

Route Sixty-Six

Part Thirty-Eight

Zechariah

Clothed in Christ

(John 5:39; Zechariah 14:8, 9)

With Study Questions

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And in that day it shall be – *That* living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, Half of them toward the eastern sea And half of them toward the western sea; In both summer and winter it shall occur. ⁹ And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be “The Lord is one,” And His name one (Zechariah 14:8, 9).

Introduction

We live in a season where we feel as if our ability to worship God has been hobbled. The warmth of fellowship, the communion of the Lord’s Supper, our “**speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs**” (Ephesians 5:19), as wonderful as our leaders in music are, all feels compromised. We are working ardently to rectify that. So many things to consider.

There is the physical well-being of the congregation, the laws and guidelines of the civil authorities, the conflicting information from medical experts, the various levels of comfort, fear, responsibility of members. All of these things and more brought under the prayerful consideration of the elders. As we read the Scriptures, where do we prioritize in order to obtain the most obedient and faithful decision. It is no easy task.

But one thing almost universally agreed upon is that, at least for a time, in-person church services aren’t going to happen. That doesn’t mean that every church that has made that decision was correct. It is hypothetically possible that every church in America, or the world for that matter, that closed its doors was engaging in (a sort of non-willful, ignorant) disobedience to God.

At the same time, the providence of God is not at the mercy of human agency. We do the best we can, to make the best decisions. And we ought to repent when our decisions are found to be wrong. But the reality of our current situation is that almost all churches are closed to in-person worship.

Why do I mention this as we embark upon our study of where Christ is found Zechariah?

The heart of Old Covenant worship revolved around the temple, which had been destroyed. God's people had returned to the land, commissioned to rebuild the temple but were negligent (even though they had convinced themselves they had a good reason to avoid in its construction). In our last meeting we studied how Haggai addressed their negligence and encouraged them to complete the task. But Zechariah was concerned if the people would be ready to worship God once the temple was rebuilt.

Though in a temporal or secondary sense, the captivity and lack of a temple were all due to the rebellion and disobedience of the people. But in a primary and providential sense, each person had to wake up every morning and understand that God had ordained that very day.

And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When *as yet there were none of them* (Psalm 139:16b).

Were the people still worshiping God in the absence of a constructed temple? When things in our lives are not quite going the way we think they should unfold how will we do? Whether it's in our church, our family, our nation, our work we often think, 'this is not the way I had imagined it going.' And it feels as if God is neglecting us. As if He's a human who forgot to return our call.

In Zechariah we are assured that this is not the case.

Survey of Zechariah

I apologize in advance for how rapidly I will survey this book, a book which has been designated as "one of the most remarkable prophecies ever penned". Though shorter than Ezekiel, Isaiah or the Revelation, Zechariah is deep, rich, challenging and comforting.

The comfort which God extends through Zechariah is the reminder that in a world full of hostility, darkness and power in the hands of evil leaders, the faithful are still "**the apple of His eye**" (Zechariah 2:8). When we see evil and faithlessness succeeding, we may be tempted to rethink our position. If they have all the power and all the loot, we mistakenly think to ourselves, perhaps they are doing it correctly.

In the first half of the book (really chapters 1-8) we see a series of visions indicating that evil will not prevail. These visions (which include four horsemen, four horns, four carpenters, golden candlesticks, a huge scroll) will all testify to God's judgment of the wicked and protection of the just. We all seem to intuitively have this conviction (as unjustified as it may seem) that good will win out. What God conveys through Zechariah is that that is truly the case. To jump on board with the wicked is to serve a defeated master.

But how does one take rank with the righteous? The Israelites, no doubt, knew they deserved the judgment they were enduring. They would be a very shaky ground if they viewed their own goodness, virtue, humility, wisdom, faithful obedience, etc. as the foundation of their own righteousness. One is hard-pressed to find a minor prophet (or almost any Old Testament book) that points to Christ as directly and as often as Zechariah.

Christ in Zechariah

In Zechariah we read of:

- The thirty pieces of silver (11:13)
- The siege of Jerusalem (12:2), which Jesus prophesied in the Olivet Discourse;
- How they will look upon Him whom they pierced (12:10)
- How a fountain shall be opened...for sin and uncleanness (13:1)
- They will smite the shepherd, scattering the sheep (13:7)
- How His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives (14:4)
- How the King comes on a donkey (9:9)

We read of these and many more prophecies pointing to Christ. We also read of the effects of the gospel upon the world.

He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion *shall be* 'from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth' (Zechariah 9:10b).

Most of us are familiar with Jesus referring to Himself, His ministry, His Spirit in terms of “**living waters**” (John 4:14; 7:37-39). The end of Zechariah proclaims the beauty and extent of the peace that comes through Christ-through the Great Commission.

And in that day it shall be – That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, Half of them toward the eastern sea And half of them toward the western sea; In both summer and winter it shall occur. ⁹ And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be “The Lord is one,” And His name one (Zechariah 14:8, 9).

A word of caution here. There are many with whom I respectfully disagree who assert that these blessings follow, rather than precede, the Second Coming of Christ. One resource of mine (whose opinion I respect in many categories) teaches that “**Zechariah, like the other OT prophets, is not enlightened as to the present long interval of the church age.**”

I would submit that they weren’t enlightened to it, because it is not found in God’s plan of redemption. We must recognize that it is the word and Spirit of God working through a redeemed people that these promises find their fulfillment. But if you’re anything like me, you feel ill-equipped for the task.

This brings us to my final thought regarding Zechariah. It is the portion of the prophecy that I think of the most and has brought me the greatest sense of tranquility. And I believe, in terms of God’s people feeling overwhelmed by their enemies and unqualified in their own souls, brought the greatest sense that they truly belonged to their Father in heaven—that they were indeed accounted as the apple of His eye.

The scene is both horrifying and comforting. Joshua, the high priest is standing before the Angel of the Lord (Zechariah 3). That would be frightening enough. To stand before the tribunal of God with His piercing eye knowing every sinful, enough foul thought! If that were not enough to convince anyone that they were not worthy to be considered a saint rather than an enemy of God, the intensity of the event becomes thick with guilt with the presence of Satan.

Satan is not omniscient (he is not all-knowing). But one needn’t be all-knowing to know enough to accuse. And this is the skill in which he excels. The names used to describe him, *satanas* and *diabolos*, mean

“adversary” and “accuser”. And due to the flesh and sinful nature of man, he has plenty of ammunition. Every last one of us are guilty as charged. To deny our own sin is the height of self-deception.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8).

God knows all. Satan knows enough. And if we’re smart, we, like Joshua will keep our mouths shut in utter dependence upon another. This is one of the glorious and powerful purposes of the law of God that “every mouth may be stopped. That we all might recognize our guilt and know that **“by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight” (Romans 3:19, 20).**

So the room stands in agreement as to the guilt of this priest-this high priest. What hope have the people when the priest (a priest represents the people to God, as opposed to the prophet who represents God to the people) stands guilty? How are we a “a royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:5), when we stand guilty?

Imagine the serenity and quietude of heart Joshua must have known when the next words were uttered.

And the Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire” (Zechariah 3:2)?

A recurring theme throughout Scripture when it comes to the victory of sin, death, darkness and the devil is that the **“battle is the Lord’s” (2 Chronicles 20:15; 1 Samuel 17:47)**. And it is in Christ that we become **“more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Romans 8:37)**.

Worthy to note that Joshua did not say (nor, I would guess, even though) ‘you did not choose us, we chose you.’ How eminently comforting for Joshua to know that his inclusion among the favored people of God is grounded in the election of God, **“The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem”**.

Though perhaps unpopular in a day of self-confidence, self-assurance and self-image, Calvin’s thoughts on this passage are worthy of repeating:

Let us then learn to rely on the gratuitous adoption of God, if we would boldly exult against Satan and all his assaults. It

hence follows, that those men who at this day obscure, and seek, as far as they can, to extinguish the doctrine of election, are enemies to the human race; for they strive their utmost to subvert every assurance of salvation.¹

I hazard to guess that in that room, we would take more comfort in the election and victory found in the words of God, than any decision we, in our best moments, would calculate to make.

We are not a glowing and beautiful ember that ascends from the fire by virtue of our own wings. We are a **“brand plucked from the fire”**. That is a piece of burning wood, headed for the ash heap. And by the love, mercy and grace of God, we are plucked-rescued *mussal*.

Let the faithful know that their contest is with Satan, over and above the irritations and attacks of an irreligious culture. For it is in the recognition of that fact, that we will not rely upon carnal devices or a retaliatory spirit for our victory, but ever lean upon Christ and His provisions for warfare (truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit and prayer-Ephesians 6:14-18).

Having dismissed the devil, the attention is fully turned toward Joshua. There he stands in filthy garments, which are emblematic of sin and iniquity (Zechariah 3:4). Let us take in the beautiful imagery of Joshua, who has nothing to offer to this event other than his guilt, being stripped down of his sin and re-clothed in the robes of righteousness.

His guilt is taken away, but he doesn't remain naked. He will be dressed now **“with rich robes” (Zechariah 3:4)**. The Scriptures speak of three imputations *logizomai* (to reckon, calculate or charge to one's account). The sin of Adam is imputed to all. The sin of the believer is imputed to Christ and the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believer. Such a beautiful and ample expression of the gospel, in such a few words:

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Now, the people of God armed with the knowledge of the power of God as their hope, they are ready to finish the temple and worship within

¹ Calvin, J., & Owen, J. (2010). [Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets](#) (Vol. 5, pp. 84–85). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

it. This righteousness found in Christ is not designed as an excuse to continue in his, but a declaration of our freedom from sin.

Toward the end of chapter three we are taught more fully of Christ. God declares that He is bringing forth His Servant, "**the BRANCH**" (Zechariah 3:8). This is a common and appropriate expression used in anticipation of Christ.

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. ²The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:1, 2).

A tender shoot from an almost extinct line of David. He will be born in humility and obscurity, from a root, as it were from under the ground. But He and His kingdom will grow. And it will grow because of something He has accomplished.

And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day (Zechariah 3:9b).

We read similar words in Daniel in anticipation of the kingdom of Christ.

Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness (Daniel 9:24a).

And it is this, which the church is to preach.

For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified (Hebrews 10:14).

Questions for Study

1. How has the inability of in-person worship affected your faith (pages 2, 3)?
2. What was Zechariah's concern for the people of God as the temple was being rebuilt (pages 2, 3)?
3. How do you respond to the providence of God when things don't seem to be going well? Do you have a way you think about these things (pages 2, 3)?
4. How does evil tempt a person to join in (pages 3, 4)?
5. Will evil eventually win or lose? Explain your answer (page 4).
6. What are some examples found in Zechariah that point to the ministry of Christ (page 4)?
7. How does the vision of Joshua, the High Priest comfort and strengthen a Christian (pages 5-8)?