are accountable.

The worldwide reign of the Lord produces worldwide responsibility to worship Him.

Cross References in Simple American English

Amos 3:2 — Greater knowledge of God brings greater accountability.

Jeremiah 25:17 — Jeremiah's cup of judgment reaches many nations.

Isaiah 19:22 — God both strikes and heals, showing judgment and restoration within His sovereign purpose.

Key Principle

Universal kingship means universal accountability.

VIII. HOLINESS TO THE LORD

Zechariah 14:20

**“On that day, the bells of the horses will bear the inscription: ‘Holiness to the Lord.’
The cooking pots in the Lord’s house will be as holy as the sacred bowls before the altar.”**

This is one of the most beautiful endings to a prophetic book.

The phrase:

“Holiness to the Lord”

had once appeared prominently on the high priest's sacred headpiece.

Now it appears on ordinary horse bells.

The distinction between sacred and ordinary life is transformed.

Everything belongs to God.

Even common objects become dedicated to Him.

Cross References in Simple American English

Exodus 28:36 — The high priest wore a gold plate engraved with the words “Holiness to the Lord.”

Exodus 39:30 — The sacred inscription marked the priestly headpiece as belonging to God.

1 Corinthians 10:31 — Believers are told to do everything, even eating and drinking, for God's glory.

Spiritual Lesson

God's final kingdom is not holy only in the temple.

Holiness touches everything.

Application

There should be no part of the believer's life marked:

“God does not belong here.”

Zechariah 14:21

“Indeed, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the Lord of hosts. All who sacrifice will come and use them for cooking. And on that day, there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts.”

The holiness becomes universal.

Every pot becomes holy.

Ordinary kitchen equipment is treated as belonging to the Lord.

The reference to no Canaanite remaining in the house of the Lord is best understood as emphasizing the complete removal of moral and worship corruption from God's sanctuary.

The chapter closes with purity.

Cross References in Simple American English

Exodus 30:29 — Objects devoted to the Lord were considered holy.

John 2:16 — Jesus drove commercial corruption from the temple and defended its holiness.

Revelation 21:27 — Nothing impure will enter God's final holy city.

Key Truth

God's kingdom ends in complete holiness.

IX. MAJOR THEMES OF ZECHARIAH 14

1. The Day of the Lord Is Certain

God will intervene decisively in history.

2. Jerusalem Faces Severe Conflict

The chapter does not hide the reality of suffering before deliverance.

3. The Lord Personally Fights

Human power does not secure the final victory.

4. The Lord Comes in Glory

His arrival transforms both geography and history.

5. The Mount of Olives Is Significant

It becomes closely connected with the expectation of Christ's return.

6. Living Waters Flow From God's Presence

Life replaces barrenness.

7. The Lord Becomes Universally Recognized as King

His rule extends over all the earth.

8. Jerusalem Is Restored and Secure

The city moves from siege to stability.

9. Rebellious Nations Are Judged

God deals decisively with opposition.

10. Survivors From the Nations Worship the King

The kingdom includes international worship.

11. Holiness Becomes Universal

Even ordinary objects are devoted to God.

X. CHRIST IN ZECHARIAH 14

1. Christ Is the Returning Lord

The New Testament teaches that Jesus will return visibly.

The Mount of Olives creates a powerful connection with His ascension.

2. Christ Is the King Over All the Earth

The New Testament declares that Jesus possesses all authority and that every knee will ultimately bow before Him.

3. Christ Defeats His Enemies

Revelation presents Christ returning in victory over rebellious powers.

4. Christ Brings Living Water

Jesus identifies Himself as the source of living water.

5. Christ Brings Universal Worship

People from every nation, tribe, and language ultimately worship the Lamb.

6. Christ Establishes Holiness

His kingdom culminates in a people and creation fully devoted to God.

XI. THE DAY OF THE LORD

The Day of the Lord is a major prophetic theme.

It includes:

Judgment.

Intervention.

Deliverance.

Kingdom.

Glory.

For the rebellious, it is terrifying.

For the redeemed, it brings hope.

Key Principle

The same divine appearing that destroys rebellion establishes the kingdom of God.

XII. THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

The Mount of Olives carries deep biblical significance.

Jesus taught there.

Jesus prayed nearby.

Jesus ascended from the area.

Acts 1 records the angels promising His return.

Zechariah 14 pictures the Lord standing upon that mountain.

Christ Connection

The geographical detail reinforces the visible and historical character of Christ's promised return.

XIII. “THE LORD WILL BE KING”

Zechariah 14:9 gives the theological climax:

“The Lord will be King over all the earth.”

This means:

No rival throne.

No competing god.

No rebellious kingdom.

No false worship.

His reign is universal.

Application

Christ's future universal reign should shape present obedience.

If He will be King then, He should be honored as King now.

XIV. LIVING WATERS

The living water imagery connects Zechariah with Ezekiel, John, and Revelation.

Water flows from God's presence.

It brings life.

It does not stop with the seasons.

This points toward a kingdom where divine life overcomes barrenness.

Spiritual Lesson

God's presence produces life.

XV. THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

Why does Zechariah specifically mention this feast?

The Feast of Tabernacles remembered how God:

Protected Israel.

Provided for Israel.

Dwelt with Israel.

It was also a joyful harvest festival.

That makes it an appropriate symbol for the kingdom age.

The nations come to celebrate:

Provision.

Presence.

Protection.

Joy.

XVI. HOLINESS EVERYWHERE

The final image of Zechariah is not a battlefield.

It is holiness.

That matters.

The purpose of divine victory is not endless warfare.

It is a holy kingdom.

The phrase once reserved for the high priest appears on horse bells.

Sacred cooking bowls and common pots are treated alike.

Everything belongs to God.

Key Principle

In God's kingdom, there is no truly secular corner of life.

XVII. KEY LESSONS FROM ZECHARIAH 14

1. The Day of the Lord will come.

God will decisively intervene in history.

2. God remains sovereign even during severe suffering.

Jerusalem's temporary distress does not cancel His purpose.

3. The Lord fights for His people.

The final victory belongs to Him.

4. The Lord will visibly come.

The Mount of Olives becomes a major prophetic sign.

5. Living waters flow from His presence.

God's kingdom produces life and healing.

6. The Lord will be King over all the earth.

His reign will be universal.

7. Human rebellion will be judged.

No army or nation can successfully oppose Him forever.

8. The nations will worship the King.

Survivors from the nations will come before Him.

9. Worship requires obedience.

Those who refuse the King face consequences.

10. The final kingdom is marked by holiness.

Even ordinary objects will be devoted to the Lord.

XVIII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Zechariah 14 challenges us to ask:

Do I live as though the Day of the Lord is real?

Is Jesus truly King over my life now?

Am I placing too much confidence in human power?

Do I believe Christ will visibly return?

Am I drawing spiritual life from Him?

Is there any area of my life that I have kept outside God's rule?

Do I worship God only in religious settings, or does holiness affect everyday life?

Am I prepared to stand before the King?

Can the words **“Holiness to the Lord”** be written over my work, home, finances, relationships, and decisions?

XIX. QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY WITH ANSWERS

Question 1

What major prophetic event dominates Zechariah 14?

Answer

The chapter centers on the Day of the Lord, when God intervenes decisively in judgment, deliverance, kingship, and restoration.

Question 2

What happens to Jerusalem at the beginning of the chapter?

Answer

The nations attack the city, plunder homes, take captives, and inflict severe suffering.

Question 3

Does Jerusalem's suffering mean God has abandoned His plan?

Answer

No. The chapter shows that God allows the crisis but then personally intervenes to defeat the attacking nations.

Question 4

Who gathers the nations against Jerusalem?

Answer

God says that He gathers them, meaning that even their rebellious actions ultimately fall within His sovereign purpose.

Question 5

What happens after the nations attack Jerusalem?

Answer

The Lord goes out and fights against them.

Question 6

What Old Testament event does this divine fighting resemble?

Answer

It resembles earlier occasions such as the Exodus, when God fought directly for His people.

Question 7

Where do the Lord's feet stand in verse 4?

Answer

They stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem.

Question 8

What happens to the Mount of Olives?

Answer

It splits from east to west, creating a great valley.

Question 9

Why is the Mount of Olives significant for Christians?

Answer

Jesus ascended from that general area, and Acts 1 records the promise that He would return in the same manner.

Question 10

Who comes with the Lord?

Answer

His holy ones come with Him.

Question 11

What is unusual about the light on that day?

Answer

Normal distinctions between day and night are disrupted, and light remains even at evening.

Question 12

Who alone fully knows that unique day?

Answer

The Lord.

Question 13

What flows out from Jerusalem?

Answer

Living waters flow toward both the eastern and western seas.

Question 14

What do the living waters symbolize?

Answer

They symbolize life, blessing, healing, and provision flowing from God's presence.

Question 15

What is the central declaration of Zechariah 14:9?

Answer

“The Lord will be King over all the earth.”

Question 16

What does that statement teach about God's kingdom?

Answer

It teaches that His final rule is universal and no competing power or false god will remain.

Question 17

What happens to Jerusalem after the Lord's intervention?

Answer

It is restored, inhabited, elevated, and secure.

Question 18

What happens to the nations that fought against Jerusalem?

Answer

They experience severe divine judgment through plague, confusion, and defeat.

Question 19

How does God create confusion among the enemy armies?

Answer

He causes panic so that they turn against one another.

Question 20

What happens to the wealth of the surrounding nations?

Answer

Their wealth is gathered after their defeat.

Question 21

Does the judgment affect only human soldiers?

Answer

No. The animals and resources supporting the enemy armies are also struck.

Question 22

What happens to survivors among the nations?

Answer

They go up to worship the King, the Lord of hosts.

Question 23

Which feast do the nations celebrate?

Answer

The Feast of Tabernacles.

Question 24

What did the Feast of Tabernacles originally commemorate?

Answer

It remembered God's provision and protection during Israel's wilderness journey and celebrated His blessing.

Question 25

Why is the Feast of Tabernacles appropriate in this kingdom setting?

Answer

Because it celebrates God's presence, provision, protection, and joy—major themes of the Lord's final reign.

Question 26

What happens to nations that refuse to worship the King?

Answer

They experience withheld rain or other forms of divine judgment.

Question 27

Why is Egypt specifically mentioned?

Answer

Because Egypt depended heavily on the Nile rather than ordinary rainfall, showing that no nation can escape God's judgment through natural advantages.

Question 28

What words appear on the bells of the horses?

Answer

“Holiness to the Lord.”

Question 29

Where had the phrase “Holiness to the Lord” appeared earlier in Scripture?

Answer

It appeared on the sacred gold plate worn by Israel's high priest.

Question 30

Why is it significant that the same phrase appears on ordinary horse bells?

Answer

It shows that holiness will no longer be associated only with special religious objects. Every part of life will belong to God.

Question 31

What happens to ordinary cooking pots?

Answer

They become holy to the Lord just like the sacred vessels of worship.

Question 32

What does this teach about holiness?

Answer

Holiness is meant to extend into every part of life, not merely formal worship.

Question 33

How does Zechariah 14 point toward Jesus Christ?

Answer

It points toward His visible return, His victory over enemies, His universal kingship, His connection with the Mount of Olives, and the worldwide worship of the Lord.

Question 34

What does Acts 1 contribute to our understanding of Zechariah 14?

Answer

Acts 1 records Christ's ascension near the Mount of Olives and the angelic promise that He will return visibly.

Question 35

What does Philippians 2 add to the theme of universal kingship?

Answer

It teaches that every knee will bow and every tongue acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord.

Question 36

What is the ultimate goal of the Lord's victory in Zechariah 14?

Answer

The ultimate goal is not merely the destruction of enemies but the establishment of God's universal reign, worship, security, and holiness.

Question 37

What is the final spiritual emphasis of the Book of Zechariah?

Answer

Holiness to the Lord.

Question 38

Why is that a fitting ending to Zechariah?

Answer

Because all of God's promises of cleansing, restoration, judgment, kingship, and redemption ultimately lead to a people and kingdom fully devoted to Him.

Question 39

What does Zechariah 14 teach believers about present-day worship?

Answer

It teaches that worship should extend beyond formal religious activity into everyday work, possessions, relationships, and decisions.

Question 40

What is the central message of Zechariah Chapter 14?

Answer

The Lord will come in power, defeat His enemies, restore Jerusalem, reign as King over all the earth, draw the nations to worship Him, and establish a kingdom in which everything is holy to the Lord.

XX. THE MESSAGE OF THE WHOLE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH

Zechariah began with a call:

“Return to Me.”

It ends with:

“Holiness to the Lord.”

Between those statements is the story of God's redemptive work.

God calls.

God cleanses.

God restores.

God empowers.

God judges.

God sends the Branch.

God sends the King.

The Shepherd is rejected.

The Shepherd is struck.

The Pierced One is recognized.

A fountain is opened.

A remnant is refined.

The Lord returns.

And finally:

The Lord is King over all the earth.

That is the movement of Zechariah.

From repentance to restoration.

From uncleanness to cleansing.

From weakness to strength.

From rejection to recognition.

From scattering to gathering.

From conflict to peace.

From mourning to worship.

From human kingdoms to God's kingdom.

And from ordinary life to:

Holiness to the Lord.

XXI. FINAL THOUGHT

Zechariah does not end quietly.

It ends with the Lord coming.

The nations gather.

Jerusalem suffers.

The situation looks hopeless.

Then:

The Lord goes out to fight.

His feet stand on the Mount of Olives.

The mountain splits.

The Lord comes with His holy ones.

Darkness gives way to light.

Living water flows.

Jerusalem is restored.

The enemies of God are judged.

The nations come to worship.

And one magnificent declaration rises above the entire chapter:

“The Lord will be King over all the earth.”

That is where history is going.

Not toward the permanent triumph of human rebellion.

Not toward endless political confusion.

Not toward the final victory of evil.

History is moving toward the reign of the King.

The Shepherd who was rejected will reign.

The One who was pierced will be honored.

The One who was struck will return.

The King who once entered Jerusalem humbly on a donkey will be recognized over all the earth.

And when He reigns, holiness will no longer be confined to sacred buildings.

It will touch everything.

Horse bells.

Cooking pots.

Homes.

Work.

Worship.

Daily life.

Everything will bear the message:

“Holiness to the Lord.”

That is how Zechariah ends.

And that is how God's kingdom triumphs.

So live now in light of the coming King.

Worship Him now.

Submit to Him now.

Walk in holiness now.

Let every part of your life belong to Him now.

For the day is coming when the truth declared by Zechariah will be visible everywhere:

The Lord is King.

Key Verse

“The Lord will be King over all the earth. On that day there will be one Lord, and His name alone will be worshiped.” — Zechariah 14:9

Key Phrase

The Lord will return, reign over all the earth, and establish a kingdom where everything is holy to Him.

Epilogue

The final words of Zechariah leave us standing on the edge of glory.

The prophet has taken us from repentance to restoration, from ruined Jerusalem to a coming kingdom, from filthy garments to cleansing, from rejected shepherds to the true Shepherd, and from sorrow to the reign of the King.

What began with the call,

“Return to Me,”

ends with the declaration that the Lord will be King over all the earth.

That is the great movement of Zechariah.

God calls.

God cleanses.

God restores.

God judges.

God saves.

God reigns.

And throughout the entire book, one truth becomes impossible to miss:

God keeps His promises.

The people of Zechariah's day needed that assurance.

They were weak.

Their city had been devastated.

Their temple had been destroyed.

Their nation had suffered judgment.

Their enemies surrounded them.

Their future looked uncertain.

But God saw what they could not see.

He saw Jerusalem restored.

He saw the temple rebuilt.

He saw the Messiah coming.

He saw the Shepherd rejected.

He saw the One who would be pierced.

He saw cleansing opened for sin.

He saw the nations gathered.

He saw the Lord returning.

He saw the King reigning.

And because God saw the end from the beginning, His people could trust Him in the middle.

That same truth speaks powerfully to us today.

We also live in a world of uncertainty.

Nations rise and fall.

Governments change.

Wars begin.

Economies shake.

Cultures drift.

Fear spreads quickly.

The future often seems unclear.

But Scripture reminds us that history is not out of control.

God is not reacting to events.

He is sovereign over them.

Nothing can cancel His promises.

Nothing can overthrow His purposes.

Nothing can prevent the return of Jesus Christ.

The King is coming.

That truth should do more than excite our curiosity about prophecy.

It should transform the way we live.

If the King is coming, then we should live faithfully.

If the King is coming, then we should take holiness seriously.

If the King is coming, then we should forgive quickly.

If the King is coming, then we should serve diligently.

If the King is coming, then we should endure suffering with hope.

If the King is coming, then we should share the gospel while there is still time.

If the King is coming, then we should not allow the temporary troubles of this world to steal our confidence in the eternal promises of God.

Zechariah never presents prophecy as entertainment.

Prophecy is a call to worship.

It is a call to repentance.

It is a call to readiness.

It is a call to faith.

The great question is not merely, "What will happen?"

The greater question is, "How should I live because these things will happen?"

Zechariah gives us the answer.

Return to the Lord.

Trust His Word.

Walk in obedience.

Do not despise small beginnings.

Depend upon the Spirit.

Reject empty religion.

Practice justice and mercy.

Look to the Shepherd.

Receive the cleansing God provides.

And live in expectation of the King.

The book of Zechariah also reminds us that the center of prophecy is not an event.

It is a Person.

Jesus Christ stands at the heart of Zechariah's message.

He is the Branch.

He is the King who comes riding on a donkey.

He is the Shepherd who is struck.

He is the One who is pierced.

He is the source of cleansing.

He is the Lord who will return.

He is the King who will reign.

The first coming of Christ revealed the humility of the King.

The second coming will reveal the glory of the King.

At His first coming, many rejected Him.

At His return, His authority will be undeniable.

At His first coming, He came to save.

At His return, He will judge and reign.

At His first coming, He stood before earthly rulers.

At His return, earthly rulers will stand before Him.

At His first coming, He wore a crown of thorns.

At His return, every crown will be beneath His authority.

Zechariah points us toward that day.

A day when the Lord will intervene.

A day when evil will be judged.

A day when Jerusalem will be delivered.

A day when the nations will recognize the sovereignty of God.

A day when holiness will characterize the kingdom.

A day when the Lord will be King over all the earth.

Until that day, we wait.

But biblical waiting is never passive.

We wait by serving.

We wait by praying.

We wait by worshiping.

We wait by proclaiming Christ.

We wait by remaining faithful.

We wait by refusing to surrender our hope.

And we wait with confidence because the One who promised to come cannot lie.

Perhaps that is the greatest lesson Zechariah leaves with us.

God remembers.

When His people thought they had been forgotten, God remembered.

When Jerusalem lay broken, God remembered.

When the temple stood unfinished, God remembered.

When generations passed waiting for Messiah, God remembered.

When Christ came, God fulfilled His Word.

And when the appointed time comes for His return, God will fulfill every remaining promise.

So we close this study not with uncertainty, but with confidence.

Not with fear, but with hope.

Not with speculation, but with worship.

The world may change.

Nations may shake.

Circumstances may become difficult.

But the Word of God remains sure.

The promises remain certain.

The throne remains occupied.

And the future belongs to Jesus Christ.

One day faith will become sight.

One day prophecy will become history.

One day the King who was rejected will be openly revealed.

One day the Shepherd who was struck will reign.

One day the Pierced One will be recognized.

One day the kingdoms of this world will give way before the authority of the Lord.

And on that day, the message of Zechariah will stand fulfilled before all creation:

The Lord will be King over all the earth.

Until then, let us remain faithful.

Let us keep our eyes on Christ.

Let us hold tightly to the Word of God.

Let us live with eternity in view.

Let us proclaim the gospel.

Let us worship the King.

And let us never forget the great promise that echoes through this entire book:

The King Is Coming.

Epilogue

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And let us never forget the great promise that echoes through this entire book:

The King Is Coming.

A Note from the Author

Writing *The King Is Coming: A Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Book of Zechariah* has been both a privilege and a deeply rewarding study.

Zechariah is a book filled with extraordinary visions, powerful warnings, gracious promises, and unmistakable hope. It speaks to people who had experienced judgment, discouragement, and uncertainty, yet it continually points them back to the faithfulness of God.

That is one of the reasons this book remains so important for believers today.

We live in a world that is often marked by fear, instability, confusion, and rapid change. It can be easy to become overwhelmed by what is happening around us. Zechariah reminds us that God is not absent, His promises have not failed, and history is moving toward the fulfillment of His purposes.

Above all, Zechariah points us to Jesus Christ.

He is the coming King.

He is the Branch.

He is the Shepherd.

He is the One who was pierced.

He is the source of cleansing from sin.

And He is the Lord who will one day reign over all the earth.

My purpose in writing this commentary has been to help readers slow down and examine Zechariah carefully, verse by verse. Prophetic books are sometimes neglected because they can appear difficult or symbolic. Yet when we take the time to study the context, the imagery, the historical background, and the Messianic promises, the message becomes both powerful and practical.

I have sought to keep this commentary clear, biblical, and useful for everyday study.

It is written for pastors, teachers, Bible study leaders, serious students of Scripture, and anyone who simply wants to understand the Word of God more deeply.

My prayer is that you will not merely gain information from these pages, but that your faith will be strengthened.

May you see more clearly the sovereignty of God.

May you understand more deeply the faithfulness of His promises.

May you appreciate more fully the prophetic testimony concerning Jesus Christ.

May you be challenged to live with greater holiness, obedience, and expectancy.

And may you never forget that biblical prophecy is not given simply to satisfy our curiosity about the future. It is given to shape the way we live in the present.

If Christ is coming, then our lives should reflect that hope.

We should live faithfully.

We should serve diligently.

We should pray earnestly.

We should share the gospel boldly.

We should endure hardship patiently.

We should worship wholeheartedly.

And we should remain ready.

One of the great truths of Zechariah is that God remembers His people.

He remembered them in exile.

He remembered Jerusalem.

He remembered His covenant.

He remembered His promises.

And He will remember every promise that still awaits fulfillment.

That gives us confidence.

The future does not belong to chaos.

It does not belong to earthly kingdoms.

It does not belong to human power.

The future belongs to the King.

Thank you for taking this journey through the book of Zechariah with me. I pray that this study will encourage you to open your Bible, examine every passage carefully, compare Scripture with Scripture, and grow in your love for the Lord.

May every chapter ultimately lead you to the same conclusion:

God is faithful.

His Word is true.

His promises are certain.

And the King is coming.

Dr. Paul Crawford

A Closing Prayer

“Father, I thank You for every reader who has walked through these pages. For the one who does not yet know You, I pray they would hear Your voice and receive Your Son, Jesus, as Lord and Savior. For the one who already believes, I pray You would set their heart ablaze with urgency—to speak, to share, to love, and to never be silent. May we all live as faithful watchmen, sounding the trumpet until the day You call us home. In Jesus’ mighty name, Amen.”

THE BIBLE WAY TO HEAVEN

1. Admit you are a sinner.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

No one is good enough to go to Heaven on his own merit.

No matter how much good we do, we still come short.

2. Realize the penalty for sin.

"For the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23a)

Just as there are wages for good, there is punishment for wrong.

The penalty for our sin is eternal death in a place called Hell.

3. Believe that Jesus Christ died, was buried, and rose again for you.

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Romans 10:9)

4. Trust Christ alone as your Saviour.

"...But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23b)

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:13)

Eternal life is a gift purchased by the blood of Jesus and offered freely to those who call upon Him by faith.

Anyone who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved forever. Being saved is a one-time event.

Dr. Paul Crawford is more than just a Christian Author; His books are a source of inspiration and guidance on your spiritual journey. His books are created with a deep sense of faith and a desire to uplift and inspire all who read.



THE KING IS COMING

A Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Book of Zechariah



The book of Zechariah is filled with prophetic visions, calls to repentance, promises of restoration, and glorious revelations of the coming King. In this verse-by-verse commentary, Dr. Paul Crawford carefully walks through each passage, helping readers understand Zechariah's message in its historical setting while also drawing out its powerful spiritual meaning for today.

From the rebuilding of the temple to the promise of the Messiah, from the cleansing fountain to the future reign of the Lord over all the earth, Zechariah points again and again to the faithfulness of God and the certainty of His purposes.

Clear, biblical, and devotional, this commentary is designed to strengthen faith, deepen understanding, and lead readers to worship the sovereign God who keeps every promise.



**A rich resource for personal study, teaching,
and devotional reading.**



Dr. Paul Crawford



