

Chapter-by-Chapter Bible Studies

Zechariah

“One Sleepless Night”



Bible Studies
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Zechariah

“One Sleepless Night”

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Back to the Future **(An Introduction to** **the First Six Chapters of Zechariah)**

Zechariah was an Old Testament Prophet. He was given a burning in his heart, by God, to move the Jewish people from their comfortableness to hard work. It wasn't just that God wanted them to stop being couch potatoes. They had a job to do, one that only they could do, which would determine the future of the world...their world, and ours, too.

In order to understand the hugeness of this job, we're going to go back to the very beginning of our universe and try to "put our arms around" God's plan for the world.

When God made world and then placed a man and a woman on the planet called earth, He did it in 6 days. At the end of that 6 days God stepped back and admired His creation. It was perfect. Complete. Good. The Earth with plants, animals, stars, sun, other planets, space, time, angels... all were part of that creation and were very good.

He had made an incredible place for Adam and Eve to live, and had placed within them the seeds which would someday become all the other people who would live there, too.

"My frame was not hidden from you, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth. Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them." (Psalm 139:15,16 NASB)

One of Adam & Eve's purposes was to begin to bring into the world, by procreation, one generation at a time, all of those other people... including you and me. By the end of the 6th day of creation it was all done, and it was good.

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Sometime after the end of that 6th day, two incredibly horrible things happened:

- One of the angels God had made – one with very great powers given to him from God – decided He wanted to be greater than God, and He led 1/3 of God’s created angels with him in open rebellion against their maker. As a result they had to leave their heavenly home. They went to earth.
- The man and the woman God had made (carrying within them the whole rest of mankind), responding to lies told to them by this fallen angel, also decided they were greater than God, and they openly rebelled against an order given to them by their Maker. As a result they had to leave their earthly garden-home, Eden, and learn to wander around in the rest of God’s world.

At this point we, as the human creations of God, were doomed. Sin became part of our genetic inheritance from Adam & Eve. We could not enter the presence of God with sin inside of us – so we were doomed to death – eternal separation from God.

And that would have been the end if it had not been for one important fact overlooked by that hideous rebellious angel, and unknown to us: hidden somewhere within Adam was also the seed which would someday become the One who would save the whole human race from the dreadful rebellion of Adam and Eve.

How could that be? God, being God, had known from before the beginning that this awful rebellion would happen. He had created us anyway, knowing Adam and Eve...and we... would sin...because He loved us. He had planned all along to be born of Adam and to die in our place. That seed was already safely in place – inside of Adam – ready to become a man at the time God had pre-chosen.

“For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you...”(I Peter 1:20 NASB)

Thus, Adam and Eve were punished, but not destroyed. They were given a promise that someday a descendant of theirs would get rid of their sin problem forever

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"...and I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel." (Genesis 3:15 NASB),

they left the garden to live their hard lives in a world which got worse and worse with the sin they started, and they had the choice, like everyone after them would have, to wait for the redeemer, and trust God. And in waiting and trusting they entered once more, by faith, a relationship with God – comforting and safe, but not anything like it would be some day when the sin begun in Eden would be gone forever from God’s creation.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch...

That powerful fallen angel, called Satan, the deceiver, the serpent, the devil, the dragon – heard what God had said to Adam & Eve about a redeemer who would come some day in the future...the seed of whom would come from them...and he came up with a plan of his own. Pretty simple, really. Just destroy the seed.

He did have a few challenges:

- he didn’t know when that seed would be born,
- and he didn’t know which of Adam’s offspring would carry that seed,
- and he didn’t want to destroy every human being in the world since he needed them to run this world he had stolen
- and he needed the participation of human beings to carry out his plan.

So... he just kept trying.

1. He inspires Cain to kill Abel (maybe this was the Promised One?) (Genesis 4)
2. The world gets so full of sin that God must destroy almost all of it in the time of Noah (Genesis 6)
3. He leads men into an open rebellion against God at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11)
4. He finds out about God’s promises to Abraham, so he makes sure Sarah is barren (Genesis 15)
5. He convinces Sarah and Abraham to choose Hagar to bring forth the One God has promised. (Genesis 16)

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6. Esau, one of the two twins who might carry the promised seed, does not choose to be a follower of God (Genesis 27)
7. Jacob’s 12 sons fight and hate and try to kill one another (Genesis 37)
8. He causes a famine in Canaan – so the family of Abraham must move away from the promised land (Genesis 46)
9. He brings to power a ruthless Pharaoh who makes sure the children of Abraham become slaves in Egypt.(Exodus 1)
10. When Moses sets them free – satan gleefully sees them refuse to obey God (Exodus)
11. When the Israelites finally obey God and re-enter the promised land, the people of the land try to destroy them (Joshua)
12. Then he tempts them to choose a King not committed to God (I Samuel)
13. David – the one who *was* carrying the seed of the future Savior/King – sins with Bathsheba, David’s sons try to kill one another (II Samuel)
14. Solomon, also carrying the seed of the Messiah, is convinced by satan to have many wives, many of whom do not love the One, True God...and his heart is eventually swayed by other Gods (I Kings)
15. The Kingdom of Israel has civil war and begin to hate and fight each other (II Kings)
16. Again, gleefully, satan brings evil Assyria and Babylon to (he thinks) wipe out Israel forever. (II Kings 25)
17. In the land of Persia, satan finds an evil man to carry out an evil scheme to kill the Jews....Haman (Esther)
18. Then the bedraggled Jews finally return again to the land...and are plagued with discouragement as they encounter opposition inspired by satan. (Ezra)
19. At this point, for about 20 years, the fallen angel and those who obeyed him stopped the plan of God. The returned remnant were at first discouraged, then disabled, then complacent, then comfortable in their land, even though they hadn’t finished the job. They built houses and educated their children. They planted crops and harvested them. They enjoyed the land...the food...the sunsets...the mountain vistas..., but they had not obeyed God...they had not re-built the temple.

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But they were there....they were alive...they could bring forth the promised seed someday...so...hadn't they beat the plan of the fallen angel?

No. The fallen angel listened to all the Lord God said, and he knew – as did the people of Israel, that many more promises had been made about the Redeemer in the years since the first promise to Adam & Eve. Promises that would have to come to pass in order for the Redeemer to come. By now the prophets of Israel had, piece by valuable piece, filled in the picture of the Redeemer:

- He would be a man (Genesis 3:15)
- He would be a Jew (Genesis 12:3)
- He would be of the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10)
- He would be of the line of David (Psalms 132:11,12)
- He would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14)
- He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:1)
- He would be God (Jeremiah 23:5,6)
- He would be the Savior of the Gentiles, too (Isaiah 42:1)
- He would suffer (Isaiah 53)
- He would be crucified (Psalm 22)
- He would have victory over death (Isaiah 25:8)
- *He would come before the 2nd temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. (Daniel 9:24-26)*

Hmmm. The 2nd temple? The returned remnant of Jews knew that the original temple had been destroyed when they were dragged to Babylon 90 years previously. It was still in ruins right then...they knew it because they were standing there looking at it. Their job was to rebuild it. Their job was to build the 2nd temple. From what Daniel had said, they were face-to-face with the fact that the rebuilt temple (the 2nd temple...which they were supposed to build) had to be there in order for the Redeemer to come and fulfill the promise of God.

The evil angel knew this...he was fully aware of the prophecy of Daniel. And the Jews knew this...they were fully aware of the prophecy of Daniel. But they had allowed satan's plan to triumph...because they had stopped working on that temple. They had gotten comfortable and lazy.

Enter Zechariah. He had words from God for the children of Israel...it was time to turn things around....Chapters 1-6 are God's message, in 8

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dreams, to the returned remnant, ...to get them going again...to start, once again, proclaiming to the world the Good News of the first coming of Jesus, their Savior from sin.

They did it.

Zechariah spent one sleepless night dreaming 8 dreams, and as a result of that sleepless night, the Jewish nation began again to look for their Messiah.

Now...back to the future.... the descendants of those faithful Jews of Zechariah's day will endure a figurative "sleepless night" as they are caught up in the unimaginable horror of events leading up to their Messiah's Second Coming....and then their God will send a "spring rain", their eyes will be opened, and as a people they will finally come to faith in Him again, realizing it was Jesus all along.



Not Your Father's Oldsmobile

Chapter 1:1-6

Make a list in your mind of the things your parents taught you: Don't touch anything hot. Look both ways before you cross the street. Put your clothes away when you take them off. Don't use all the hot water. Wash your hands before dinner. Cover your mouth when you cough. Take your vitamins. Good stuff. And maybe there are a few things not so good, too. How about: get angry at everyone when things don't go your way. Speed when you drive. Complain about everything. Go to church twice a year... Bad stuff.

I think the lesson to be learned from this small passage as we begin the book of Zechariah is: *Before you begin to go forward, admit and get rid of the bad stuff your parents taught you.*

Zechariah is about to have one sleepless night. Eight times in that one night he is going to have a dream...eight different dreams all designed to speak challenge and truth to the returned remnant of Israel.

But our story really begins 5 months before the night of 8 dreams:

The prophet Haggai, 5 months before Zechariah has his one sleepless night, begins calling the people of Israel out of their lethargy... challenging them to begin rebuilding the temple of God.

"In the second year of Darius the king, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the LORD came by the prophet Haggai..." (Haggai 1:1 NASB)

The people had been saying "The time has not yet come for the Lord's house to be built..." – and Haggai says, "Oh yes it has". Why do you think you have so much but feel like you have so little? Why do you think you are busy, busy, busy, but never feel like you reach your goals? Why do you think you never have enough time? It's because you haven't put the things of God first. You aren't looking forward to the coming Messiah. You aren't telling the world about Him. You are living backwards. It isn't working.

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Twenty-four days later the leaders -Zerubbabel and Joshua - and the remnant of the people began to work on the temple.

"So the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God." (Haggai 1:14,15 NASB)

The next month Haggai speaks to them again...and tells them not to be discouraged that this temple is looking so puny. So they kept on building.

"On the 21st of the seventh month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet saying,"(Haggai 2:1 NASB)

And then, one month later, our prophet, Zechariah, enters the scene and calls them to repentance – *but not for their own sins, for the sins of their fathers...*

1:1&2 (NASB) "In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the prophet.....saying, the LORD was very angry with your fathers..."

A little history of Israel will help here:

God gave Israel 5 things:

- He gave them the land of Israel to live in
- He gave them laws so they would know how to live
- He gave them a temple so they could show the world how to worship God – it was a kind of a stage where they could play out their “how to have a relationship with God” drama in front of the whole world.

And then two more things – promises:

- Through them He would send a Messiah (Savior)
- When the Messiah came, there would be a time of great peace and prosperity and happiness, because sin would be gone.

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So, the Jews knew that no matter how good life got (and it was going to be really good if they simply obeyed God), there was an even better time coming. Their side of the bargain was to obey what God set forth in His laws for living. When they failed at that (and they would), they were to acknowledge their failure, offer a sacrifice, and turn away from their sin.

Their sacrifices were to be offered at the place God had chosen – His temple in Jerusalem...for the purpose of drawing a picture for the world of what God was like...and how to approach Him when you are not perfect like He is. Those sheep and goats and oxen which were sacrificed all were helping the Jews and the whole world remember that some day a Savior was coming who would also be sacrificed – solving the sin problem forever.

As time went on the Jewish people stopped acknowledging their failures. They got satisfied with the way life was. A failure here, a failure there, a little sin makes way for a bigger sin – but life was good, so why be so intense about sin? Sure, a Messiah was coming someday – and that would be a great day – but for now, well, our neighbors who surround us are nice people...they worship idols...we'll just be friendly to them and not worry about the idols...and then maybe our daughters will marry their sons and we won't worry about the idols...and then maybe we will take part in a few of their idol-worshipping ceremonies – what could it hurt? We're still Jews – we still go to the templeand then maybe we'll worship their idols along with worshipping our God, too – enjoy this land the Lord God has given us – not be so uptight about always doing things by the book...and then maybe we'll sacrifice a few of our children to the God of fire, too – seems like you have to do what you have to do to make sure you life stays comfortable and blessed...everyone is doing it...and then...we're just not all that sure the God of Israel really exists...maybe we just imagined Him...what difference does it make if we sin?...religion is just a bunch of man-made tradition...nobody else is in charge of me...I'm in charge of me.

In order to stop their downward slide, because it would eventually lead to their destruction, God allowed another country, Babylon, to cruelly conquer them and carry them far away from all they knew and loved. They had no land, their families were dead or injured, and they were away from their temple...which had been destroyed. They had no way

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to offer sacrifices for the sins they were just beginning to admit. It was wake-up time. I imagine they were wondering as they were carted away if all God’s promises were null and void. Did they even have the hope of a Messiah anymore? Did they have any kind of future at all?

A few survived in Babylon. And the few became many over the course of 70 years. Now they passed on to their children not a desire to chase after idols, but a deep longing for Jerusalem and for their temple. They longed for God.

After 70 years God miraculously sent the children and grandchildren of those captives back to Jerusalem – and you know the story – they started to rebuild their temple, but their enemies scared them and discouraged them and they stopped. They got comfortable. *And those idols began to look awfully good again.*

So God tells Zechariah to say:

1:2-4 “The Lord was very angry with your forefathers. Therefore, tell the people: This is what the Almighty says; ‘Return to me,’ declares the LORD Almighty, ‘and I will return to you’, says the LORD Almighty. Do not be like your forefathers, to whom the earlier prophets proclaimed: This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Turn from your evil ways and your evil practices.’ But they would not listen or pay attention to me, declares the LORD.”

What did your parents do wrong that you are repeating? Give it some thought and put your finger on it. Let the Spirit of God point it out to you. Anger? Materialism? Laziness? Dishonesty? Gossip? Addictions? Bitterness? Fear? And I’m just naming the ones I think I passed on to my children.

You don’t have to discount the awesome things your parents may have done – the sacrifices they made – the things they taught you which led you to God. But when you admit what you are really like, you do have to honestly say: I, too, am an idol-worshipper, just like my parents.”

God goes on to say:

1:5 “Where are your forefathers now? And the prophets, do they live forever?”

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Those generations of Jewish people who got into such a mess....God had to destroy them to save their future children and grandchildren....they're gone. They didn't live forever. Don't put your trust in your parents and grandparents and your lineage or your family history. There's nothing there to save you from yourself.

1:6a "But did not my words and my decrees, which I commanded my servants the prophets, overtake your forefathers?"

The Word of God was still there. The truth hadn't changed or died. Judge your life by the truth – not by anything or anyone from the past.

I'd like to give you an illustration of this from a very painful time in my own life. When I was eighteen my parents divorced. I got a letter from my Mom while I was a sophomore at college – telling me that she and Dad had decided to file for divorceand that he had moved out of the house. I clutched that letter in my hands, walked into the bathroom in our dorm, slid to the floor and cried and cried and cried. For weeks after that I asked God how He could do this to me? How could He do this to our family...how could He let this happen...because even though I was a new Christian, I was pretty sure He was the One who could have stopped this. And then I felt penetrating guilt – could I have prevented this? Could I do anything to change this even now?

The Old Testament says that divorce is like a violent act – and I can tell you that is what it feels like. When I finally got through the worst of all of that, I came to the point where I realized that God, indeed, had allowed it and it was for a purpose. It wasn't my fault. And I couldn't fix it. Then I made a decision:

I....WILL....NOT.....DIVORCE.....

I was 18 years old – not yet married – but I came to that decision inside of myself, and it was like a rod of steel running down inside of me...I would not bend. I would never divorce. No matter what – even if I died doing it. I still feel that way.

That is what God meant when He said “turn around – repent” The Jewish people of that day needed to come to the point where they said I...WILL...NOT...WORSHIP....IDOLS. I will not worship other Gods. I



will love the LORD Almighty and Him only, and Him only will I serve no matter what – even if I die doing it.

1:6b “then they repented and said, the LORD Almighty has done to us what our ways and practices deserve just as He determined to do.”

And they kept rebuilding the temple.

Put your finger on it. Admit it. Repent. And let’s get going.

Zechariah 1:1-6

Questions for Discussion or Personal Study

1. (:1) When did Zechariah receive this message?
2. (:1) Who did he receive it from?
3. (:1) What does this verse tell us about Zechariah?
4. (:2-4) Why was the LORD angry with the people of Israel?
5. (:5) What happened to all the people who, in the past, had disobeyed and ignored God?
6. (:6a) What did last, even though the people didn’t?
7. (:6b) How did the Israelites of Zechariah’s time react to this message from the LORD?
8. What have you learned about God in this passage?
9. Have you repeated any of the mistakes of your parents?
10. What should you do about what you have learned?

Footprints in the Sand

Chapter 1:7-17

We have 5 children. Our oldest is Steve. He and his wife, Julie, live in northern Indiana with their 4 children. Steve and Julie got us started on the Grandparent’s track almost 19 years ago when they brought Michael into the world. They were living near us at the time, so when we got the phone call that they were on the way to the hospital...wow! it was time! We rushed to the hospital, too, and waited. We were right there wanting to be a part of the excitement and joy when he was born. Everybody was in a party mood – all the grandparents were there – and even a few of Steve & Julie’s friends. All of us got to go into the room with Julie, a few at a time, and talk celebrate with Julie & Steve while we were waiting. (I’ll smilingly add a note here – this whole process was a huge shock to me. There was no timing, no pain, no groaning, no little puffs of air while making it “through” a contraction – the advent of the epidural had completely changed the way women have babies...and I was totally unaware. Nice change, by the way.....not complaining..I was just so amazed.)

It was a really fun and exciting time – lots of laughing and talking out in the waiting area. And when Steve came out of the delivery room to tell us he had a son, he came striding down the hall, big as life, spread his arms out and said “It’s a Boy”!!! We all congratulated him with lots of laughter and slapping on the back. He walked up to me and gave me a hug – and when I threw my arms around him, too, he started crying. We stood in the middle of the waiting room with our arms around each other and we both cried.

You know what my thought was at that time? I stood there thinking...“I wish I had held him more....I wish when he was little, I had held him on my lap more.” When we had Steve we were very young ourselves...I was nineteen years old, and he just went everywhere with me. He was on my hip, he was in the car seat, he was at church meetings...we were starting churches...so he was also in a lot of church nurseries. We just went go-go-go all the time. It was a wonderful life, but I didn’t have a whole lot of time to just hold him. And when I stood in the waiting room, knowing that his own baby boy

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was waiting back in the delivery room for him, I thought to myself, “I wish I had held him more.”

You start looking back a little when you reach your 40’s. More than once I’ve thought to myself...“If I had known then what I know now, I might have done things a little differently.” I would have held Steve more...I might have been a little firmer in some areas with our kids, and a little softer in other areas. But If I had just had this little glimpse of the future – standing here in the hospital waiting room with Steve – I might have lived better, then, in the past – knowing what the future held. Knowing what the future holds - that’s the wonderful gift the LORD, through Zechariah, is giving this handful of Jews living in about 400 BC. Little glimpses of the future.

Three months after the people of Israel repented (from chapter 1, verse 6a), deciding to worship the God of Israel, and Him only...the LORD gave Zechariah 8 dreams in one night – little glimpses of the future. Zechariah’s dreams were going to show them what would happen because of their step of repentance.

1:7 “On the 24th day of the eleventh month, the month of Shebat, in the 2nd year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah, son of Berekiah, the son of Iddo. During the night I had a vision...”

It’s going to help if you think of these dreams or visions like a giant, interactive video. Picture in your mind a huge video screen, floor to ceiling, wall to wall. Standing right next to it, and in front of it, is Zechariah. He’s turning around and looking at what is happening on the screen. Standing next to Zechariah, also in front of the video screen, is an angel who explains to Zechariah what he is seeing.

1:8 “During the night I had a vision – and there before me was a man riding a red horse.”

The color red in those days meant something to the people of Israel – especially a red horse. It was a symbol of war, or power. Thus, the man on the red horse was someone who had war and power in his nature. He was able to conquer.

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1:8 "He was standing among the myrtle trees in a ravine."

Myrtle trees are evergreen-type trees which grow in Israel to a height of about 30 feet. They grow where there is a lot of water. So the man was sitting astride a red horse in the middle of a stand of evergreen trees, in a ravine or valley where it was probably cool and shady. Actually, there is a valley just like that, which during Zechariah's time was filled with Myrtle trees - just down the hill from the temple area. I imagine this is what Zechariah was seeing. A broken-down temple, and then the camera scans to the valley below where there is a man on a red horse in amongst the myrtle trees.

1:8 "Behind him were red, brown and white horses."

Other horses were behind him, doing something which had to do with the man on the red horse – we'll find out what that was in a minute.

If you were Zechariah, and you had just been shown this video, and there was an angel standing there with you, too...what would you do?

1:9 "I asked, 'What are these, my Lord,?'"

Yes, you and I would have asked, too. He is asking the angel who the horses and people are.

1:9 "The angel who was talking with me answered, 'I will show you what they are.' Then the man standing among the myrtle trees explained...."

Instead of answering this question, the angel refers Zechariah to the interactive video screen – for the man in the video screen is going to answer the question. That's why we called it an interactive video – the people on the screen are sometimes able to talk with Zechariah, and part of the time the angel next to Zechariah is able to talk to those people too. High tech.

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*"1:9 "...Then the man standing among the myrtle trees explained,
'They are the ones the LORD has sent to go throughout the earth.'"*

So it seems that those sitting astride the red, brown and white horses in the background have been sent out to travel around on the earth by the LORD. I have an idea of who these ones on the horses are...look at Job Chapter 1, verses 6 & 7:

"One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, 'from roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.'"

It seems possible that one of the things angels were created to do was to serve as eyes and ears for God. To see and hear and check out everything that is happening in the earth – and then to report back to God. The fact that Satan rebelled against God apparently didn't remove the fact that he still had the right to roam the earth, looking and seeing – which is what the Job passage is talking about. But the Job passage also tells us, then, that many angels have that assignment – and here are some, on horses, symbols of power, doing that same thing. On a research assignment from God.

1:11 "And they reported to the angel of the LORD, who was standing among the myrtle trees..."

Notice that the ones on the red, brown and white horses were reporting to the man on the red horse, and that the man on the red horse is called "the angel of the LORD". The word "angel" here also means "messenger"...and often in Old Testament scripture the Angel of the LORD is the term used to describe Jesus Christ Himself as He appears now and again in history. (see Genesis 18) So this man on the red horse is either Jesus Christ Himself, or perhaps His own personal, powerful angel – His direct representative. I personally am guessing this is Jesus Himself.

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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.' "

All of these messengers on horses have gone throughout the world looking to see what is going on and how things are happening everywhere. They are coming back and reporting that all throughout the world is at rest and peace. You'd think this would be an encouraging report and would make the man on the red horse happy. But it didn't.

1:12 "Then the angel of the LORD said, 'LORD Almighty...'"

Now the man on the red horse is talking to God the Father, addressing him in prayer.

1:12 "Then the angel of the LORD said, "LORD Almighty, how long will you withhold mercy from Jerusalem and from the towns of Judah, which you have been angry with these 70 years? "

The man on the red horse is not happy that the whole world is at rest and at peace, but Jerusalem and Judah, and the temple, and the people of Israel are still completely in ruins. Apparently they are in ruins because the LORD Almighty has been angry with them for 70 years...and the angel of the LORD is saying, "Isn't it time for mercy?"

1:13 "So the LORD spoke kind and comforting words to the angel who talked with me."

Zoom back out of the video screed. In answer to the prayer/question from the man on the red horse, the LORD Almighty in heaven gives to the angel a message to give to Zechariah, a message that was kind and comforting. In verse 14, the angel turns around and tells Zechariah what the LORD has said to him...

(Stop a minute here and notice the order of things...

- Something isn't right with the world
- A powerful man – a man with the ability to make war - prays to the LORD Almighty about the situation
- The LORD Almighty answers the man by giving a message to an angel

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- That angel will relay the message to Zechariah.
- So that Zechariah can relay it to people hungry for truth)

Does this chain of messages and answers remind you of any other passage in scripture?

How about Revelation 1:1-2?

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must come shortly to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John; who bare record of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ and of all things that he saw"

Again, a message from God is given to an angel to relay to a man who can communicate it to people. God definitely is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow – you can see His signature on all He does.

You know what else we see here? The man on the red horse (Jesus) is praying for people! Jesus Christ prays for us. Did you know that? (see John 17 for an example of Jesus' prayer for us just before His death). When your life becomes so overwhelming that it would seem impossible even to pray, remember that Jesus is praying – it is never too hard for Him. He is never up in heaven wringing His hands, wondering what to do next.

1:14, 15 "Then the angel who was speaking to me said, 'Proclaim this word: This is what the LORD Almighty says: "I am very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion, but I am very angry with the nations that feel secure. I was only a little angry, but they added to the calamity.'"

The nations that were out there in the world were quite willing for Jerusalem to be in ruins, even though Jerusalem was where God's heart was. They were quite willing to be in peace and live wonderful lives without having God's desires at the center of their lives. This did not make God happy. It's just plain evil to live in comfort when the things that matter most to God are left undone.



1:16, 17 “Therefore, this is what the LORD says: ‘I will return to Jerusalem with mercy, and there my house will be rebuilt. And the measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem’, declares the LORD Almighty. Proclaim further: This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘My towns will again overflow with prosperity, and LORD will again comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem.” (underline-emphasis is mine)

The “measuring line” will show the rest of the world that Jerusalem belongs to God – there will be prosperity, comfort, and the blessing of God.

What did the Jews of Zechariah’s time learn from this vision?

- When the rest of the world is living well, even though God’s work looks like it has been crushed – God’s anger is kindled
- The task of doing God’s work is worth doing – it will be accomplished – keep going
- The LORD Almighty never changes. The same LORD who chose Abraham and rescued Isaac, Jacob & Joseph is the One who is speaking with you now.
- In a hopeless situation God Himself is praying for you and has drawn a boundary around you – setting you aside for His purposes and protection.
- Not only that, but take another look at what Zechariah saw on the video screen: The man (The Lord Jesus on the red horse) is saying – **“I have been here all along.** I have been here, just outside the temple, in the myrtle trees, watching, keeping tabs on what is going on. For 70 years I have been to the side – not in the temple itself – because your sin became so bad I had to destroy it...but I didn’t leave. **I have been here all along.**

Footprints in the Sand

One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord.

Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky.

In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand.

Sometimes there were two sets of footprints,

other times there was one only.

This bothered me because I noticed that during the low periods of my life,



when I was suffering from anguish,
sorrow or defeat,
I could see only one set of footprints,
so I said to the Lord,
“You promised me Lord,
that if I followed you,
you would walk with me always.
But I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life
there has only been one set of footprints in the sand.
Why, when I needed you most, have you not been there for me?”
The Lord replied,
“The years when you have seen only one set of footprints,
my child, is when I carried you.”

Mary Stevenson

Zechariah 1:7-17

Questions for Discussion or Personal Study

1. (:7) When, in the Jewish year, did the prophet Zechariah have this vision...this night of 8 dreams?
2. (:8) What was the setting for this first dream?
3. (:8) What people and what animals were in the dream?
4. (:8) What do the myrtle trees tell us about the location of this dream?
5. (:9) Who was explaining this dream to Zechariah?
6. (:10) Who answers Zechariah's question?
7. (:10) How does Job 1:6&7 help explain who the ones on the horses might be?
8. (:11) The one sitting on the red horse in the midst of the myrtle trees....what is His title?

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9. (:11) What report did the ones on the horses give to the one in the myrtle trees?
10. (:12) What does the one in the myrtle trees do when He gets the report?
11. (:13) When the LORD answers this prayer, Who does He give the answer to?
12. (:14-15) Why is the LORD angry that the nations feel secure?...isn't being secure a good thing?
13. (:16) What promise does the LORD give for the future?
14. (:17) Why would Zechariah need to hear these words?
15. Has this promise been kept yet?
16. Will it? (see Zechariah chapters 13 & 14)
17. What did this passage teach you about God?



But...What About the Bad Guys? **Chapter 1:18-21**

Can you think of a time in your past when God solved a problem in your life, or got you past a difficult situation, or moved you into a place of usefulness to Him when you wondered how you were ever going to serve Him again? I can think of many of those times. Hold that thought.

The message of Dream #2 is very, very simple: **God fights our enemies for us:**

The LORD gave the land of Israel to a man named Abraham, directing him to live there and pass on the knowledge of Him to the dying world.

Genesis 12:2-3 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

The land was God's to give. He sealed His gift of this land with a promise which could not be broken – a promise not dependent on any action of man – dependent only on His own faithfulness. (*Genesis 17 – the whole chapter*)

From that point on, the enemy of God, satan, set out to raise up other nations to rule God's world in evil ways, and to destroy the only nation on earth who professed to worship the One, True, God – Israel. No other nation believed in the LORD...and no other nation had the right to the land of Israel. It was legally deeded to the Jews by the owner, the LORD. But all of satan's evil nations tried to take it:

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At the time of Zechariah, here are the nations which had followed satan’s plan:

- Egypt enslaved the Jews.
- Assyria killed them and dispersed them.
- Babylonia destroyed their capital and dragged them away.
- And Medo-Persia sent them back to their land, controlling them from afar.

Up to this point in history, 4 Non-Jewish nations had been used by satan to conquer the Jews or bring them to a point of uselessness in God’s plan.

Back to the night of 8 dreams...and let’s imagine that our prophet has awakened slightly after his first dream....

Zechariah: The man on the red horse...The LORD... has always been there...all through our mistakes and our sins...all through the grief of being dragged away from our beloved Jerusalem...all through the pain of living in Babylon...and then all through the 70 years of waiting to return...and all through the past 20 years as we sat back and did nothing...He’s been there all along. Overwhelming. I can’t wait to tell our people this message of God’s unfailing love. He has been faithful even though we have not...Yawn...but I can’t do it right this minute...Yawn...it’s still only about 1:00 in the morning...yawn...think I’ll catch a few more winks before dawn.....I can’t help thinking, though...yawn...if He was there all along, why didn’t He help us?
.....**maybe our enemies are stronger than our God**
.....yawn.....**couldn’t be**.....yawn...”

1:18-19 “Then I looked up – and there before me were four horns! I asked the angel who was speaking to me ‘What are these?’ He answered me, ‘These are the horns that scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem.’ ”

A horn on an animal is its symbol of power and ability to rip apart and overcome. The word “horn” in scripture speaks of the mighty power of a nation or individual, and quite often symbolizes the power of a Gentile nation over the nation of Judah, as it does here.

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It wouldn't have been hard for Zechariah, who was of the priestly line of the tribe of Levi, to know the history of his own people, and to know that four gentile nations had had the audacity to rule over or attack the Chosen People of the One, True, God: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and now the Medo-Persians. Those four horns would strike terror into the heart of any Jew who remembered the stories passed down from father to son of the wars, the slavery, the cruelties inflicted by these powerful Gentile nations.

The message of God's faithfulness from Dream #1 would now have to be challenged with a question in Dream #2: Is God stronger than our enemies?... And here's the answer:

1:20-21 "Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen. I asked 'What are these coming to do?' He answered, 'These are the horns that scattered Judah so that no one could raise his head, but the craftsmen have come to terrify them and throw down these horns of the nations who lifted up their horns against the land of Judah to scatter its people.' "

Craftsmen here are symbolizing people or powers who tear things down. In this case this tearing down was a good thing. The craftsmen that God would send were coming to specifically destroy the horns. Israel had already seen this happen 3 times:

When **Egypt** would have enslaved and eventually destroyed the people of the One, True, God, the LORD made a way for them to escape, and brought along a more powerful, more terrifying nation to conquer Egypt – Assyria.

When **Assyria** grew huge and powerful and overcame the Northern 10 tribes of the people of the One, True, God, the LORD brought along an even stronger nation to conquer them – the Babylonians.

And when the **Babylonians** cruelly destroyed what was left of the people of the One, True, God – the remaining two tribes and the royal city of Jerusalem - and carted them off to their own land, the LORD, after 70 years, brought along an even stronger power who outsmarted the Babylonians and snuck into their impregnable city and conquered it – the Medo-Persians.

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This dream is promising, among other things, that the Medo-Persians, too, would some day see a “craftsman” coming to tear down their power and authority.

Every time a nation raised its ugly head against the people of the One, True, God, it was another, more powerful nation which brought God’s judgment down around its shoulders. Four horns....ripped apart by four craftsmen. As the Jews of Zechariah’s put two and two together, with the help of this dream, what conclusions can they come to?

- 1. Their enemies are nothing....God is everything.
- 2. What God has done in the past He is promising to do again.

What do we learn from this dream?

- 1. Our enemies are nothing....God is everything.
- 2. What God has done in the past He is promising to do again.

Now, remember that thought you were holding onto as we started this lesson? Some time in the past when God has fought your enemies for you? Here’s your promise: What God has done in the past He can do again – trust Him to fight your enemies for you. We gain hope and excitement for the future from the record of the past – and then we get to tell the people we love about those past victories – again and again. The Jews were admonished in Deuteronomy 6 to do just that:

“In the future, when your son asks you, ‘What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the LORD our God has commanded you?’ tell him: ‘We were slaves in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Before our eyes the LORD sent miraculous signs and wonders – great and terrible – upon Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole household. But he brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land that he promised on oath to our forefathers.’ ”
(Deuteronomy 6:20-23)

And the powerful message of this dream goes even further:

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From the prophet Daniel (*Daniel 7 & 8*) and then from the prophet John, in the book of Revelation (*Revelation 12, 13, 17, & 18*) we learn that after Zechariah’s time there would be three more “horns” – times when the gentile world did and will dominate the people of God.

Medo-Persia was conquered by Greece

Greece was conquered by Rome

And some day in the future that old Roman kingdom will gain new life, led by the Anti-Christ, and joined together with 10 other gentile nations, and will relentlessly persecute the people of God and the nation of Israel, **but will be conquered by the One, True, God. – Jesus Christ Himself.**

In His time, and for His purposes. The bad guys are always defeated. No matter how disastrous it looks.....we can trust Him.

Zechariah 1:18-21

Questions for Discussion or Personal Study

1. (;18) What did Zechariah see as he looked up?
2. (:18) What did horns symbolize in the Old Testament?
3. (:19) Who was explaining this dream to Zechariah?
4. (:19) What four nations were symbolized by the four horns?
5. Why had God ever allowed these four nations to enslave and terrify the Jews?
6. (:20) What does Zechariah see next?
7. (:21) What have the four craftsmen come to do?
8. Every time a nation conquered and tried to annihilate the Jews, what happened to that nation?
9. What did Zechariah need to learn from this dream?
10. What can I learn from this dream?



How Wide?...How Long?

Chapter 2

Tsunami's, earthquakes, massive health challenges, floods? What is God's role in a natural disaster? Believe it or not, Jerusalem is the solution to all the terrifying things our world can deliver up...epidemics, raging waters, hurricanes, tornadoes, monsoons. Jerusalem? The city? Yep.

First, let's back it up and see a few interesting things about Jerusalem:

- The LORD chose Jerusalem as the place HE would dwell
- Abraham willingly offered Isaac in the very place Jerusalem is located today.
- David stopped the plague of death there, too.
- At the dedication of the temple, the very presence of God descended and stayed there
- We are told in the Psalms to "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem".
- And the collective heart of the Jewish people cried out in pain at their separation from it. Psalm 137

In this next vision we'll see that **Jerusalem is the hope our hearts can cling to in a time of disaster and terror.**

I'll explain.

So far we have looked at the history of the Jewish people from several different angles. We have put our arms around the total plan of God for the whole world and seen how the Jews fit into that....we have looked at the timeline of their walk with God and their failure to walk with God....and we have learned from the list of enemies they encountered along the way.

The choosing of the Jews, and the predicaments of the Jews and the future of the Jews is a perfect picture of the LORD's relationship with us. The better we understand God's dealings with the Jews, the better we understand the LORD Jehovah. And the better we understand the

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LORD, the more we love HIM, AND THAT IS THE WHOLE POINT OF LIFE!!!!!!

We really don't need this life except for loving God. We never needed to even exist except for the purpose of loving God and being loved by Him. If you wonder what you were supposed to be...and what you were supposed to do with your life...and what your main purpose is in life...then look no further than the example of the Jews. We were created to love God. To spend time with Him. To have Him dwell with us. To be forgiven by Him and experience the relief of seeing Him again when we have been away. And we weren't chosen by God for that purpose because there was anything about us that was so great. But just because He loved us. The Jews were not beautiful or loving or gentle or kind, that He would desire them...but, amazingly, He said they were the APPLE OF HIS EYE.

"He (The LORD) found him (Israel) in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him, as the apple of His eye." Deuteronomy 32:10

He chose to dwell among them – first in a tent in the desert, and then in a fine temple made by human hands. Because He wanted to be with them. He was with them through every failure they could cook up – because He loved them.

But then, at the height of their rebellion and stupidity, He left. Seven years before Babylon had reduced them and their beloved city, Jerusalem, to ashes and slavery, the LORD left Jerusalem, the city He loved....full of the people He loved.

Ezekiel pictures it for us the way the LORD showed it to him, sort of in steps:

"And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, upon which he was, to the threshold of the house." (Ezekiel 9:3).

First, He moved from the cherub which topped the ark of the covenant to the doorway of the temple.

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"Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim." (Ezekiel 10:18)

Then He moved from the doorway of the temple to the waiting arms of the angels who would accompany Him on His total departure.

"Then did the cherubim lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city. (Ezekiel 11:22-23)

With His heavenly escort He exited the temple at the Eastern Gate, moved out of Jerusalem, and stood upon the Mount of Olives to the east of the city.

For Zechariah, this was history. He and his fellow Jews knew the story of the LORD leaving the temple...leaving them.

Now as Zechariah's contemporaries finish the rebuilding of that same temple, they have to be wondering...Will the Spirit of the LORD RETURN to Jerusalem now that we have returned to Him? Will He want to dwell with us again? Are we still the APPLE OF HIS EYE?

That question gets sweetly and mysteriously answered in this third dream.

Let's go back to the interactive video screen. Zechariah and the angel explaining things to him stand in front of it, and here is what they see:

2:1 "Then I looked up, and there before me was a man with a measuring line in his hand. I asked, 'Where are you going?'"

Notice that he did not ask "What are you going to do?". It was perfectly obvious to him what the young man was going to do....he had a measuring line in his hand...he was going to measure something. But where?

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2:2 "He answered me, 'To measure Jerusalem, to find out how wide and how long it is.' "

Makes sense. The newly returned inhabitants of Jerusalem were in the process even now of rebuilding. You have to measure in order to build. But they were working on the rebuilding of the temple only. They hadn't even dreamed of rebuilding any further than that. This man with a measuring line was going forth to see how big the whole city would eventually be. Measuring to legally document what belonged to the inhabitants and what was outside the boundaries of the city. Measuring where the wall could eventually be built.

2:3 "Then the angel who was speaking to me left, and another angel came to meet him and said to him..."

Now before we see what this other angel has to say, let's visualize what just happened: The angel standing next to Zechariah, viewing the video with him, left his side and himself entered the video perhaps to talk to the one doing the measuring. When he got there another angel appeared on the video screen, met the "explaining" angel, and gave him a message to give to Zechariah. The whole rest of this chapter is simply us being told what one angel told another angel about the future of the city of Jerusalem.

2:4 "Then the angel who was speaking to me left, and another angel came to meet him and said to him, 'Run, tell that young man Jerusalem will be a city without walls....' "

Suddenly this angel has telescoped Zechariah from the time he is living in now to a time when Jerusalem would be a city without walls – a future time, because a city without walls was unheard of in Zechariah's day. Oh, there could be a city without walls...but it sure wouldn't last long.

In this vision we are going to learn 4 things about the future city of Jerusalem. The first? It will be a city without walls because of the multitude of men and animals dwelling within it. So many people and so much prosperity that there will be no way to put a wall around it. Too big. You could say...immeasurable.

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Ever had anything so big that you just couldn't put a wall around it? I can think of one example from our life: Our son, Andy, went to Purdue University. When he went away to college he was a kid who had managed to stay pretty moral in high school. At Purdue he joined a fraternity...and there he learned that everybody drank and everybody lived in ways he didn't. Slowly but surely he became one of those people. He began to live the way they did. We saw it happening and were sick about it. We drove up to Purdue one weekend and had dinner with Andy, and told him that if he didn't find a Christian group to get involved with, we weren't sending him back to Purdue the following semester. Fortunately, Andy knew we would do what we said, so he started searching for a Christian group. By God's mercy and grace he got involved in a fledgling ministry for fraternity and sorority students – an arm of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship – and eventually he started a Bible study in his fraternity house. Students got saved through that Bible Study... Andy's life was turned around.

Here's the "no way to put a wall around it" part: After Andy graduated he got a job full-time with InterVarsity – starting Bible studies in fraternity and sorority houses all over the Midwest. About the time he got started doing that he was home one weekend, and Ken had come home with a tape for me to listen to. It was Joni Erickson Tada, singing acapella "My Jesus I love thee". He had listened to it in the car, and knew that I would be moved by it. We were standing in the kitchen listening to it...and, if you know Ken, you won't be surprised to learn that as she sang he started crying. Andy came in and joined us as we listened. I had tears rolling down my cheeks, too, as I heard her sweet voice praising our Jesus. And then I looked over at Andy. Here was my 22-year-old son – the one I wasn't sure was ever going to live for the LORD....and he, too, had big tears rolling down his face. I thought to myself..."this is too big...I can't contain it. This is so wonderful you can't put a wall around it."

That's the **first** thing the Jerusalem of the future is going to be like. Too wonderful to put a wall around it.

2:5 "And I, myself, will be a wall of fire around it, declares the LORD..."

So, how will this city be protected? If there is no wall? Two things were absolutely essential for a city in 500 BC: A source of water (which Jerusalem had), and a way to defend it...a wall (which

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Jerusalem once had, but didn't now). All cities which would survive must be surrounded by a wall – a protection from the marauders and enemy armies which would for sure come.

In this Jerusalem of the future, The LORD Himself would surround the city like a wall of fire. No enemy could ever slip through. The peace would be deafening. This is the **second** thing which would identify the Jerusalem of the future: no fear, ever, of enemies.

And...2:5 *“I will be its glory within.”*

A shimmer of hope. Was the LORD Himself...the Shekinah glory of old...the glory that left the temple so long ago because of rampant sin...was He going to come back again and dwell in this new temple being built?

2:6-8 “Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the north, saith the LORD; for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the LORD. Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon. For thus saith the LORD of hosts; ‘After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you; for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.’

Oh. The tears begin to flow. Still the *apple of his eye*? He has not given up on us! These words were spoken not just to the returned remnant, but to all Jews scattered throughout the world. Some were still in Babylon, enjoying life. Some had fled to Egypt, others to many different parts of the world. Leave Babylon. Leave the world. Come back to a safe place which I am protecting. Come back to serve in the place I have chosen. You are still the *apple of my eye*. You have always been the *apple of my eye*. I have never stopped caring for you and protecting you, just as the involuntary blink of an eyelid protects the most vulnerable part of the body...the apple of the eye. I will once again dwell in your midst in the Jerusalem to come.

Third: The New Jerusalem will be filled once again with the presence of God, protecting the Apple of His eye.

2:9-10 “For behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants; and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD”



2:11-12 "And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me to thee. And the LORD shall inherit Judah as his portion in the Holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again."

Fourth. We were chosen in the beginning to spread the word about the One, True, God. We failed so miserably. But...the LORD is going to bring it to pass, isn't He? We will not be the only nation in this wonderful new Jerusalem. The world will be joining us in submission to and trust in the One, True, God.

- 1. Jerusalem will someday be too huge and wonderful to put a wall around it.**
- 2. Jerusalem will be a place without fear**
- 3. Jerusalem will be filled with the presence of God**
- 4. All who believe in the One, True God (Jesus) will be there...Jews and Gentiles.**

You and I, as New Testament believers in Christ, have much more than Zechariah ever experienced...we have the LORD Jehovah actually living within us. But, even at that, all of us know that is only a tiny glimpse of what our future will be like.

What will it be like? It's so hard to put into words. Try this: Think of one of those times when you feel squeezed inside because of sheer pleasure about something pure and beautiful. It's probably different for each of us. A breeze. A look on a child's face. A sunset. An incredible meal. A romantic evening. A song on the radio. The ocean as a storm is brewing. Those things are given to us simply to help us understand how amazing our future will be when life will be that pleasant, that amazing, that exquisite, that full of life – every moment of every day. The mountaintop experience will never end.

Just hearing the word "Jerusalem" can remind us... when God is finally dwelling with us once again – walking in the garden again with us – life will be non-stop heaven.



Jerusalem is the hope our hearts can cling to in a time of disaster and terror. Where is God in the tsunami and hurricane? Waiting to bring peace and beauty and calm back to a world destroying itself. Waiting for the right time...because those idiotic, crazy sinners are still the *apple of His eye*.

Would the Spirit of the LORD RETURN to Jerusalem now that they had returned to Him? Did He want to dwell with them again? Oh, yes, Zechariah, He will dwell with us again, in Jerusalem – when we will finally know - How long....how wide....how high....how deep...is the love of God.

"...that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:16-19.

Zechariah 2

Questions for Discussion or Personal Study

1. Look up Deuteronomy 32:10 – How did the LORD God feel about the people of Israel?
2. In Zechariah's time, are the people of Israel still the "apple of God's eye"?
3. (:1&2) What did Zechariah see as this dream begins?
4. (:3) Who is bringing this special message to the angel interpreting things for Zechariah?
5. (:4&5) What will the Jerusalem of the future be like?
6. (:6-8) What do you see in this verse which gives you a clue to how the LORD feels about Israel in Zechariah's time?
7. (:6-8) What instructions does the LORD give the people of Israel in this dream? What two places are they to flee from?

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8. (:9) How will the people of Israel know that the LORD Almighty is moving on their behalf?
9. (:6 again) The LORD declares that He has scattered the people of Israel to the four winds of heaven. Had this happened before Zechariah’s time?
10. So, since this scattering to the four winds had not yet happened before this prophecy, what can we conclude about this prophecy?
11. (:10-12) What things will happen when the LORD fulfills this prophecy?
 - a. The _____ is coming
 - b. The _____ will live among the people of Israel again.
 - c. Many _____ will also be there
 - d. There will be no doubt but that the _____ has done this
 - e. Judah and _____ will again be chosen by the LORD.
12. (:13) What is the only possible response to this amazing promise?

The Five Year Rule

Chapter 3

What are some of the rules you have had for your children?

Of course we had rules for our children the whole time they were growing up. Far too many rules, according to them at the time. We were quite proud of the reputation we had as the strictest Mom & Dad on the block – because we had more rules than anyone else. When our kids would complain, I would tell them that I had gone to “Mean Mom School”, and had graduated at the top of my class.

When they were little the main rule was “never, ever, say ‘no’ to your Mom”. We had zero tolerance on that one.

Then, when they were a little older, the rule was “make your bed every morning”. In Junior Hi, “shower every morning”. In High School they had a curfew. When they got in from an evening away from home, the rule was that they were to knock on our bedroom door. (Well, you didn’t think we were going to stay awake and wait up for them, did you?) They would wake us up with a knock on the door...we would look at the clock and note that they had made it home before curfew, and say, “OK, Good night, go to bed” Nobody liked that rule -

As our children began growing up and leaving home Ken and I instituted the final rule: The 5-year Rule.

We thought of this rule because we knew the day would come when the family would all be sitting around together, talking about the days when they were still living at home. We realized they would begin sharing stories about all the things they used to do...the things Mom and Dad never knew about. We knew this would happen because we had done it, too.

I remember when I was 6 years old, my two sisters and my brother and I had to take vitamins every morning, and we hated it. My

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younger sister would throw a major fit every morning. She would gag on the pill, or spit it back up. She would cry and beg. But it was the rule – we all had to take vitamins. I didn't like it either, but I thought she was really stupid because there was a better way to handle this situation. I just picked up my vitamin from the table beside my cereal bowl, where Mom always put it....pretend that I was putting it in my mouth (but in reality I kept it in the palm of my hand)...take a drink....smile....and go off to school. On my way to school I would simply toss that little red pill over a fence somewhere. When I told my Mom, laughingly, about it years later, it just broke her heart. It's so hard to hear your kids were devious and sneaky.

So in our house the 5-year-rule started the moment you left home as an adult....Five years had to pass before anyone started telling us those stories of the things we never knew about. We hoped that after 5 years we would laugh right along with them as they sat around "remembering". Looking back, I'm thinking it would have been better if it had been the "Twenty-five Year Rule".

Now, with God, there is no 5-year or 25-year rule. When we disobey Him, He knows right away. And not only Him, but all the angels in heaven and those angels not in heaven – the fallen angels – know about it, too.

In today's passage, Joshua, who had come back to Jerusalem with the first wave of returnees, and then had sat around with everyone else for 20 years not doing what God had called them to do, is going to appear before Almighty God. He has to get some things right in his life before he can hope to lead the people of Israel when the temple is finally finished. He is the one who inherited the responsibility of being the High Priest of Israel, but he is in no condition to do the job. The High Priest needed to be "clean" before he could be so brave as to stand in the presence of the LORD to plead the case of his brethren.

"Clean" meant that, even though he was in reality a sinner deserving of death, he had done everything the LORD had commanded in the way of sacrifices and offerings and the proper clothing and bathing procedures – everything to show that he knew he needed a Savior – and was trusting that someday God would provide that Savior to take away his sins forever. "Cleanliness" did not make the High Priest a sinless man – but it did show that he knew he needed to be sinless in

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order to enter the presence of God. And he knew that God alone could provide, through the perfect sacrifice someday, that sinlessness. The High Priest's faith in the promise of God made him sinless in the eyes of God – *“The just shall live by faith”*. (Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 1:17)

3:1 “Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him.”

On our giant, interactive video screen we'll view the drama with Zechariah. Joshua is standing in front of the Angel of the LORD, in a scene similar to a courtroom. Satan is standing next to Joshua. Satan is the prosecuting attorney. There are also others standing near Joshua, and then others sitting, observing.

Joshua needs to be re-instated as the high priest of Israel. He needs to be clean. Why is Satan allowed to be the prosecuting attorney? God allows it because He is God and is not afraid for anyone, even evil fallen angels, to confront Him with His own rules.

God had said a man must be pure and holy to be in His presence. God had said if a man sins he must surely die. Those were the rules. Satan is there to either force God to keep His own rules (and then the nation of Israel would never have a High Priest again), or if God doesn't keep His own rules, then Satan is there to say: “Aha!!! God is not Who He says He is – God has failed – I have won!!!”

You can see – a lot was at stake here. Satan is thinking that there is no way God can declare Joshua clean, because there is no temple where anyone can offer sacrifices for Joshua. And there is no clean person to perform the ceremony. You have to be clean to declare someone else clean. And there is no anointing oil, prepared in the way God said it must be prepared, to anoint the High Priest for His job. The evil angel must have thought that he had a slam-dunk here.

And Joshua must have been quite fearful. He knew the rules and he knew his history. If ever a high priest of Israel entered the Holy of Holies without being ritually clean, he would die. I'm picturing Joshua in this dream looking terrified.

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The Angel of the LORD is someone we have seen before in this night of visions. He is Jesus. So we have Joshua, standing before Jesus, with the devil at Joshua's side.

3:2 "The LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?"

Jesus speaks to satan. God the Son is speaking, speaking in the name and in the power of God the Father. And what does he say to this ugly, evil angel? He is saying that He plans to have mercy on this man, Joshua. He had a different plan for him than death. And He is telling satan that he (satan) has no right to tell Him (Jesus) that this man (Joshua) should die.

Why didn't satan have that right?

3:3,4a "Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. The angel said to those who were standing before him, 'Take off his filthy clothes.'"

A few of the observers in the dream are instructed to take Joshua's filthy clothes off of him. – the clothes that indicated his sin.

3:4b "...then he said to Joshua, 'See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you.'"

And Jesus lovingly tells Joshua that He Himself is putting back on Joshua new, rich, clean, priestly garments. Why did Jesus have the right to tell satan to back off? Because, in the timetable of God, Jesus had already paid the price for Joshua's sin. He had bought him back from death. He had purchased with His own life the royal garments Joshua would wear for the rest of eternity...as High Priest of Israel for a little while...and as precious child of the LORD forever.

There are three great lessons for us in this before we go on with the rest of this passage.

- First – Jesus has done the same thing for us. There isn't one of us who can stand in the presence of God on his/her own. Not one of us is good enough to stand in the presence of God. Yet,

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because Jesus used His own life to purchase us back from death, we are allowed into the presence of God.

- Second – I know this is true for me – I’m sure it’s true for you. Even after we understand salvation, and accept Jesus as our Savior, we still sin. And when we sin, here is the scenario played out in front of God: I walk into the throne room, wanting to be in the presence of the LORD. The devil appears next to me, saying: “Kathleen told a lie. She can’t be here. She can’t ever have fellowship with You again, because she is dirty and You don’t allow dirt in your presence.” Then Jesus rebukes satan and says: “the sacrifice I paid for her – giving my own life to keep her from death – covers all her sins – past, present and future. All the sins she ever did do – and all the sins she ever will do. They are covered. She is clean in my sight”
- And third – this is a picture of what is going to happen to the nation of Israel some day in our future. Right now they don’t believe in Jesus as a nation. But scripture tells us that someday they will. Someday the whole Jewish nation will see that Jesus really is the Savior. And satan will say: “No! They can’t be saved because their ancestors have rejected you as their Messiah. They can’t be saved because they have sin in their lives.” And Jesus is going to say “Rebuke you, satan! When they turned to me in faith, I took away their sin and robed them in majesty! Rebuke you once and for all!” Look at it in the 13th chapter of Zechariah:

“On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and impurity....(8) In the whole land,; declares the LORD, ‘two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it. This third will I bring into 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.’” Zechariah 13:1,8-9

Back to our vision....Zechariah is getting so caught up in what is happening in this vision – that he makes a suggestion himself! He is watching all this happen and I can just see him blurt out – “Put a clean turban on his head!”.

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3:5-7 "Then 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 Angel of the LORD gave this charge to Joshua: 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'If you walk in my ways and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here.'"

The turban was a part of the garments the high priest wore as he went about his job. Joshua was back to work!

Now – let's finish up this dream by solving **a little mystery**, and hearing an **awesome promise**:

3:8 "Listen, O High Priest Joshua and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come

Mystery: who are all the rest of the people sitting around watching this happen? There was Jesus, Joshua, satan, and a few others to help Joshua get off his dirty clothes. And then there are others.....
"associates seated before" Joshua.... Some commentators think these are the angels of God, watching the whole scene. I don't. I think these are men who had once filled the same shoes Joshua was filling. I think these are the past High Priests of Israel – the ones who lived by faith. They are cheering him on. Watching. Seeing what he will do with the privilege given to him. "OK, Joshua, this is your fresh start. We attempted it, did the best we could, failed often, and now this is your turn. We're behind you. You're not alone."

There is a verse in Hebrews that gives us a glimpse of this same thing happening for us:

*"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."
(Hebrews 12:1)*

All of us, as we live our lives for Christ, are surrounded by other people from other generations, other people who have lived for God, and also the people who are living for God now, just as we are. They

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see what we are doing and they see what we are trying to accomplish. They urge us on, cheer for us, because they see the end. They see Jesus – King over the whole world – and they know we have a part to play before we reach that end.

Many years ago we lived in a little farmhouse in Ft. Morgan, Colorado. We were starting a church there and struggling to survive there. The house was heated with propane. It was winter, and the wind blew like crazy out there. It was 20 below one night – and we knew that the propane was about to run out. We hadn’t had the money to get the tank refilled that day – we were hoping against hope that the propane would last through the night so that we could figure out a way to take care of it the next day. All we had to do was get through that night. We weren’t really worried – we had seen so many miracles in those months in Ft. Morgan – we figured we’d have a wonderful story to tell some day about the propane lasting through the night. We put the kids to bed upstairs and then Ken and I stayed up and prayed together. I remember us sitting on the couch with our arms around each other. We prayed that we would trust the LORD and praise Him, and we thanked Him that He had put us in this situation for whatever purpose He had in mind. Then we just sat there and fell asleep.

About 2:00 in the morning we heard the propane run out. It made a sort of popping noise. Right then we felt like the loneliest 2 people on the face of the earth. Nobody anywhere knew what we were going through. It was 20 below outside, the wind was howling across our little farm field, and with no heat in the house we didn’t know what was going to happen. The kids were still sleeping upstairs. Ken said, “Honey, just go back to sleep and I’ll stay awake – and somehow, something will happen. We’ll make it through the night. I was terrified. I started thinking that in the morning my kids would be frozen. We both finally fell asleep again.

The miracle was not that the propane lasted. The miracle was that the house didn’t get cold. That drafty old farmhouse never got below 65 degrees. We woke up alive and warm, got a check in the mail the next day, filled our tank, and life went on again.

The point of the story is that that night when we sat on the couch and prayed together and heard the propane run out and felt that loneliness, like there was no one who knew what we were going

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through, the truth is that there was. Jesus was there, of course...but also there was (I think) a whole cloud of witnesses sitting around us in our living room. They were the prophets of the Old Testament. Some of them had been sawed in half for their faith. They were the ones who had given up all in order to serve God on the mission field in Bolivia and Indonesia. They were the people of God from all through history who knew what it was to make a sacrifice for God. They were watching us, just like those associates were watching Zechariah become the High Priest of Israel. They wanted us to make it by faith – they had lived by faith themselves - and because they had lived for God, they had kept the truth alive...and we were getting our chance to live for God, too.

Because countless believers in Christ have lived for God in ages past, you are getting your chance to live for God today.

Because high priests since Aaron had lived for God, Joshua was getting his chance, too.

And the awesome **promise?**

3:8b-10 "I am going to bring my servant, the Branch. See, the stone I have set in front of Joshua! There are seven eyes on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it." Says the LORD Almighty, 'and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day. In that day each of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and fig tree,' declares the LORD Almighty."

Jesus is the Servant....He is the Branch out of the tree named Israel....and He is the Stone. The seven eyes indicate that He knows and sees everything that happens everywhere and at all times. And He makes a promise so firm that it is actually written right on Him – the Jewish nation and the land of Israel will have their sin removed in one day.

When they do, life will change from war to peace – from fear to friendship. For the whole world. The promise is yet to be fulfilled. The time is coming.

Have you stood in front of His throne today, sins wiped away forever? Are the ranks of believers from history proud of the job you are doing?



Have you paved the way for the ones following you to do the same?
Can you see yourself sitting under your vine and fig tree someday?
Sharing your stories of living by faith?

Zechariah 3

Questions for Discussion or Personal Study

1. (:1) Describe the scene which Zechariah sees, and who is in it:
2. (:1) Why does Satan think he has a right to “accuse” Joshua?
3. (:2) As Satan begins to accuse Joshua, what does the LORD do?
4. (:3-4) Why doesn’t Satan have the right to accuse Joshua?
5. If you were standing before God, and Satan showed up, would Satan have the right to accuse you? If not, why not? If the answer is yes....what should you do right now?
6. How is this dream also a picture of something which needs to happen to the whole nation of Israel?
7. (:5) What does Zechariah suggest at this point in the dream?
8. What does the turban represent?
9. (:6,7) These words indicate that Joshua has his old _____ back!
10. (:8) Who else is in this dream, people we haven’t seen before?

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11. Do you think you have anyone “cheering you on”?
12. (8b-10) What is the awesome promise at the end of this dream?

This Little Light of Mine

Chapter 4

We started out this study with a question: *Like the returned remnant of Israel, is there something I am supposed to be doing...which I am not doing because I have grown comfortable with my life?* Am I supposed to be shining the light of God into this dark world in any particular way?

Today’s passage gave me one more thing to think about as I try to answer that question for myself.

Zechariah’s fifth dream is specifically addressed to a man named Zerubbabel. A descendant of King David, he was in line to be the King of Israel – but he was never going to be the King. The Jewish remnant had returned to the land God had given them, but they were not the ruling power in that land. They were the vassals of the Persians – living in Israel, but paying taxes and owing allegiance to their rulers. Zerubbabel was never going to be the King of Israel....he was a subject of the King of Persia.

If he had been King, his job would have been to govern and protect this rebellious nation of people in such a way that they could get their job done, What job? Showing God to the world. Shining the light of God into the world.

How to do that job? Live in the place God said to live...and worship in the way God said to worship. As the Jewish priests ministered in the temple, they were showing the world how to approach the One, True God.

Before a priest entered the temple there first had to be an innocent, flawless animal killed on his behalf, on the altar of sacrifice out in front of the temple itself.

Then, and only then, he entered the first room in the temple – the Holy Place. He entered this room in order ceremonially show how to

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prepare to enter the presence of God. There were things in this first room which would direct his thoughts to the LORD – remind him of how to think about Him. There was a lamp stand – called a Menorah – symbolic of two things: 1). The LORD is the light of our life. Without Him we would not be able to see or understand anything at all. And 2) Israel was to show forth God’s light in the world.

Also in the Holy Place was an altar – not one for sacrifice, but one where sweet incense was burned – symbolic of the sweetness of being able to actually know and communicate with the LORD. Symbolic, too, of the fact that God desired communication with us. He desired not just blind obedience but also a relationship.

And also in that room was a table with 12 loaves of bread kept fresh on it, called the Table of Showbread. This was symbolic of the fact that God Himself was the bread of our life. Without Him we could not survive.

Once a year the High Priest had the privilege of not only entering the Holy Place, but also walking on through to Holy of Holies – the only other room in the temple – the place which represented the very presence of God always with the Jewish people. The presence of God was so strong in that room that no other light source was necessary.

How did this whole process show God to the world? As the world walked by the door of Jerusalem...traded goods and traveled through that city and by its temple, they could see the drama Israel was continually playing out, day after day, week after week, year after year. They could see that the God of Israel wanted to have a relationship with men. Wanted to know them.

But the world could also see that no man could not approach God casually, just “as he was”. First, sinless blood must be shed. Then he must focus on the LORD Himself, Who is our very Bread which sustains our life, the One we offer our sweet praise and prayer, and the One who infuses us with the power we helplessly need to even hope to get the job done.

The watching world would learn that no one could just walk up to God and say “here I am, like I am”. No one got a “come as you are” audience with the LORD of all. A person had to become what God

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wanted them to become in order to be in His presence. And the only way to do that was to trust God to first cleanse you of sin, and then change you as you had faith in Him. This is what the Jews were to show the world.

So here's the question Zerubbabel must have had - to be answered by Dream #5: "What Am I Supposed to do?"

He would never have the power necessary to command an army for the protection of Israel. He would never rule and govern like other Kings - he had no laws to enforce. He would never have a palace to live in. He would never have "subjects" who bowed to him. He was a King without a Kingdom...but his people needed a ruler, a protector, a leader. What was he to do?

4:1 "Then the angel who talked with me returned and wakened me, as a man is wakened from his sleep. He asked me, "What do you see?"

I wonder if that's anything like being wakened by your spouse saying "Are you asleep?".

4:2 "I answered, "I see a solid gold lamp stand with a bowl at the top and seven lights on it, with seven channels to the lights. "

Zechariah recognizes this lamp stand as being similar to the one which would soon be standing in the Holy Place in the temple. The original menorah from the old temple had been transported back with the returnees - given back to them by the Persians. One of the three pieces of furniture in that room, it would be continually lit, day and night, and was the only source of light in there. The menorah Zechariah saw in his vision had a bowl at the top for oil to collect and then be funneled by 7 channels to its 7 lights.

4:3 "Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left."

Not too hard to understand - 2 trees stood by this lamp stand - 2 olive trees. The Menorah would be fueled by olive oil from these 2 trees - so we are seeing the source of energy for the lamp stand of this vision.

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4:4-6 "I asked the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?". He answered, "Do you not know what these are?". "No, my lord," I replied. 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."

Zechariah asks the angel "What are these?" – referring to the olive trees. The menorah he recognized – but there had never been olive trees standing anywhere near the menorah in the temple, so he didn't understand their significance.

As the angel answers this question, Zerubbabel is also getting his unasked question answered (What am I supposed to be doing?)

The way Zerubbabel is going to do his job – accomplish the task God has given him – be the "King" of Israel – is not going to be by might (a word which gave the idea of the strength of great armies), or by power (a word which meant the power of one person – their personality or their personal charisma), but by the Spirit of the LORD Himself. The olive trees represent the power of the LORD Himself available to flow into the menorah. The LORD is telling Zerubbabel, through this vision, that he was not going to have an army, or personal power, but there was still going to be a way for him to powerfully do the job God had given him to do.

4:7 "What are you, O mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. "

The task you see before you, Zerubbabel, may look like an immovable object, a huge mountain in the way, but by the Spirit of God it will be simply leveled to the ground – not a problem.

4:7 "Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of 'God bless it! God Bless it!'"

Zerubbabel will finish this job of leading Israel to complete the temple, and when he does, there will be a final stone laid – the capstone – and people will be shouting praises to God for the task that was finished.

4:8 "Then the word of the LORD came to me:"

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Zechariah has been talking to the angel up to this point. Now he actually hears the LORD Himself, probably Jesus again, talking to him:

4:9 "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you."

Zechariah – tell Zerubbabel that his own hands helped to lay the foundation for this temple 18 years ago when he first returned to Jerusalem. And his hands will complete it soon.

But also...fast forward to the distant future – when the LORD, Jesus, Himself will step into and complete the final temple here on earth (at the end of time) – when Jesus, the son of David, son of Zerubbabel ...will complete that temple with His own hands...when that happens, then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me (Jesus) to you.

4:10 "Who despises the day of small things? Men will rejoice when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel."

(Still Jesus talking to Zechariah) Many of these people working on this temple were not happy that it was going to be small, not splendid, not amazingly golden and beautiful, as was the temple of Solomon's day. Jesus is saying – don't look down on this temple because it seems small and insignificant. This is the work I have chosen. This is where my own feet will stand someday. This is where there will be great rejoicing at what I have accomplished on earth. Size doesn't count. In comparison with my greatness, do you think even the first temple was really all that great?

4:10b "(These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range throughout the earth)"

The stone, remember, from the last vision...the stone with 7 eyes – which represented the all-knowing, all-seeing Jesus? Those eyes on that stone see all – the past, the present, the future. Jesus knows what will become of the work you are doing – let Him take care of how important it is.

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4:11-13 "Then I asked the angel, "What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lamp stand? He replied, "Do you not know what these are? "No, my lord", I said.

Now Zechariah is talking to the angel once more...and he still wants to understand more about the two olive trees. Side note: When you seem to have a logical explanation for something in God's Word, but still have a curiosity which won't quit – a desire to know more - ...don't stop asking questions. There may just be something else the LORD wants you to know.

4:14 "So he said, "These are the two who are anointed to serve the LORD of all the earth."

1. We saw that the olive trees were going to be the source of power flowing into the lamp stand.
2. And we know that the source of that power was going to be the Holy Spirit.
3. And we realize that the lamp stand represented the work which God had given the Jewish people to do – the work of showing God to the world.

And now we learn that the two olive trees also symbolize two people – through whom the Holy Spirit is going to flow so that the Jewish people can do the work of showing God to the world. And those two are "anointed". That helps us figure out who the two are. For in Judaism there are only two offices of leadership which require an anointing ceremony. Priests and Kings. On one level we know, then, that this means the Holy Spirit would flow through Joshua and Zerubbabel to the nation of Israel so that they could do their job of showing God to the world.

But, as in quite a bit of prophecy, there is another, future fulfillment of this prophecy, too: In 33 AD the Holy Spirit would flow through the One who was both Priest and King, Jesus, to the nation of Israel and the believing gentile world, so that they could do their job of showing God to the rest of the world.

And another.... in 2005 AD the Holy Spirit continues to flow through the One who is Priest and King to us, who are the body of Christ, so that we can do our job of showing God to the rest of the world.



And another...Some day in our future, when the time has come for the Jewish nation to come back to God, the Holy Spirit will flow through the One who is the Priest and the King into the revived Jewish nation so that they can do their job of showing God to the rest of the world.

In conclusion, let’s re-ask that question: *Like the returned remnant of Israel, is there something I am supposed to be doing...which I am not doing because I have grown comfortable with my life? Something which must be done before the Redeemer finally returns?*

My answer? As I try to decide how to shine for God in this dark, dark world? I’m realizing I would love it if my job is:

1. Something small
2. Something impossible
3. Something important....in God’s eyes....not mine

Zechariah 4

Questions for Discussion or Personal Study

1. What was the “job” the LORD had given to the nation of Israel when He first chose them to be His people? And therefore, what was the “job” of the King of Israel?
2. (:1&2) What does Zechariah see as he begins this dream?
3. What function did this lamp stand serve in the original temple?
4. What made the original lamp stand in the temple give light...in other words...what was the lamp stand’s source of energy?
5. (:3) What was the source of energy for the lamp stand in this vision?
6. (:4-6) The message of this dream is directed to _____
7. Who was Zerubbabel?

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8. What was Zerubbabel supposed to understand because of this vision?
9. (:7-9) What “mighty mountain” of a job is Zerubbabel trying to accomplish?
10. What will be the last step to be finished in this job?
11. (:8-9) What event will be a sure sign to Israel that the LORD Himself has made their task come to completion?
12. (:10) Is the size of a task the measure of its importance?
13. (:10b) Where have we seen 7 eyes before?
14. (:11-14) Besides the Holy Spirit, what else is symbolized by the 2 olive trees which will provide the nation of Israel with the energy to do its job for God?

Here Comes the Judge

Chapter 5:1-4

Short little vision. Big, huge message – not just for Israel, but for all of us.

5:1, 2 "Then I turned and raised my eyes, and saw there a flying scroll. And he said to me, 'What do you see?' So, I answered, 'I see a flying scroll. Its length is twenty cubits and its width is ten cubits.' "

Twenty cubits by ten cubits is the same as 30 feet by 15 feet – same size as the Holy Place in the tabernacle (the first room a priest entered as he approached God). Remember what the priest was to do in that first room?

He was to be reminded of Jesus...who was the Bread of Life (table of showbread)...who was the Light (candelabra), and who was the One who carried our prayers to God the Father (altar of incense). There was no way to approach God the Father without going through Jesus.

This great, huge, flying scroll (picture Aladdin and a room-sized flying carpet) was, I think, a symbol of the presence of Jesus Himself as He begins to judge the world for sin.

In Dreams 1 through 5 the people of Israel were being challenged and encouraged to do their job. Beginning with Dream 6, and then continuing in Dreams 7 and 8, the message changes. These Dreams have to do with judgment. The Jews of Zechariah's time are going to see what judgment is for, where it is going to take place, when it is going to take place, and whether they are going to be a part of it. You and I are going to be able to apply this dream to ourselves, too – we're going to see what judgment is for, where it is going to take place, when it is going to take place, and whether or not we will be a part of it...or if we need to even be concerned about it at all.

A scroll is usually rolled up. This scroll, however, isn't. It is fully extended, so that we can see its entirety all at one glance.

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5:3 "And he said to me, 'This is the curse that is going out over the whole land; for according to what it says on one side, every thief will be banished, and according to what it says on the other, everyone who swears falsely will be banished.' "

This scroll is the Law of God – the Torah – the 10 commandments:

1. You shall have no other Gods before me
2. You shall not make yourself an idol
3. You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God
4. Remember the Sabbath Day & keep it holy
5. Honor your father and your mother
6. You shall not murder
7. You shall not commit adultery
8. You shall not steal
9. You shall not give false testimony
10. You shall not covet

My guess is that on one side of the flying scroll are written 5 of the commandments, on the other side the other 5. The two mentioned in this verse – stealing and lying – are simply representative of the whole law of God. Every possible sin that any of us has ever committed – that any of us will ever commit – was written on that scroll – and it is flying through the air. When this scroll begins to fly, there will be no more secrets. Isaiah says, chapter 59, vs. 12, "...our sins testify against us...". The evil things we have done – from the "small" ones, such as stealing and lying – to the huge ones – like murder – will someday all be displayed for the whole world to see – on a huge, flying scroll – condemning us to the punishment a Holy God must hand out for them.

So...the Jewish people must be asking...if this scroll begins to literally fly someday, will I be banished? Will my sins be broadcast to the whole world as proof of the punishment I will be receiving? Is this vision for me? Haven't I returned from Babylon unlike those who stayed? Haven't I endured persecution from the enemies of God? Haven't I groaned under the load of trying to obey the Law of God? Don't any of my good deeds count for anything? Don't they outweigh the sin here and the sin there which I have done?

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And we might be asking the same things...because what this vision symbolizes hasn't come to pass yet...it is still in our future, too.

5:4 "The LORD Almighty declares, 'I will send it out, and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of him who swears falsely by my name. It will remain in his house and destroy it, both its timbers and its stones.' "

Nope. When that scroll begins to fly, if you have any sins at all in your life, you will be completely and utterly destroyed. There is no doubt at all that that is what God is saying in this dream. The LORD Almighty cannot tolerate sin. So where's their hope? Where's our hope? Is our only hope that we somehow get every sin confessed before our final breath – or that we somehow clean up the slate of our life right before that time in history when the scroll begins to fly, assuming we are still alive at that moment?

And that is where we get to the blessing of Dream #6.

Think about a well-known jury trial from the past. Scott Peterson was tried for the murder of his wife, Laci, and their unborn child. Horrendous crime, spread all over the world by media coverage. The jury came back with a guilty verdict, and then some time passed and the punishment is actually be carried out.

Relate that jury trial to what this dream about judgment: there is a time when we are declared guilty of the sin in our lives....and there is not one of us who can pass that test – we are all guilty. Then there is a time when the punishment for those sins comes. The blessing is that there is a huge, long, space of time between those two things happening.

We were declared guilty thousands of years ago when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. Every single one of us was declared guilty then for all the sins we would ever do. Since then there has been this long, long period of time waiting for the punishment for sin to actually take place. Dream #6 describes that punishment beginning...it begins with a declaration, flying through the air so all can see..."here's what sin is...here's who has committed sin...here's the punishment."

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Will I be a part of that punishment? Or a part of that initial pointing out of sin?

It depends. If, at some point in between the time I was declared guilty and the time the punishment comes, Someone Else stepped forward, willing to take that punishment for me, then I would be spared. That Someone Else has to be qualified – has to be someone who doesn't also deserve that same punishment. It has to be Someone who isn't going to be destroyed for the sin in their own life (even if it was only a small sin) – because by the time that person got around to taking my punishment, they wouldn't be alive to do it.

In my life...In between the time I was declared guilty of sin and the time I would need to take my punishment, Someone Else did step in and said "I don't deserve any punishment at all, but I want to take the punishment for her because I love her and I don't want to lose her for all of eternity."

That Someone Else was Jesus Christ. When I found out He had died on the cross so that I wouldn't have to, I reached out and accepted the gift He was offering –

"As many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God – even to them which believed on His name." (John 1:12).

It happened when I was a Senior in High School, in Tucson, Arizona. I was one of those kids raised in a religious family, meaning we went to church. My Mother always made sure we went to church – my Dad went at the important times...Easter and Christmas. I knew the name, God, and I was familiar with going to church. I had a hunger in my heart for something having to do with God, but I didn't exactly know what it was. Church wasn't really satisfying that hunger, but it was the way you were supposed to do it. I was doing everything to be a good person – except those things nobody but me knew about.

Then I visited a different church, a small one near our home. It was there that I heard for the first time that Jesus Christ wanted to have a personal relationship with me. When He had died on that cross, it apparently wasn't something that had simply happened with no effect

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on me. I learned it was something done specifically for me, and that I needed to respond to it. I remember sitting in that little church, hearing that Jesus had died for me, feeling a stirring within me that said – “this is what you’ve been looking for” – and also thinking “this preacher wants me to walk down this aisle and make a fool out of myself – there isn’t a chance in the world I’m doing that...but still there is something here I want.” I left there that day thinking...“Well, I am going to think about this.”.

I went back the next week. The sermon was different, but the LORD’s tugging on my heart was the same. I knew that I wanted Jesus Christ to be the LORD of my life. I wanted in the worst way to do something for Him with my life, but I knew that could never happen until I accepted His gift of salvation and gave over the reins of my life to Him. So I sat there in my chair in the middle of an “invitation”, and asked Jesus to be my Savior. I told Him: “I give my life to you...I don’t know what you can do with it, but look at what you did for me – so here’s my life.” I didn’t walk down the aisle...or “go forward”. But it didn’t matter anymore. He had changed me completely.

I don’t have to go through the judgment to come, because Someone Else already took my punishment. My past sins? Taken care of. The sins I struggle with today? Taken care of. My future sins? Taken care of. All of my sins, past, present & future, were covered over with the blood of Jesus Christ when I accepted His gift of salvation.

The Jews of Zechariah’s time? Could this be true for them, too? Could they also have Someone step in to take their well-deserved punishment for their sins? Absolutely.

All of their sacrifices of lambs, bulls, birds...all of the blood that was shed for hundreds of years on the altar of sacrifice was to help them understand that One was coming Who would pay the price once and for all. The temple these Jews were building would continue that message for their children and grandchildren and great grandchildren until the day, 400 years later, when Jesus would appear in time to sacrifice His life. For them, having faith in that Someone yet to come was the same as me having faith in the One who had already come. Same Someone. Same saving faith.

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But it took an individual decision in the heart of each Jewish person. So many promises were given throughout the Old Testament about a future Redeemer, that there was no way they could have not known they had Someone coming – someone to trust and look forward to. Their decision was whether or not to believe the Someone was coming to take care of their sin problem forever.

The gift of Jesus’ future death on the cross for them was just the same as His past death on the cross is for me. He paid for all sins, through all of time, for all people of all races and nations. The response needed was: “Thank You for being the future sacrifice for my sin – my life is in Your hands.”

The message of Dream #6? Judgment on sin is coming. No doubt about it.

When are the rapists, murderers, child pornographers, pimps, thieves and liars going to finally get what they deserve? The time is coming. **And the One Who provided escape from that judgment is also the One Who will bring the judgment to pass on those who have rejected Him.**

The Redeemer is also the Judge.

What is God’s judgment for? To remove all sin from all places so that a new heaven and a new earth can exist without sin.

Where will God’s judgment take place? Everywhere on this earth there is even one person with sin staining their life.

When will God’s judgment take place? It hasn’t happened yet, so it will be sometime in our future

Will I be a part of that judgment? Not if Jesus Christ has already taken your punishment...the awesome price He paid for your life goes into effect for you the moment you turn to Him in faith, accepting the gift He is offering... His death so that you can live forever.

So, first of all, is there Someone who has taken the punishment you deserve?



And second, do all of your friends and loved ones know that time is coming...do they know what Jesus has done for them?

When the scroll begins to fly, only those who have their sins already paid for will live.

Next week, in Dream #7, Zechariah gets a hint about “when”.

Zechariah 5:1-4

Questions for Discussion or Personal Study

1. (:1) What does Zechariah see in this dream?
2. (:2) How big was this flying scroll?
3. (:3) What is written on this scroll?
4. (:4) What will happen to the people affected by this scroll?
5. Will I be affected by this scroll? Will I go through judgment once all my sins are revealed?
6. If not, why not?
7. What do we learn about the LORD in this dream?
8. What is the message of Dream #6 to the Jews of Zechariah’s day?
9. What is the message of Dream #6 to me?

Pandora’s Box

Chapter 5:5-11

When I was a little girl, I was fascinated with the story from Greek mythology called Pandora’s Box. Here’s how I remember it:

The first mortals were men. They lived in a perfect world, full of wonderful food, unequaled beauty and happiness. They had not been given the ability to make fire...this was a power reserved only for the gods. But one of the gods decided it was a gift that man must have, so behind Jupiter’s back, he bestowed the gift on men.

Jupiter, in order to have revenge on men for the transgression of possessing such a powerful gift, brought all the gods together and inspired them to decide to create a woman. She was charming and lovely to look at – and was given to man. Her name was Pandora.

Their first days together were spent in unbelievable joy and pleasure. One evening a messenger from Jupiter approached them, carrying a heavy box. It was wooden and covered with beautiful carvings, and wrapped around with a golden cord. The box was left in Pandora’s care – and Pandora wanted in the worst way to look into it.

Eventually her reserve gave way to inquisitiveness, and she managed to untie the golden cord and open the box – just for a quick look – and then she planned to close it quickly and never look again.

Secretly, Jupiter had crammed into this box all the diseases, sorrows, vices, and crimes that afflict mankind; and the box was no sooner opened, than all these ills flew out, looking like little brown-winged creatures, closely resembling moths. These little insects flew out of the box, stung Pandora and her companions, and then sped away into the world, to live forever in what had been a perfect world, afflicting men and women ever since.

The good part of the story is that there was one, small creature left in the box, trapped there as Pandora, too late, slammed the lid shut.

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When Pandora heard the small voice of this creature, pleading to be let out, she gave in again to curiosity and out came "hope". Hope's job was to heal the wounds inflicted by all the other cruel creatures let out of Pandora's box.

Thus, according to the ancient Greeks, evil entered into the world, bringing untold misery; but Hope followed closely in its footsteps, to aid struggling humanity, and point to a happier future.

Recognize the story? The entrance of sin into the world. Tuck away in the back of your mind that picture of Pandora's box being opened and misery filling the world, as we look at today's passage – Dream #7.

Following on the heels of Dream #6, this seventh vision tells us a little more about sin, judgment, and what the LORD will do in the future to rid the world of sin forever.

5:5&6 "Then the angel who was speaking to me came forward and said to me, "Look up and see what this is that is appearing." I asked, "What is it?" He replied, "It is a measuring basket." And he added, "This is the iniquity of the people throughout the land."

The basket contained the sins of the world. All people throughout all time have been filling up this basket with sins and now it seems to be almost full. And when it is full it has a purpose. An evil purpose.

5:7 "Then the cover of lead was raised..."

There are two interesting things about this basket.

1. It has a cover of lead. Did you know that lead is the element which can be used to keep radiation contained? To keep it from escaping?

So we can assume that somehow this cover of lead is keeping something inside the basket from getting out. Along with all the other evil which has been accumulating inside this basket, there is something extremely evil which is going to be captured and kept in it by the cover of lead.

5:7 "...and there in the basket sat a woman."

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2. And here's the 2nd interesting thing about this basket: There's a woman inside it! In the defense of women, I think we should state here that when scripture uses women as a symbol of something evil, that does not mean women are evil. (well, at least not any more evil than men). It is just a symbol sometimes used in scripture for "religion" which does not include God....religion based around worship of self, or worship of animals, or worship of things...but not worship of the One, True, God. In this basket full of all kinds of evil sat a woman representing religion which did not worship the One, True God.

5:8 "He said, 'This is wickedness,'" and he pushed her back into the basket and pushed the lead cover down over its mouth."

Religion which did not worship the One, True, God began in Genesis chapter 11 – at the Tower of Babel. Mankind gathered in a geographical location... in what is now Iraq... and decided, against the will of the LORD, to join their intelligence and their abilities to build a tower – where they could be strong and no one could oppose them, where they could stay and not obey God in His command to go out and populate the earth - and where they could worship other Gods – worship themselves – and not the One, True, God.

You know the story. God simply confused their languages so that they couldn't communicate with one another. Couldn't finish the mammoth tower they had planned to give glory unto themselves, and they had no choice – they disbursed throughout the earth. But they carried with them their love for gods which were not God. And they worshipped those false gods everywhere they went.

They worshipped idols...and they worshipped things. The things this world offers.

In fact, in Babylon, where the Jews of Zechariah's time had been living for 70 years, the worship of things – beautiful, material things – was so intense that the Jewish people, too, fell in love with the things this world could provide, and they carried that "adultery" in their hearts with them back to the broken down city of Jerusalem.

And there it simmered. They had worked on their own homes rather than the temple of God, but were obeying God again as they finished

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the temple. But this dream was given to them to root out that evil which still simmered...and help them see the end God has in mind for the “things” they thought they could not live without.

The woman being stuffed into this basket represented all that evil – all the things they had given themselves to, in their hearts, instead of giving themselves wholeheartedly to the One, True, God. Instead of looking for the glittering future He held for them in the palm of His hand, they looked for the sparkling, cheap baubles offered by the God of this world.

5:9 “Then I looked up, and there before me were two women, with the wind in their wings! They had wings like those of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between heaven and earth.”

A stork in the Old Testament is called an unclean bird. One that the LORD God said not to eat. I think what we have here is two other women who are going to pick up this basket and fly it someplace. But these aren't good angels – they are bad ones – they are satan's servants - demons. Something evil is going to happen with this basket – because the time has come. The basket is full – sin has reached its fullest power – and now is the time for sin to do its worst.

5:10 “Where are they taking the basket?” I asked the angel who was speaking to me.

This is the important question. Wherever they are taking this basket is where it is going to be opened, and where the ultimate evil is going to be unleashed.

5:11 “He replied, “To the country of Babylonia, to build a house for it. When it is ready, the basket will be set there in its place.”

When the time of the end comes.... when the scroll from our last vision flies throughout the land, destroying evil people, then the evil world system, which teaches and enslaves people to a worship of all that is not God, will find a home in Babylonia, and from there the most evil power of all will seek to rule the world. That power will need this evil woman to make it work – and the world will be controlled by a religion which does not worship the One, True God... a religion which worships things and the one who can make them available – satan.

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This is terrifying! Why tell Zechariah something like this when he is trying to inspire his people to finish this temple? Why not just center their thoughts on the wonderful hope that Jesus is going to come to that temple? Why bring up the frightening scenes that will someday envelope the whole world?

Because sin is strong. We don't defeat it by avoiding it. We have to see clearly what it is like, and throw ourselves into the arms of the One who is strong enough to fight it – Jesus.

Do you think you are strong enough to fight this basket full of all the accumulated sins of the world? Do you think you are smart enough to steer clear of the worship of things which controls every thought and desire? Would you be able to stuff all the evil set free in the Garden of Eden back into Pandora's box?

No. But you know the One who can. And will.

Read Revelation 17 and 18 and weep. Weep for the world. Weep for your loved ones who don't know Christ. And weep for yourself.

And then read Revelation 19:1 and shout! Whoopee!!!! Jesus is going to destroy all the evil we could produce!

Where will the end begin to take place? The plain of Shinar. Babylon. The center of evil. When you see evil begin to gather in one place – when you see the worship of things and all that is not God begin to take shape in one geographical location on the earth, and begin to spread from there – remember Vision #7 and trust your every breath to the One Who decreed from the beginning that sin could only go so far, the One Who has the power to stuff evil down into a basket, the One Who will keep us safely in His hand through anything evil can throw at us.

*“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them,
and they follow me. I give them eternal life,
and they shall never perish; no one can snatch
them out of my Father's hand. I and the
Father are One.” ... (the words of Jesus –
recorded in John 10: 27-30)*

Zechariah 5:5-11

Questions for Discussion or Personal Study

1. (:5-6) What does Zechariah see as this dream begins?
2. (:6) What does this measuring basket represent?
3. What has been filling up this measuring basket?
4. (:7&8) Name two things which are unusual about this measuring basket.
5. Is this dream teaching that women are wicked?
6. If not, then what does this woman represent...and why choose a woman to represent this?
7. (:9) Storks in scripture are unclean birds...therefore the storks here probably represent evil...and if that is true, then what might the storks be doing with this basket?
8. (:10-11) If the basket is full of sin, and an evil woman is in it, and two evil women like storks were transporting it somewhere...what might you guess about the place they were taking it?
9. Why scare people with scenes like this? Why not just give the hope of Jesus someday returning?
10. What is our hope when the end times someday get underway? (John 10:27-30)

“Go, Son”

Chapter 6:1-8

Shortly after Southside Bible started in 1997, we met at a little white church building on Main Street in Greenwood. We put a blue awning on it, and planted a few flowers out in front. Many of us remember that little building fondly – because we had such great times there – and we grew from about 25 people - to “busting out the seams” at over 100 people. While we were there I was out watering the flowers one day, and an older woman walked up to me and said she would like to help water our flowers. She said she lived in the neighborhood and it would be no trouble for her to water our flowers during the hot days of summer.

Her name was Dean. We started talking, and I found out she lived about a block away with her husband – that her daughters and grandchildren lived nearby – and that she loved Jesus more than anything in the world. I was grateful to have someone watering the flowers. Dean started to attend Southside Bible, and we became friends over the next few months. She began to experience some dizziness, so quite often one of our young men would walk her to church, or home from church. Then we found out she had cancer, and we didn’t see her as often. I would talk to her on the phone, or go by and see her as she got progressively worse. There was sadness, of course, that we were losing this dear friend as she lost her battle with cancer....but there was also such joy – because she wanted nothing more than to see Jesus face to face. She had a son who had preceded her in death, but even when we talked about the fact that she would soon see her son, she said first of all she wanted to see Jesus.

We were talking about end times one day, and when we thought they would begin. I’ll never forget what she said. “The end times are going to start when God turns to Jesus and says, **‘Go, Son.’**”

She was right. Just like that. At some point in our future the LORD of all will say: **“Go, Son.”** And the 7 last years will begin.

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Sometime during those 7 years, the 6 seals on the scroll are opened, and as they are opened people begin to realize this world is not just all about themselves. During that time, many will believe in Jesus as life gets harder and harder, and many of them will face persecution and death for their faith.

Shortly after this horrible time of persecution the believers in Jesus will be snatched out of the earth, to join their Savior in the sky – and to await returning with Him to earth. The ones left on the earth – the non-believers – will experience much worse suffering than the persecuted ones ever did – and some of them will turn from their sin and cling to the hope of Jesus’ soon return. Amongst those will be the entire nation of Israel.

This last vision given to Zechariah shows him the last battle which will be fought- at the end of the Last 7 Years. It begins the moment the Lord, Jesus Christ, calls His army to follow Him as He descends to the earth. It is fought against all the armies of the world, gathered to defy Him in the Valley of Armageddon, just north of Jerusalem.

Turn to the book of Revelation....and see how the scene begins:

"I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, 'Come, gather together

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for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great.’ Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army.” (Revelation 19: 11-19)

Then turn back to Zechariah...chapter 6....and see what happens next: (Note: I have chosen for Zechariah 6 to use the NASB version of the Bible, instead of the NIV, which I usually use. I think the NIV has done a poor job of giving us this passage the way it was originally written – the NASB is superior in staying close to the original words and intent of the vision.)

6:1-3 "Now I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold, four chariots were coming forth from between the two mountains; and the mountains were bronze mountains. With the first chariot were red horses, with the second chariot black horses, with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot strong dappled horses.”

Here is a powerful picture of punishment about to begin, and here are the visuals in this vision to help us understand it:

- Two mountains of bronze

The two mountains are thought by many Bible scholars to be Mt Zion (where the temple is located) and the Mt. of Olives (just to the east of Mt. Zion). In between these two mountains is the Kidron Valley. We have, in fact seen this geographical location before – in the very first vision Zechariah had. Remember? There was a man on a red horse sitting amongst the myrtle trees in the Kidron valley, just outside of the temple area – and there were messengers on horses reporting to this man (Jesus) about the state of the whole world.

Here we are again, in Zechariah’s 8th and last vision – looking at the same mountains and the same valley – only this time the ones who are reporting to Him are rushing forth to go out in judgment – the time of waiting is over. In other places in scripture, brass or bronze is used as a symbol of judgment. Look at Revelation 1: 15&16, where

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the LORD Jesus is pictured as having feet like "*brass glowing in a furnace*".

- Four chariots pulled by horses: red, black, white and dappled. These are different in some ways from the horses we saw in Vision #1: their colors are slightly different, and these horses in Vision #8 are pulling chariots, probably Zechariah recognized them as the chariots of war he would have seen in his lifetime.

There is another place in scripture which pictures horses similar to these: In Revelation chapter 6, as the first 4 seals are broken on the scroll held by Jesus, 4 horses, also red, black, white and dappled, are told to go forth and accomplish their part in God's plan for the taking back of the world from the Destroyer. In that passage those horses have riders, and their riders unleash suffering and misery upon a world just beginning to wake up to reality – that Jesus is LORD of all, and always has been.

But in Vision #8 the horses are not just doing research, not simply reporting the state of the world, and not waking the world up to their sinful condition...they are ready now to kill and destroy all that is not of God. Judgment time has come. No more chances. Eternal suffering and separation from God is what awaits their victims.

The last 2 visions we saw in Zechariah were depicting judgment as it began on the earth –

Vision #6: the scroll flying throughout the world to convict of sin –
and **Vision #7:** the basket full of evil being transported to the Plain of Shinar where all that is evil could do everything in its power to fight against the LORD –
and now **Vision #8:** the horses of judgment are come – the end is here. God the Father told Jesus to "Go, Son" when the Last 7 Years began. Now, as the time is complete, He gathers His army of believers around Him, descends, to the Mount of Olives, and calls 4 horses, pulling chariots, into His presence, and says to them:
"Go."

6:4-6 "Then I spoke and said to the angel, who was speaking with me, 'What are these, my lord?' The angel replied to me, 'These are

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the four spirits of heaven, going forth after standing with the Lord of all the earth, with one of which the black horses are going forth to the north country; and the white ones go forth after them, while the dappled ones go forth to the south country.”

Picture it.

The Lord (with us behind Him) descends to the Mount of Olives. In chapter 14 of this book, Zechariah describes that moment:

“In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half to the south.” (Zech 14:4)

A huge valley appears as the LORD steps on to the Mount of Olives – and the LORD Jesus is basically standing in between 2 mountains. Just north of here the armies of the world are assembled to try to destroy this Son of Man/Son of God, as He returns to reclaim His world.

He calls 4 chariots of horses to Himself, and sends them to accomplish His will – the destruction at the Valley of Armageddon. I can see them and even hear them thundering through the Kidron Valley, or perhaps through the valley the LORD Himself created as He stepped onto the Mount of Olives. The black horses go – and destroy. The white horses follow them – symbolizing victory. And the dappled ones go south to capture any who would surround the city on its other side. They have been waiting for this moment, standing on the sidelines for thousands of years and wondering....“how could they treat the LORD of Glory this way for so many years and still be alive?” (*I Peter 1:12*)

*“...things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-
things into which angels long to look.”*

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6:7 "When the strong ones went out, they were eager to go to patrol the earth. And He said, "Go, patrol the earth". So they patrolled the earth."

The dappled horses are eager to not only go south, but to patrol the earth, too – perhaps to make sure that throughout the entire world there is not one unbeliever left. We're not told where the red horses go – but we know that red symbolizes war, so we assume they are involved somehow, and that the LORD has spared us from knowing the details for now.

The destruction of human beings who do not believe in Jesus is complete.

6:8 "Then He cried out to me and spoke to me saying, 'See, those who are going to the land of the north have appeased My wrath in the land of the North.'"

Who's "He"? Not the angel Zechariah was talking to in verse 1-6. This is the same "He" who in verse 7 told the red horses to patrol the earth. It's Jesus. Jesus, who is dispensing the judgment of God upon all of mankind...they same mankind He died for. Jesus' own words in John 5:22&23 have been fulfilled:

"For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father...."

The chariots who rushed to the Valley of Armageddon to destroy the armies gathered there have appeased the wrath of Almighty God – Jesus.

Here's how that moment is described in Revelation 19:

"And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with



brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh." (Rev. 19:20-21)

.....

Dean always wanted to pray together before I left. The last morning I was there she was in a coma. I was hoping she could hear me, so I talked for a while about Jesus and how she was going to see Him soon, and how He was waiting for her, and that the angels would take her to be with Him. Then I held her hand and we prayed. I asked the LORD to take care of her and keep her safe. I kissed her forehead, said goodbye, and I left. When I heard about an hour later that she had left to be with the LORD, all I could think of was that she was at that moment gazing into the eyes of Her Savior.

And that's how it ends. When the dust settles after the horses and their chariots go forth in judgment, we will be gazing into the eyes of our Savior.

Zechariah 6:1-8

Questions for Discussion or Personal Study

(Suggestion: Use the NASB version of the Bible for this passage...it does a much better job of correctly translating these verses.)

1. Read Revelation 19:11-19 and describe what happens when the LORD first returns to earth:
2. Now read Zechariah 6:1-3 and describe what happens next:
3. (:1-3) This is a strong picture of punishment about to be executed. What are the visual symbols the LORD gives us to help us understand it?
 - a. Two mountains of _____
 - b. Four _____
 - c. _____, _____, _____, and _____ horses

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4. Where else have we seen four different-colored horses in Zechariah?
5. What were they doing?
6. What are the different-colored horses of Revelation 6:1-8 doing?
7. These 4 horses are not doing research, not unleashing suffering so that people will wake up to reality...these 4 horses are doing what?
8. (:4-7) Where do these 4 chariots and horses go?
The black horses: _____
The white horses: _____
The dappled horses: _____
The red horses: _____
9. (:8) Why is Jesus pleased with what the horses are doing? (see John 5:22 & 23)



“Crowning a Priest”

Chapter 6:9-15

Zechariah has had very little sleep on this night of eight dreams. Eight different visions are lingering in his head. He has seen encouraging things, amazing things, frightening things, and calming things. I'm thinking he woke up the next morning wondering where to start as he would try to communicate these messages from the LORD.

The LORD has a little help on the way.

6:9&10 "The word of the LORD came to me: Take silver and gold from the exiles Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah, who have arrived from Babylon."

Three visitors have arrived in under-construction Jerusalem. J. Carl Laney, in his commentary, [Zechariah](#), says: "Although there were three major returns from captivity – the first under Sheshbazzar in 537 B.C., the second under Ezra in 458 B.C., and the third under Nehemiah in 444 B.C. - apparently there were other smaller groups of Jews who trickled back to the land. The group mentioned here came with a gift..."

They came with precious silver and gold – perhaps they had heard that construction was underway again on the temple – or perhaps the LORD had just put it in their hearts to travel now to take a gift with them. We aren't told the reason they came, but we do know they arrived the very next day after this night of powerful dreams. And the gift they brought was exactly what the LORD needed to complete His message to this tiny group of workers.

6:11 "Take the silver and gold and make a crown, and set it on the head of the high priest, Joshua son of Jehozadak."

Hmmm. Joshua is the high priest who was pictured being cleansed by the LORD Himself in Dream #4. He is certainly qualified and ready to

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be High Priest. But something is funny here. High priests were never crowned. Kings were crowned. God had made it very clear in his instructions to Moses that priests were priests and kings were kings, and the two were never to do each other's jobs. Priests were in charge of ruling and leading the spiritual needs of the people. Kings were in charge of ruling and leading the physical needs of the people. But kings were never to offer sacrifices (in fact, King Saul lost his kingship because of doing just that – see I Samuel 13). And priests would never sit on a throne...or wear a crown. Priests were of the house of Levi....kings were of the house of Judah.

Priests were teachers, preachers, physicians, disease control experts, interpreters of the law, intercessors for the people, and they offered sacrifices.

Kings led the defense forces of the country, went to war, made the laws, enforced the laws, kept the economy healthy, and represented the country to other nations.

Priests and Kings were two different animals...so to speak.

So why is Zechariah told to crown a priest?

6:12 & 13 "Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD. It is he who will build the temple of the LORD, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.' "

Why crown a priest?...As a clue and a promise of what was to come.

As Zechariah placed a crown on Joshua's head, the Jewish people were getting a picture of a king and a priest together in one person – a clue that some day there was One coming who would lead us in the world, and also bring us safely into the presence of the LORD. This future Priest/King would "branch out" into the whole world – ministering to the physical and spiritual needs of Jew and Gentile alike.

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Those who would someday see this day of Priest/King would finally be able to become what they were always meant to be before sin and Satan entered into the picture.

6:14 "The crown will be given to Heldai, Tobiah, Jedaiah and Hen, son of Zephaniah as a memorial in the temple of the LORD. "

After Joshua the High Priest is ceremonially crowned, this crown will be given to the travelers who had brought the silver and the gold, and also to another, named Hen, and they would place it in the completed temple. It would be a memorial – a “remembering object”.

6:15 "Those who are far away will come and help to build the temple of the LORD, and you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you."

Every time any person, Jew or Gentile, saw that crown, he or she would remember that some day a Priest/King would wear it – and that would be their hope for the future. The future Priest/King would rule them and lead them to God. The future Priest/King would smooth out the rough spots in the world, bring health back into their lives, draw out the boundaries so that each could be secure, clean up the devastation of wars, heal personal hurts and put families together, and lead into the future.

Where is that crown today? The temple which was reconstructed by Joshua and Zerubbabel during Zechariah’s time was eventually expanded upon and beautified before Jesus ever walked in its passageways. And then it was totally destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D. The treasures housed there were carried away, or burned up, or perhaps hidden away. We don’t know where the crown is...but this verse (6:15, above) seems to indicate that there will be a time when people from all over the world will come again to build another temple – will see this crown – and will be firmly convinced once more that the LORD Almighty actually did send Jesus to earth. And that He, the Priest/King, is returning.

When will that happen? Don’t know – but I do know it hasn’t happened yet. If I had to guess, I would say this silver and gold crown which rested for a short time on the head of Joshua the High Priest of Israel will be “discovered” sometime toward the end of the

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Last 7 Years, and that its discovery will be used by the LORD to begin to turn the hearts of the nation of Israel to a heart-wrenching, soul-freeing conclusion – Yeshua of Nazareth was indeed – is indeed- the Messiah of Israel – the everlasting Son of God.

Later on in the book of Zechariah we see a scene which I think describes this moment of belief for the Jewish nation:

“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.....on that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.” (Zechariah 12:10 thru 13:1)

When I came to belief in Christ my life was changed, but there were no earthquakes. When the nation of Israel comes to collective belief in Jesus, the earth will move, mountains will be split in two, the light of the sun will be changed, the weather will be affected, day and night will be suspended, rivers of living water will begin to flow, and the LORD of all heaven and earth will return to be KING and PRIEST over all the earth. (see Zechariah 14:3-9)

6:15 “This will happen if you diligently obey the LORD your God.”

We owe a huge debt to Zechariah. He obeyed the LORD. He conveyed the message of the 8 dreams to a struggling group of citizens-turned-builders.

Thus, the temple was built and ready for a non-descript Jew named Yeshua (Jesus) to arrive at its gates 400 years later. If you know Jesus today you owe a huge debt to Zechariah. You can pay back that debt by carrying on his legacy.

Ken and I have a friend named Larry. At one time we all worked together in the building industry. Larry didn’t know the LORD and Ken

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and I felt a great heaviness of heart for him. We prayed often for him. Many times during the middle of the night I would wake up and pray for Larry. He was one of those people who liked to “think” and philosophize and talk about the meaning of life, but he had no clue about the LORD. We prayed so often just for the right opportunity to share with him what faith in Jesus was all about.

We took a business trip together once. Our client had a plane of his own and we all left from Indianapolis to look at some land in Illinois. On the way back, as we were getting ready to land at night in the Indianapolis airport, I was sitting next to the pilot in the cockpit...not because I can fly a plane...I was just up there talking and observing...he had given me a pair of earphones so I could listen to the tower communication. As the pilot began to put down the landing gear, he said “uh-oh”. This is something you never want to hear a pilot say. I looked over at him in alarm and saw that he was moving very quickly, trying different levers and knobs. Apparently the light which was supposed to go on indicating the landing gear was down had not lit up, and there was no way to know for sure the landing gear was down.

The pilot said, “Underneath my feet here is the manual...would you find it and get it out?”

The MANUAL? You need to read the MANUAL? I’m starting to panic. Ken, who is in the back of the plane with our friend Larry and a few others, notices that something unusual is happening up in the cockpit, so he scoots up to the front and asks what’s going on. The pilot very calmly tells Ken it’s probably no big deal, but the light indicator is not coming on, so he’s going to try a few things. He switches a new bulb into the indicator...nothing. And then he tries manually lowering the landing gear...nothing. Then he communicates our problem with the tower and they suggest we fly by the tower so they can shine a light on our underbelly and visually determine whether or not the gear is down. We do that – but they can’t tell for sure whether we are OK.

Throughout all of this we are circling the airport again and again. And now I begin to see red and orange and yellow flashing lights lining up down there – emergency vehicles preparing for our landing. I have never known such terror in my life. I knew where I was going when I died...but I really didn’t want to die right then, and I especially didn’t



want to suffer. I started talking to the LORD about it, and calmed down a little.

I was praying “LORD, You know, whatever You want is OK with me. If this is our time to go, help us to glorify Your Name.” And then the thought came to me....Larry O’Hair, this man for whom we had been praying for so long, was sitting in the back of this plane. If we died he would, too. Suddenly I had such a calming thought from the LORD – “I’m going to answer your prayers – Larry will someday come to know Me – so this cannot be the time of his death – or yours.”

We landed safely – turned out the landing gear was down after all.

A year later, in a Pizza Hut somewhere in north Indianapolis, Larry and Ken were having lunch together. Larry said, “You know, you have talked a lot about being a Christian and I really don’t understand what it’s all about... my life has fallen apart...show me what it means to know God.” Ken got out his little New Testament, and began to page through, looking with Larry at one verse after another. After spending a couple of hours that afternoon in Pizza Hut, Larry bowed his head and asked Jesus to be His Savior.

For a one terrified woman in a plane above Indianapolis, that little promise of the future salvation of a good friend changed fear to hope. The important thing was no longer what was happening at the moment...the important thing was what was going to happen.

Carry on the legacy of Zechariah. Convey the hope of the future to someone caught in today’s fearful world....tell them about Jesus – the future King/Priest.

Zechariah 6:9-15

Questions for Discussion or Personal Study

1. (:9-15) Read through these verses and determine whether this passage is another dream, or whether it is a historical event.

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2. (:9&10) Who has just arrived from Babylon, and why have they come?
3. (:11) What is Zechariah supposed to do with the silver and gold?
4. Why is it odd that a crown was to be made for Joshua?
5. (:12 & 13) How do these verses explain why Joshua is going to have a crown made for him?
6. Joshua is wearing a crown in order to be a symbol of a man yet to come, one called “The Branch”, Who would actually be both a priest and a king. Who is that man yet to come?
7. (:14) What would this symbolism do for the Jewish people who saw this happen?

8. (:15) What does this symbolism teach future generations of Jews?
9. What do I learn from this passage about God?
10. If I ever hear of an ancient gold and silver crown found in or around the site of the Jewish temple, what would I think?
11. How does a hope for the future change the reality of today?



A Few Comments to Begin Part 2: "Spring Rain"

*"Let us acknowledge the LORD;
let us press on to acknowledge him.
As surely as the sun rises,
He will appear;
He will come to us like the winter rains,
Like the **spring rains** that water the earth."
Hosea 6:3*

The spring rain in Israel is also called in scripture the "latter rain". It is the rain that comes in March and April. This isn't the rain that gives the sowed seed its first growth. And it isn't the rain that feeds the growing tiny plants as they race to maturity. This is a special rain, amazingly timed to swell the heads of wheat into plumpness at just the precise moment in their growth when it will work the best, thus assuring not just a crop, but a bumper crop. Guaranteeing not just supply of needs, but over and above abundance.

For this rain you pray, because no matter how well the farmer might plan, the well-timed "latter rain" cannot be brought about by men....

Someday in our future there is going to be a Spring Rain directly from the Holy Spirit that sends all of God's chosen people running straight

into the arms of their Messiah – Jesus. It will be a bumper crop. The results will be over and above all any person has ever hoped. These last chapters in Zechariah describe the events which will lead up to that, and what will happen after.



Religion or Ritual?

Chapter 7

As we begin Part 2 of our study in the book of Zechariah, let's take a minute to restate a truly fundamental fact about the Bible:

- Everything in the Bible was written to point us to Jesus. In fact, every single book of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, has a message for us about our Savior.

We simply cannot understand the simplest thing about God unless we first have come to the place where we know we need a Savior.

"But a natural man (a man who has not placed his faith in Jesus) does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised." (I Corinthians 2:14, NASB)

The Bible is basically written in a language, a spiritual language, that we aren't able to understand until we have been born into the family of God. We are born into that family when we firmly place our future in the hands of Jesus Christ, because He is our Savior. So of course every single book in the Bible points to Jesus. No matter where we start in our reading of His Words, we can meet the One who will open our eyes to understand it.

There is a song I love, titled "He Is", by Aaron Jeffrey. In this song every book of the Bible is mentioned, and then the picture each book gives of Jesus Christ is listed. It's pretty powerful. (I've included the words to this song in an appendage at the end of this study).

Now – on to Chapter 7.

Have you ever had a "break-through" when trying to teach someone something? You know...their eyes open up a little wider; you can almost see the light bulb flicker on over their heads; they smile as if to

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say “Ahhh – now I see”. Isn’t that a great feeling? Maybe it was in a classroom setting, or maybe it was one of your children, or maybe just a friend who finally saw the answer to a long-held question. But isn’t it great to know you have been able to explain something...convey a message of truth? Remember what Hannibal on the “A” Team used to say? - “I just love it when a plan comes together.” I’ll bet just about anyone in a position to teach really loves that feeling.

The prophets of God in the Old Testament would have felt that same way, too, when people listened and responded. But we’ll see in today’s chapter that quite often it took several messages from a prophet before the light bulb finally clicked on.

Less than two years after the amazing Night of 8 Dreams, a small group of Jewish men from Bethel (a town about 12 miles north) arrives in Jerusalem with a question for the LORD. That sounds like a good thing, doesn’t it? What better place to go with a question than to the city of Jerusalem where the priests and prophets are? What more beneficial way to spend your time than to go and seek the LORD’s answers to your questions?

7:1-3 “In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev. Now the town of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regemmelech and their men to seek the favor of the LORD, speaking to the priests who belong to the house of the LORD of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, ‘Shall I weep in the fifth month and abstain, as I have done these many years?’ ”

A little background will help here.....what are these men talking about? Why have they been weeping in the 5th month?

Before the Jews were carted off to Babylon they were living in Jerusalem, worshipping 3 times a year in the temple: at Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Spring, Summer and Fall.

But after they were carried away as captives their temple was destroyed and there was no way for them to celebrate these three festivals – for all of the festivals involved the offering of sacrifices at the temple.

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Instead, the Jews taken to Babylon began celebrating 4 new festivals...ones they crafted themselves out of their own experiences of pain and disaster.

- In the 4th month they fasted and mourned to remember the day Nebuchadnezzar breached the walls of Jerusalem.
- In the 5th month they fasted and mourned to commemorate the burning of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar.
- In the 7th month they marked the anniversary of Gedaliah’s assassination.
- And in the 10th month they had a day of mourning as they recalled the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem.

What a gray and awful time those “festivals” must have been!

But now the Jews are back in the land of Israel. Their temple and their city are being rebuilt, and sacrifices can once again be made. So the question these travelers have brought to Jerusalem seems odd....Should we still fast and mourn in the 5th month? (and the 4th, the 7th, and the 11th, too, probably).

If you are asking yourself why they would even consider asking that, then you and I are wondering the same thing. Wouldn’t they just stop fasting and mourning once the bad times were over? Apparently, though, the Jewish people had felt a need to continue their rituals of fasting and weeping – and now are asking – should we be doing this?

The question was asked of the priests and the prophets – and the answer comes from the LORD through our old friend, Zechariah.

7:4-7 "Then the Word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, 'Say to all the people of the land and to the priests, 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months these 70 years, was it actually for Me that you fasted? When you eat and drink, do you not eat for yourselves and do you not drink for yourselves? Are not these the words which the LORD proclaimed by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous along with its cities around it, and the Negev and the foothills were inhabited? ' "

In beginning to answer their question, the LORD asks them 3 questions:

1. What was your fasting for in Babylon....for Me?

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2. Weren't you really fasting and weeping just for yourselves?
3. Haven't I dealt with this before?

He had addressed this before. Over 90 years ago, when things were still great in Jerusalem, before the Jewish world fell apart, the LORD God had warned them again and again of loving their rituals and not loving Him.

“Religion” is that set of truths which satisfies our inner-most desire to know the One, True God. There are false religions – these are a set of beliefs which don't lead a person to the One, True God....like Islam, Buddhism, Taoism, present-day Judaism, etc., but true religion has but one end – to know and love the One, True God.

But even in a group of people who say they are practicing true religion, like the Jews of Zechariah's day, there are many, many who substitute rituals for religion. They become so in love with the things they do which look religious that they ignore the LORD they say they believe in.

Even fasting, or mourning, weeping and appearing unbelievably sincere and vulnerable can be rituals which we love...instead of loving our LORD, Jesus.

The LORD is asking them, before He ever answers them...“Was it Me you were worshipping all those years? Did it start out to be Me, and then change to you? Was it ever Me?”

7:8-10 “Then the Word of the LORD came to Zechariah saying, ‘Thus has the LORD of hosts said, ‘Dispense true justice and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother; and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.’ ”

So the LORD reminds his group of questioners from Bethel of what He had already said in the past: “If you truly are religious (ones who Know Me), then here is what you will be like:

- You will love truth...and dispense honest justice
- You will be kind and compassionate
- You will take special care of those who are weak
- You will not be cooking up schemes to hurt people

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There's the mirror, guys from Bethel – how do you look?

- A truly religious person wants to be sure that all justice is really just...no partiality or bias.
- A truly religious person is gentle in his day-to-day relationships with other people. J. Carl Laney, in his commentary, *Zechariah*, says “the word ‘compassion’ is related to the word for ‘womb’, and suggests a mother’s sense of love and concern.”
- A truly religious person would feel the way God feels about helpless or weak people – making sure they are OK.

“Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” (James 1:27, NASB)

- And a truly religious person would never sit in his chair at night thinking of ways to hurt someone else.

Doing the above things doesn't make you religious. But if you are religious, this is what you will look like.

Chapter 7 ends with a few more verses recalling how the Jewish people had, in the past, responded to this message from the LORD: 7:11-12a *“But they refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears from hearing. They made their hearts like flint so that they could not hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets...”*

And look what happened to them: 7:12b-14 *“...therefore great wrath came from the LORD of hosts. And just as He called and they would not listen, so they called and I would not listen,” says the LORD of hosts. ‘but I scattered them with a storm wind among all the nations whom they have not known. Thus the land is desolated behind them so that no one went back and forth, for they made the pleasant land desolate.”*

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In next week’s chapter the LORD will finish answering their question...however, at this point, what do you think the “questioners” are thinking?

What am I thinking? What are you thinking? What are our rituals? Are we doing them for us...or for Him?

When our grandkids were little, as often as we could, Ken and I would take one or two of our grandchildren with us to Southside Bible’s once-a-month worship services at Greenwood Village, a nearby retirement home. When our granddaughter, Riley, was 4, she told me she loved to go to Greenwood Village because they had books there which had music in them! She was fascinated with them, even though she couldn’t read them – just the idea that there was music in books was so new to her.

I had to laugh quietly at myself. It had never occurred to me that a “ritual” I had set aside (hymnbooks), in order to be fresh and new in my worship of the LORD, would in themselves be someday fresh and new to a little one who had seen only powerpoint projections on a wall.

It’s not the rituals that count. It’s whether or not we long to love and be like the LORD they point to.

Appendage: Lyrics to: “He Is” – by Aaron Jeffrey

In Genesis, He’s the Breath of Life
In Exodus, The Passover Lamb
In Leviticus, He’s our High Priest
Numbers, the Fire by Night
Deuteronomy, He’s Moses’ voice
In Joshua, He is Salvation’s choice
Judges, Law-giver
In Ruth, the Kinsman-redeemer
First and Second Samuel, our trusted prophet
In Kings and Chronicles, He’s sovereign
Ezra, Tue and Faithful Scribe
Nehemiah, He’s the builder of broken walls and lives
In Esther, He’s Mordecai’s courage

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In Job, the timeless redeemer
In Psalms He is our morning song
In Proverbs, wisdom's cry
Ecclesiastes, the time and season
In the Song of Solomon, He is the lover's dream

He is....He is....He is

In Isaiah, He's Prince of Peace
Jeremiah, the weeping prophet
In Lamentations, the cry for Israel
Ezekiel, He's the call from sin
In Daniel, the stranger in the fire
In Hosea, He is forever faithful
In Joel, He's the Spirit's power
In Amos, the Arms that carry us
In Obadiah, He's the Lord our Savior
In Jonah, He's the great missionary
In Micah, the Promise of Peace
In Nahum, He is our strength and our shield
In Habakkuk and Zephaniah He's pleading for revival
In Haggai, He restores a lost heritage
In Zechariah, our Fountain
In Malachi, He is the Sun of Righteousness rising with healing in His wings

He is....He is...He is

In Matthew, Mark, Luke and John He is God, Man, Messiah
In the book of Acts, He is fire from Heaven
In Romans He's the grace of God
In Corinthians, the Power of love
In Galatians, He is freedom from the curse of sin
Ephesians, our glorious treasure
Philippians, the Servant's heart
In Colossians, He's the Godhead Trinity
Thessalonians, our coming King
In Timothy, Titus, Philemon He's our mediator and our faithful Pastor
In Hebrews, the everlasting covenant
In James, the One who heals the sick
In First and Second Peter, He is our Shepherd

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In John and in Jude, He's the lover coming for his bride
In the Revelation He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

He is.....He is....He is

The Prince of Peace
The Son of Man
The Lamb of God
The Great I am
He's the Alpha and Omega
Our God and our Savior
He is Jesus Christ the Lord
And when time is no more...He is....He is.

Zechariah Chapter 7
Questions for Discussion or Personal Study

1. (:1) How much time has gone by since the Night of 8 Dreams?
2. (:2) Who came to Jerusalem, why did they come, and to whom did they come?
3. (:3) What was their question?
 - What “weeping in the 5th month” are they referring to?
4. (:4) Who answered the question?
5. (:5-7) In answering their question, the LORD asks three questions:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - What is the LORD's point?
6. (:8-10) Then the LORD goes on to remind the questioners what His answer has been in the past to this kind of question from this kind of questioner:

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- a.
 - b.
 - c.
7. (:11-12) In the past, how have Jewish questioners responded to the LORD's answers?
 8. (:13 & 14) And in the past, what has the LORD's response been to the response of Jewish questioners?
 9. In next week's chapter the LORD will finish answering their question....however, at this point, what do you think the "questioners" are thinking?
 10. What was wrong with the questioners' question?
 11. What are our rituals? – How do we measure up?

Tisha B'Av Chapter 8

What was the question posed to the priests and prophets of Jerusalem by a group of men from Bethel, in Chapter 7? "Should I mourn and fast in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years?" (7:3)

First, in Chapter 7, the LORD brought these men face to face with their own hypocrisy.

Now, in Chapter 8, the answer is completed...as the LORD

- first (:1-8) describes the way it looks when a relationship is restored
- second (:9-17) tells the people what they must do now, in the waiting time
- and third (:18-23) describes the results of the restored relationship

So I guess the answer is: You've been praying, fasting and weeping because your beautiful city was destroyed and you were far from home. The LORD saw what the real problem was – you and He had a broken relationship.

And even though your heart wasn't broken over the right thing, still the LORD is going to honor your mourning – with a Restored Relationship to Him.

I was trying to think of a real-life story of a restored relationship to use as an illustration in this chapter...and I kept discarding all of my ideas because they are just too personal to share. Then I realized that that is a lesson in itself. A relationship gone bad, then restored, is intensely personal...there are so many details no one else should ever know...the infidelities, the words spoken in anger, the grief, the tears, the harbored bitterness, the personal pain which will not let up...no one wants to spread all of that out for the world to see. But the LORD has let us see what happened between Him and Israel. And, unlike

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most human relationships, the fault was all one-sided. Israel was unfaithful, Israel took advantage of the LORD, Israel said hurtful things, Israel brought grief to Him, and then Israel blamed it all on the LORD, and harbored bitterness against Him.

You'd think the LORD would stand up, say, "OK, it's over.", and walk away. But, instead, He says:

8:1&2 "Again the word of the LORD Almighty came to me. This is what the LORD Almighty says: "I am very jealous for Zion; I am burning with jealousy for her."

I've always heard jealousy is a sin (the 10th commandment, Exodus 20:17, forbids coveting) . And of course I know the LORD does not sin. So I have to understand the LORD's jealousy in a different light. This is a jealousy, a "coveting" for something which rightfully belongs to the LORD. This is a longing for someone that is so intense it must be described as "jealousy" – the word love doesn't even suffice. This is not a jealousy that leads to violence or hatred or revenge...but instead "burns" within the LORD, and leads Him to do whatever it takes to win back the one who has been lost.

Whatever it takes....even to sacrifice Himself, on a cross.

8:3 "This is what the LORD says: "I will return to Zion and dwell with Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain."

Not only was He burning with a jealousy that led Him to die on a cross, but He also never gave up on the one He loved...He planned from the start to come back to her, and to live with her. To dwell together.

And when He did come back, it would be in truth. There would be no more lies, ever. No more unfaithfulness, ever. He would not only forgive His beloved, but also enable her to be more than she ever could have imagined. Clean and pure and never again to wander away.

Glance back at the 3 paragraphs above, and you'll see that I've underlined the three things which will define this restored relationship between the LORD and Israel:

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- They will be jealously in love
- They will be physically together
- There will be no more lies

This is what any restored relationship should look like...

- Two people who have known the devastation of brokenness – now jealously guarding their hearts only for each other.
- And not content to be apart any longer.
- And pledging to always tell the truth. To never again fool themselves or anyone else about their weaknesses. To remain faithful to each other, for nothing else in life matters.

8:4-6 "This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Once again men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with cane in hand because of his age. The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there.' This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'It may seem marvelous to the remnant of this people at that time, but will it seem marvelous to me?' declares the LORD Almighty."

We may be stumped trying to imagine what this restored-relationship world will look like, but does the LORD have any problem "seeing" it? It will be so safe and comfortable then that people will be able to grow very, very old. And children will be able to play without harm in the streets – instead of being filled with fear that a bomb will fall on them, or a pervert will try to abduct them. The restored relationship between the LORD and Israel will affect the whole world.

8:7&8 "This is what the LORD Almighty says; 'I will save my people from the countries of the east and the west. I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem; they will be my people, and I will be faithful and righteous to them as their God.'"

So the LORD is going to bring all Israel back from the east and the west to Jerusalem when this relationship is restored. At the time this was written, in about 500 BC, the Jews were scattered to the north of Jerusalem, in Assyria and in Babylon, but not to the east or the west. So Zechariah was speaking of a future time, a time after Jewish people had been scattered basically the world over. We have the vantage point of being 2,000 years on the other side of BC/AD, so we can ask, "have the Jewish people ever, in our history, been scattered the world over and been brought back from everywhere to Jerusalem in a

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restored relationship to the LORD?” The answer is no. Since the 1940’s Jews have “gone up” to Jerusalem from all over the world, but their relationship to the LORD has not yet been restored. So Zechariah is speaking of a time yet future to us, too.

8:9-15 *“This is what the LORD Almighty says: “You who now hear these words spoken by the prophets who were there when the foundation was laid for the house of the LORD Almighty, **let your hands be strong** so that the temple may be built. Before that time there were no wages for man or beast. No one could go about his business safely because of his enemy, for I had turned every man against his neighbor. But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as I did in the past, declares the LORD Almighty. The seed will grow well, the vine will yield its fruit, the ground will produce its crops, and the heavens will drop their dew. I will give all these things as an inheritance to the remnant of this people. As you have been an object of cursing among the nations, O Judah and Israel, so will I save you, and you will be a blessing. **Do not be afraid, but let your hands be strong.** This is what the LORD Almighty says: “Just as I had determined to bring disaster upon you and showed no pity when your fathers angered me, says the LORD Almighty, “so now I have determined to do good again to Jerusalem and Judah. **Do not be afraid.**”*

What phrases pop up 2 times each here, telling the Jewish people what they were to do now, as they are waiting for this future restored relationship?

- Do not be afraid
- Let your hands be strong

The phrase “Do not be afraid” seems to be self-explanatory. The phrase “Let your hands be strong” is used other times in the Old Testament to encourage people to be prepared for battle. The times which were ahead for the Jews of Zechariah’s day were not going to be easy. They would have to “let their hands be strong”. They would have to be willing to fight for the future.

8:16-17 *“These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts; do not plot evil against your neighbor, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this,” declares the LORD.*”

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The LORD doesn't leave them, however, to their own imaginations in knowing how to "be strong". He gives them guidelines – "exercizes" to do to increase their strength so that they can fight for the future:

- Speak the truth
- Render true judgment
- Don't plot evil
- Don't lie

What word does He repeat again & again? Truth. Look for truth...love truth...speak the truth....make truth your plumb line....don't speak untruths.

Truth was going to make them strong. Truth was going to help them fight for the future. And truth was going to enable them to see their LORD when He arrived to begin to restore a lost relationship.

"He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him....yet...to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become the children of God." (John 1:11,12)

And although many Jewish people had wandered from the truth by the time Jesus arrived, and thus did not receive Him, there were those who had clung to truth...whose hands had remained strong...who recognized Him, and did receive Him. (Luke 2:25-32, 36-38)

Is anyone still wondering about the fasts of the 5th month? Have we seen the answer yet to the original question?

8:18-19 "Again the word of the LORD Almighty came to me. This is what the LORD Almighty says: '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.'"

The answer to the question. When the LORD restores His relationship to the nation of Israel, then those fasts will turn to feasts. The commemorations of grief will become celebrations of hope.

8:20-23 "This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Many peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will yet come, and the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, 'Let us go at once to entreat the LORD

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and seek the LORD Almighty. I myself am going.’ And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD Almighty and to entreat him.’ This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘In those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, ‘Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.’ ”

Not only will Jewish fasts turn to Jewish feasts, but there will be a great revival of Gentiles! All people from all over the world will see the restored relationship of the LORD and the Jews and will flock to Israel, cling to Jewish people, longing for, looking for, the presence of the LORD. Longing and looking for their own restored relationship to the LORD Almighty.

When will this happen? At the end of the 7 years of Tribulation. When the Jewish nation collectively falls to their knees in love and adoration of the One they had not received so many years ago. And a relationship is restored.

Now comes the part which I like the best about this passage. Did you know that today there is still a Jewish festival of mourning? It is called “Tisha B’Av”.

Here are the basics about this day of fasting and weeping, Tisha B’Av: (I copied this info from this website: <http://www.jewfaq.org/holidayd.htm#Dates>, a great place to learn about today’s Judaism.)

- Tisha B'Av, the Fast of the Ninth of Av, is a day of mourning to commemorate the many tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people, many of which coincidentally have occurred on the ninth of Av.
- Tisha B'Av means "the ninth (day) of Av." It usually occurs during August.
- Tisha B'Av primarily commemorates the destruction of the first and second Temples, both of which were destroyed on the ninth of Av (the first by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E.; the second by the Romans in 70 C.E.).
- Although this holiday is primarily meant to commemorate the destruction of the Temple, it is appropriate to consider on this

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day the many other tragedies of the Jewish people, many of which occurred on this day, most notably the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492.

- Tisha B'Av is the culmination of a three week period of increasing mourning, beginning with the fast of the 17th of Tammuz, which commemorates the first breach in the walls of Jerusalem, before the First Temple was destroyed. During this three week period, weddings and other parties are not permitted, and people refrain from cutting their hair. From the first to the ninth of Av, it is customary to refrain from eating meat or drinking wine (except on the Shabbat) and from wearing new clothing.
- The restrictions on Tisha B'Av are similar to those on Yom Kippur: to refrain from eating and drinking (even water); washing, bathing, shaving or wearing cosmetics; wearing leather shoes; engaging in sexual relations; and studying Torah. Work in the ordinary sense of the word is also restricted. People who are ill need not fast on this day. Many of the traditional mourning practices are observed: people refrain from smiles, laughter and idle conversation, and sit on low stools.
- In synagogue, the book of Lamentations is read and mourning prayers are recited. The ark (cabinet where the Torah is kept) is draped in black.

So... a day of national mourning, spoken of over 2,500 years ago in the Bible, is still alive and well today? Not only that, but the same question asked by a group of Jews from Bethel in Israel over 2,500 years ago could still be asked by any group of Jews today: “Should I mourn and fast in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years?” (7:3)

And the answer, too, would be the same: **“You’ve been praying, fasting and weeping because your beautiful city was destroyed ... The LORD has seen what the real problem is – you and He have a broken relationship.**

And the LORD is still jealously, lovingly, actively bringing the day to pass when you and He will be restored, and your fasting will turn to feasting. Amazing.

Zechariah 8

Questions for Discussion or Personal Study

1. What was the question posed to the priests and prophets of Jerusalem by a group of men from Bethel, in Chapter 7?
2. (:1&2) How does the LORD feel about the Jews?
 - a. What is jealousy??? Isn't jealousy a sin? (Exodus 20:17)
 - b. Since the LORD couldn't sin, what is this "jealousy" He says He feels for them?
 - c. So...is there ever a place for jealousy in human relationships?
3. (:3) What will someday be 2 proofs that the LORD and His people have a restored relationship?
4. So let's review: The restored relationship of the LORD and the Jews looks like this:
 - a. They are jealously in love
 - b. They are physically together
 - c. They tell the truth – no lies whatsoeverFor our human relationships, what can we learn from this?
5. (:4-6) We may be stumped trying to imagine what this restored relationship-world will be like, but does the LORD have any problem "seeing" it?
6. (:7-8) The LORD says He will bring His loved ones back from the "East and the West" to Jerusalem. At the time this was written, were the Jews scattered to the east and the west? Have all the Jews ever been brought back to Jerusalem from the east and the west? So is this a promise yet to be fulfilled? And if so, when?
7. (:9-13) What phrase pops up 2 times in this passage, which tells the Jewish people what they were to do now, as they are waiting for this restored relationship?

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8. (:14-17) The LORD doesn't leave them to their own imaginations in deciding how to "be strong". What guidelines does He give them in these verses? What "exercizes" should they do to increase in strength?
9. What 2 things are described here which will happen when the relationship of the LORD and the Jews is restored?
 - (:18-19)
 - (:20-23)Have these things happened yet?
When will they happen?
10. Is there a future restored relationship with the LORD for today's Jewish people?



Why a Donkey?

Chapter 9

When I was a little girl I was desperately jealous of my little sister, Barb. She was everything I wasn't. Slim. Blond. Curly hair. And, I thought, favored by my Mom & Dad. She got everything she wanted. I had to wait. She had a room of her own. I had to share with my older sister. And then as we got older, she had boyfriends, I didn't. She had close girlfriends. I was a loner. I've shared with you before that when I came to know Christ I was immediately afraid she would also accept Christ and then "my" church would no longer be mine. And then that sweet amazing day came when she asked me to tell her how to be a Christian, and in the process of introducing her to "my" Savior, the jealousy melted away like ice in July.

Zechariah 9 doesn't deal with jealousy – but when you see what the LORD has planned for Israel, you may understand the jealousy people have felt through the ages for this "chosen people" of His. But when we get to verse 9, I think you will see, like I have, that there is no place for jealousy of the chosen people of God.

First, take a look at the following sequential list of things which will happen during the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation - things involving Israel:

Israel in the last 3 ½ years: Sequential, where possible

- The 7 years begins with a peace treaty which affects the whole world and deals specifically with peace in the Middle East. It is brokered, somehow, by anti-Christ, and he also begins to move toward a time of persecution of believers in Jesus. Daniel 9:27, Revelation 13:7, Revelation 6:9-11, Daniel 11:44

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- The last 3 ½ years begins with anti-Christ ascending the throne in Jerusalem and demanding to be worshipped as God. Persecution of Jews begins.
Daniel 9:27, Daniel 11:31, Daniel 12: 1, Matthew 24:15, Revelation 13:15, Revelation 12:23, Daniel 12:11, Daniel 11:45
- At this point, those living in “Judea” (the area around Jerusalem), who are Jewish, or who are believers in Christ, flee in great numbers from Judea to “the mountains”. Many people believe this “mountain” place will be Petra, located south of Israel. This will be a place of safety. Even though Satan makes an attempt to destroy it, he will not succeed. Matthew 24:15-21, Revelation 12:14-16
- When Satan does not succeed at destroying the place to which Jews are fleeing, he is enraged, and begins to step up persecution of believers in Jesus, and he throws all of his power and authority to the anti-Christ.
Revelation 12:17 thru 13:7,
- Also at this point the 2 witnesses appear near the temple mount in Jerusalem, and begin proclaiming the return of Christ .
Revelation 11:2-6
- Then, at some point after this, there is an enormous earthquake which appears to affect earth and sky, and in some miraculous way (some “sign” in the sky) , unsaved people realize this begins the time when God will be showing His wrath. Revelation 6:12-17, Matthew 24: 29, 30
- Immediately after this earthquake, or perhaps during it, all believers in Jesus (except 144,000 of them) are snatched out of the earth, up to meet the LORD Jesus in the air. They receive resurrected bodies. They are joined by all believers in Jesus, throughout all ages, who have died previous to this. This has been called the “rapture”. Matthew 24:31, Revelation 7:9, I Thessalonians 4:16,17, Daniel 12:2, Matthew 24:22
- The 144,000 who are not snatched away at this time are Jewish believers in Jesus, who are “sealed” for their protection and left

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on earth to be missionaries, or priests, to the world during the last 3 ½ years. They, along with the 2 witnesses, will be the only ones speaking up for the truth and for Jesus at first. Revelation 7:1-8, Revelation 9:4

- At some point (I think before the 6th trumpet blows), the 144,000 are through with their job. They meet the Lord Jesus in the heavenly tabernacle, in their resurrected bodies, and join the rest of the raptured believers in Jesus, praising Him and preparing for a soon return. Revelation 14:1-5
- During the time of the witness of the 144,000 there are some people who come to faith in Christ, but most, whether Jews or Gentiles, do not yet. Revelation 9:20,21
- Then, at the very end of the last 3 ½ years, the 2 witnesses are killed by anti-christ. Their bodies lie in the street of Jerusalem for 3 ½ days, and then are resurrected in the view of all. Revelation 11:7-12
- This resurrection of the 2 witnesses causes a great Jewish revival to begin. It begins in Jerusalem, and like a huge domino effect, belief in Jesus as Messiah sweeps across the globe, wherever Jews are hiding. Revelation 11:13, Zechariah 12:10-13:1, Zechariah 12:6
- And when the Jews come to faith in Christ, great revival also breaks out over the whole world. Zechariah 8:13, 20-23
- The resurrection of the 2 witnesses and these 2 great revivals begins the huge final war. The forces of the world unite against Jerusalem. Zechariah 12:2,3, Zechariah 14: 1,2, Revelation 14:18-20
- Then the 7 bowls of God’s wrath are poured out on the world, quickly (perhaps it takes only 30 days). Revelation 16: 1-11, Daniel 12:12
- And the world gathers in a valley just north of Jerusalem for the Battle of Armageddon. The world intends to destroy Jerusalem once and for all. Revelation 16:12-16

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- There is a huge earthquake, and basically, the whole rest of the globe is crumbling but still the eyes of the world are trained on the Valley of Megiddo, where the armed forces of the world gather. Revelation 16:17-21
- Then....the LORD Himself, Jesus Christ the King, returns to planet earth....places His feet on the Mt. of Olives...makes a way of escape for those besieged in the city of Jerusalem...and by the word of His mouth, destroys all His enemies. No unsaved person survives.
Revelation 19: 11-21, Daniel 12:7-10, Zechariah 14:4-7
- Then King Jesus enters His own city, Jerusalem, through the Eastern Gate, and reigns as King for 1,000 years. Revelation 20:4-6, Zechariah 14:9-11
- The Revived Jewish people will be a jewel in His reign – serving Him in Israel, and showing forth His splendor for the whole world, as He had always planned. Genesis 12:1-3, Ezekiel 11:17-20, Zechariah 8:3-8, Isaiah 61: 1-11.

Isn't that amazing? The Jewish people, even while they are still rejecting and not believing in Him, will be protected and sheltered by their Savior, and brought safely into a time of choosing Him. *"They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of His splendor."* (Isaiah 61:3 NIV)

Now, on to Zechariah 9, where we see not only the protection and sheltering of the children of Israel, but also the total defeat of their enemies, the chance of a totally fresh start, the promise of a future full of blessings....you can't help but see from Zechariah 9 that this is a people who are loved. Very, very loved:

The first 8 verses of chapter 9 list the enemies of Israel who will be totally destroyed by the LORD in the day He returns to earth:
9: 1-8 *"The word of the LORD is against the land of **Hadrach** and will rest on **Damascus** – for the eyes of men and all the tribes of Israel are on the LORD – and upon **Hamath**, too, which borders on it, and upon **Tyre and Sidon**, though they are very skillfull. Tyre has built*

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*herself a stronghold; she has heaped up silver like dust, and gold like the dirt of the streets. But the LORD will take away her possessions and destroy her power on the sea, and she will be consumed by fire. **Ashkelon** will see it and fear; **Gaza** will writhe in agony, and **Ekron** too, for her hope will wither. Gaza will lose her king and **Ashkelon** will be deserted. Foreigners will occupy **Ashdod**, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines. I will take the blood from their mouths, the forbidden food from between their teeth. Those who are left will belong to our God and become leaders in Judah, and Ekron will be like the Jebusites.”*

And here are the things these verses say will happen to those enemies:

1. Possessions taken away (:4)
2. Sea power destroyed (:4)
3. Consumed them by fire (:4)
4. Fear (:5)
5. Writhing in agony (:5)
6. Withered hope (:5)
7. Kings gone (:5)
8. Land deserted (:5)
9. Occupied by foreigners (:6)
10. Pride cut off (:6)
11. Sinful ways stopped (:7)

Did you catch this phrase above? “...*Those who are left will belong to our God.*” (9:7b)? No unbelievers will be left at all in the world at His return.

And the LORD goes on to promise that no enemies of Israel will ever again be able to overtake them – for the 1,000 years of the Millennium the LORD will not allow it. 9:8 *“But I will defend my house against marauding forces. Never again will an oppressor overrun my people, for now I am keeping watch.*

Verse 9 is the verse I mentioned earlier...the one which will sweep away any possibility of jealousy of God’s chosen people....but, hold that thought...we’re going to look at verses 10 through 17 to see what else the LORD is going to do for the Jewish people...

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9:10 "I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses 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."

In this day war is over for Israel. No more war for Israel. Because their LORD wins the war of wars on this day. Remember the way that same day is described by John in the book of Revelation?:

"I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice He judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on His head are many crowns....out of His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations...." (Revelation 19:11-15)

When the Savior of Israel returns, as the victor, on a beautiful white horse, what will be gone from the earth forever? War...no more.

9:11 "As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit."

When Christ returns, what will happen to the Jewish people trapped in Jerusalem? Freedom

9:12 "Return to your fortress, O prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you."

When Christ returns, what will happen to those who have lost everything in the Tribulation time? They will be given twice as much from the LORD.

9:13 "I will bend Judah as I bend my bow and fill it with Ephraim. I will rouse your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece, and make you like a warrior's sword."

When Christ returns, what will happen to the scattered tribes of Israel? Ephraim (the Northern tribes) and Zion (the southern tribes) will be joined as one again.

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9:14 "Then the LORD will appear over them; his arrow will flash like lightning. The Sovereign LORD will sound the trumpet; he will march in the storms of the south."

When Christ returns, how will the Jews know He is back? They will not be able to miss His return. They will see it. And hear it.

9:15 "and the LORD Almighty will shield them. They will destroy and overcome with slingstones. They will drink and roar as with wine; they will be full like a bowl used for sprinkling the corners of the altar."

When Christ returns, will the Jews be watching or involved? Looks like they will in some way be active and involved in their victory over their enemies.

9:16 "The LORD their God will save them on that day as the flock of His people. They will sparkle in his land like jewels in a crown."

When Christ returns, what will the Jews be compared to? They will be a jewel in the crown of the King.

9:17 "How attractive and beautiful they will be! Grain will make the young men thrive, and new wine the young women."

When Christ returns, what will the Jews look like? Beautiful. They will simply be beautiful.

Is there any reason we should feel jealousy about the position the LORD has set aside for the Jews?

Now let's go back and look at verse 9: *"Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your King comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."*

You see...before the King of Israel comes to wage war against His enemies and reign victoriously and rescue His chosen people, He first comes humbly to give Himself as the Savior of the whole world. Before He swings Himself up onto a glorious white horse and arrives with majesty, He rides slowly up to Jerusalem on a borrowed donkey, which Bible scholars tell us was the chosen mount of King David – so that He could be our servant and bring us peace. The King came first on a donkey, offering salvation and love to Jews and Gentiles.

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He never intended to save just one group of people, the ones He called His “chosen” people...He never intended to give the truth to only them...He never intended to defeat only their enemies...Or to restore only their fortunes...He never planned to end up with only one jewel in His crown.

He planned all along to be the Savior of the world. He chose the Jews to carry that message to the world. And He chose the Jews to carry the precious seed of life within them through thousands of years until the Savior could be born in God’s time. The Savior of the world.

And He chose a small group of Jewish men to listen to and respond in faith to Him as He appeared in a humble body, taught angry crowds, and entered His own city as a gentle King on a donkey....so that He could save the whole world.

The donkey ridden by the LORD of the earth into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday almost 2,000 years ago was a sign from God for Gentiles – that He came for all. The King of Israel on a donkey meant that there would be time for all to come to worship Him before He someday arrived on that white horse.

The King of the Jews will return. For me. For the Jews. For Gentiles the world over. He will keep every single one of His promises to the Jews. Every single scene in Zechariah 9 will be fulfilled.

And He will keep every single promise He has made to me. I will be mounted on a white horse somewhere behind Him as He destroys the enemies of Israel.

Is there any reason I, a gentile, should feel jealousy about the position the LORD has set aside for the Jews?

Goodness no! We have a Kingdom to inherit together. I’ve been promised a white horse...but....I’m eternally grateful for a donkey.



Zechariah 9
Questions For Discussion or For Personal Study

When the time comes for Jesus to judge the world, it will be complete – there will be no enemy of God left on planet earth....

1. (:1-7) Make a list of the enemies of God mentioned in these verses: (in class we will put them all on a map)

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

2. (:1-7) Now make a list of all the things the LORD says will happen to these enemies at His time of judgment:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.

3. (:1-7) Find the phrase which tells you that all unbelievers will be destroyed in this judgment:

4. (:8) This judgment happens at the end of the 7 years of Tribulation....at the beginning of the 1,000 years of Millennium. Why, with all unbelievers gone from the earth, would the LORD need to ever again defend anyone against oppressors?

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5. (:9) So rejoice, O Israel!!!!, Your King comes to you, having salvation....*riding on a donkey*. Why a donkey? Why not a glorious white steed, with pomp and ceremony? What day in history is this verse pointing to? Has this happened yet?
6. (:10-17) What day in history are these verses pointing to? (Revelation 19:11-21) Has this happened yet? In history, what happens between verses 9 and 10?
7. (:10) When Christ returns, what will be gone from the earth forever?
8. (:11) When Christ returns, what will happen to the Jewish people trapped in Jerusalem?
9. (:12) When Christ returns, what will happen to those who have lost everything in the Tribulation time?
10. (:13) When Christ returns, what will happen to the scattered tribes of Israel?
11. (:14) When Christ returns, how will the Jews know He is back?
12. (:15) When Christ returns, will the Jews be watching or involved?
13. (:16) When Christ returns, what will the Jews be compared to?
14. (:17) When Christ returns, what will the Jews look like?

Pray for Spring Rain Chapter 10

*"Let us acknowledge the LORD;
let us press on to acknowledge him.
As surely as the sun rises,
He will appear;
He will come to us like the winter rains,
Like the **spring rains** that water the earth."
Hosea 6:3*

The spring rain in Israel is also called in scripture the "latter rain". It is the rain that comes in March and April. This isn't the rain that gives the sowed seed its first growth. And it isn't the rain that feeds the growing tiny plants as they race to maturity. This is a special rain, amazingly timed to swell the heads of wheat into plumpness at just the precise moment in their growth when it will work the best, thus assuring not just a crop, but a bumper crop. Guaranteeing not just supply of needs, but over and above abundance.

For this rain you pray, because no matter how well the farmer might plan, the well-timed "latter rain" cannot be brought about by men.

10:1 "Ask the LORD for rain in the springtime; it is the LORD who makes the storm clouds. He gives showers of rain to men, and plants of the field to everyone."

And, in case any of us misunderstand the concept of prayer..., let me take a minute to state the obvious: prayer is asking of God. Not asking idols. Not asking sorcerers. Not asking dreamers of dreams. Not asking insurance companies. Or false Gods. Or governments. Or employers. Not asking the person in the mirror. And certainly not asking the workers of evil in this world. Prayer is asking of God. He is the only One who actually hears and answers prayers.

10:2a "The idols speak deceit, diviners see visions that lie; they tell dreams that are false, they give comfort in vain..."

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“Well”, we might say, “I know that.”

But do we?

Israel didn’t. They ran after the idols their neighbors worshipped. A little silver god on a pedestal in the tent next door certainly did look, well, good.

When they prayed to that god they felt confidence....like they had done everything humanly possible to tackle life. And the magicians who could see the future? Well, maybe they were just pulling the wool over the eyes of the people, but...maybe not. Maybe they really could “see” something which would help folks get through life. And what if a friend has a dream which was supposed to explain things? Couldn’t a person listen to that dream and draw comfort from knowing some power other than him or her was watching over them? And so Israel said.. “What could be wrong with that”?

The problem was – the idols were only little pieces of metal. The magicians couldn’t really see the future. The dreams were not from God, but from Satan. And the comfort was false.

Who are we praying to? Are we really trusting God to supply our needs? When we are sick, do we “pray” to the doctor? When we wonder what to do next, do we “pray” to the latest horoscope? When we don’t have everything we think we need, do we “pray” to our credit cards? When we are in an accident, do we “pray” to our car insurance? When we visit a friend in their home and see all the things they have that we don’t have, do we “pray” to the silver and gold?

10:2b “Therefore the people wander like sheep oppressed for lack of a shepherd.”

If it is not God we are praying to, we are so lost....like a little herd of sheep wandering around in a field somewhere without a shepherd. No way to get home. No hope for a clear bubbling spring to quench our thirst, or a green pasture to fill our empty stomachs. Bleating and crying – with no one to hear.

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10:3a "My anger burns against the shepherds, and I will punish the leaders;"

The LORD despised those leaders in Israel who led His people to pray to worthless idols. He called them "shepherds" because they were kings and priests – the ones in charge. But they were just as dumb as the leaders of the gentiles – leading their people to trust in things which simply didn't exist.

And now the future of these people of God is peeled back like an overlay, and we see that the anger of the LORD to the false "shepherds" of Israel and to the "leaders" of the gentiles was not only for a time 2,500 years ago –but is also for a time yet to come – the time when the LORD's little flock – the people of Israel - will finally come home.

10:3b "...for the LORD Almighty will care for his flock, the house of Judah, and make them like a proud horse in battle."

There is coming a time when the flock of the LORD will change suddenly from being a lost group of pitifully weak sheep into a herd of trampling horses in battle.

How does this happen? The Spring Rain. The perfectly-timed outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God on Jews the world over, who are hiding from the anger of the man called anti-christ – an outpouring on those who have already had the seeds of truth planted in them and watered in them for nearly 7 years by Christians who have been martyred, and by the 144,000 Jewish evangelists, and by the 2 Witnesses in Jerusalem. Then, at just the right time, the LORD creates the storm clouds, and literally dumps bucketfuls of Spring Rain on the Jews – and they become not only believers in Jesus – but radical, on-fire, believers in Jesus – like horses running into battle.

10:4 "From Judah will come the cornerstone, from him the tent peg, from him the battle bow, from him every ruler."

Jesus – from the tribe of Judah – is the cornerstone, on which all of creation leans. He is the tent peg, on which all the glory of the LORD

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hangs. He is the battle bow – no other weapon could ever win this battle. And from Him every ruler who is truly a ruler will come.

Once Israel sees Him for Who He is...and bows their knee to Him....

10:5 "Together they will be like mighty men trampling the muddy streets in battle. Because the LORD is with them, they will fight and overthrow the horsemen."

10:6-7 "I will strengthen the house of Judah and save the house of Joseph. I will restore them because I have compassion on them. They will be as though I had not rejected them, for I am the LORD their God and I will answer them. The Ephraimites will become like mighty men, and their hearts will be glad as with wine. Their children will see it and be joyful, their hearts will rejoice in the LORD."

After the death of King Solomon, when the 12 tribes of Israel split into 2 nations, they became:

- the "northern tribes", otherwise known as Ephraim,
- and the "southern tribes", otherwise known as Judah.

Ephraim was one of the 2 sons of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh). So the house of Judah and the house of Joseph described here are the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel...shown back together again at the time of their collective belief in their Messiah. All of them, as one, will be restored to a relationship with their LORD, as if they had never left. They will be forgiven, healed, glad, joyful, and rejoicing. Oh my...what a wonderful time.

10:8-9 "I will signal for them and gather them in. Surely I will redeem them; they will be as numerous as before. Though I scatter them among the peoples, yet in distant lands they will remember me. They and their children will survive and they will return."

How will the nation of Israel know the LORD is calling them to Himself? The NIV says in verse 8 that He will "signal" for them. Actually, the word signal is better translated "whistle". Like the whistle of a shepherd calling His scattered sheep back around Him. Somehow they will have a miraculous "ear" to hear for the first time the whistle of their shepherd. And they will come running, no matter how far they have wandered away.

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10:10 "I will bring them back from Egypt and gather them from Assyria. I will bring them to Gilead and Lebanon, and there will not be room enough for them."

When Jesus “whistles” for His Jewish people, they will hear, repent, turn in faith to Him, and then return to the land of Israel. There will be so many of them that it will be difficult to find places for all.

10:11&12 "They will pass through the sea of trouble; the surging sea will be subdued and all the depths of the Nile will dry up. Assyria's pride will be brought down and Egypt's scepter will pass away. I will strengthen them in the LORD and in his name they will walk."

When the Jewish people begin to return to their Lord, the world situation is still frightening. The anti-christ is still actively persecuting those who believe in Jesus. The armies of the world are gathering at Armageddon for that last, huge battle. But the LORD brings his little flock, one at a time, from the far corners of the world, back to Israel. Just as He rescued them long ago from fierce Egyptians and dried up a sea for their crossing, so now He will get them safely home. They will begin the trip as weak, lost sheep, but end it as strong, powerful believers in the One, True, God....Jesus.

It might be hard for us to imagine the enormity of this...after all, we were not around long ago when there were Jews walking with the LORD and powerfully trusting in Him. We probably have not felt the extreme grief of their separation from God.

So let's make it personal. Think of a person you love who does not know Jesus...does not believe He is the answer to their sin problem... does not ever have a time when they talk to the LORD and know that He listens.

The person who first comes to my mind is my Mother, Bonnie. As I and my siblings were growing up, she was a really great Mom. I learned unconditional love from her. The best proof of that is that she still loves me, even though I am exactly what she does not want to be – a Bible-thumping Christian. She stayed home to raise us – even though I know she would have liked to be working. She wanted to be an archaeologist. She sang songs to us, read to us, cooked for us

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(and, like me, hated the cooking part). She took us to church when my Dad never seemed interested. And then watched in dismay as I dedicated my life to Christ, instead of simply being a good, church-going person. She might have stayed simply a non-committed person who goes to church herself, but something devastating happened. My Dad became a sold-out believer in Jesus, too – and now this man who let her do all the religious stuff with the kids became the center of everyone’s attention – the truly religious one – and she was left standing at the back of the room wondering what happened.

They argued, they fought, they yelled...they went for counseling. And then they divorced. I think it was then my Mom decided that she wanted nothing to do with God or Jesus ever again. She found her “belief system” in some combination of Eastern Religious thought – and there she stands today.

You have someone in mind, too, who may not have my Mother’s story, but who is set in their stand against believing in Jesus. Let’s say they are just like the little flock of God – the Jews – who today have no use for Jesus. They are people who may be religious, but there is no true relationship with God.

Now.. pretend for a minute that that someone you have in mind is going to come some day to faith in the Savior the same way the Jews will. The same way the LORD has described for us here in Zechariah 10.

In my imagination, here’s how it could happen:

She has spent the last few years listening to her children speak of their faith in Christ. The whole thought just makes her mad, because she knows “Jesus” is a story, but not real. The Bible, whom her grown kids spend so much time reading, is simply full of errors and leads people away from the truth, not to it. The only real truth is what each person feels in their own heart, and it is so wrong that her children would think they have the answers for anyone else’s life. So arrogant. But, still she watches their lives. And even though they are so different from one another, they keep saying the same things over and over again. They say they love Jesus. They say He leads them through their lives. They say, even during their darkest times, that they know He is in charge and will get them through. And she

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wonders....could it really be true? But, of course, she would never say that out loud. For goodness sake, don't give those kids any further fuel for the fire!

She has heard things on TV and on the radio, too. Preachers who get her attention every now and again. Of course one can't be too careful about those TV preachers. Look how they mess up their lives. If Jesus was God...and if they really are worshipping Him....why do they commit such terrible and public sins? Just a lot of opium to keep the masses calm.

But the seeds of truth which have been sown in her life have not been sown in vain. The Bible verses she learned as a child keep popping into her mind. And the thought is there.....what if it is true?

One day she is incredibly bored and picks up the Bible her daughter had given her, and decides to read a little to pass the time. It might be fun to find all the errors.

She reads all day, can't put it down. Then she picks it up the next day again, and is mesmerized by the stories and the truth of what she is seeing there. She knows these stories...she heard them lots of times as a kid. She reads of Jesus in the Gospels and she realizes this is an entirely different Jesus than the One she had been remembering. He keeps saying that He is God. And....well....it does look like He is.... The next day she approaches the book with fear. This can't possibly be the truth. I can't possibly have been wrong my whole life! I'm over 80 years old. This would mean the unthinkable...that I have wasted my whole life turning away from the truth.

She's too old to fall to her knees. But when the "spring rain" falls on her she dissolves into a heap on her favorite chair. This special outpouring of the Holy Spirit has been amazingly timed take all the discarded truth of 80 years and bring it to vibrant life within an old woman who surely could not still make a difference in the world. But this is God's plan, not ours, and He is giving not just a crop, but a bumper crop. Guaranteeing not just a supply of needs, but over and above abundance.

She believes. The One she has resisted for so long has touched her eyes and she can see. He is truly LORD! He has loved her all this

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time. And waited for her. And never left her as He lovingly planted the seeds of truth. “Oh, Jesus – I love you. I’m so sorry – how could I have missed you?” Spring rain.

Now....this little trip into my imagination brings up great wells of

emotion in me...and maybe I understand a little better the depth of feeling God Himself has for His precious chosen lost lambs who have yet to run back home. After the spring rain. Pray for Spring Rain.

(Note: My Mom came to faith in Christ 3 years after this was written – at the age of 81)

Zechariah 10
Questions for Discussion and Personal Use

1. (:1) Who brings the spring rain? Who makes the storm clouds? Who gives the plants of the field?
2. (:2) Who looks like they could provide for us....says they could provide for us....even comforts us....but isn't actually doing anything?
3. (:3a) How does the LORD feel about those described in vs.2?
4. (:3b) When the LORD provides, what does it look like?
5. (:4) Who will come from Judah?
6. (:5) Who is the “they” who will fight and overthrow?
7. (:6-7) Who is the “house of Judah”....and who is the “house of Joseph”?What will happen to these 2 “houses” together?
8. (:8-9) How will the nation of Israel know the LORD is calling them to Himself?
9. (:10) When Israel hears the “whistle” of their shepherd, where will they be?

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10. (:11 & 12) After Israel believes in her Savior, the LORD will strengthen her to return to her land through a sea of trouble, through surging seas which have been subdued, through rivers which have been dried up. What does this imagery remind you of?
11. What is Chapter 10 telling the scattered children of Israel?
12. What is Chapter 10 telling you?

The Two Shepherds

Chapter 11

Scene 1. The scene opens:

11:1-2 "Open your doors, O Lebanon, so that fire may devour your cedars! Wail, O pine tree, for the cedar has fallen, the stately trees are ruined! "

Armies from the North are descending on Israel, marching through the beautiful land of Lebanon, burning stately cedars on the way.

11:2-3 "Wail, oaks of Bashan; the dense forest has been cut down! Listen to the wail of the shepherds; their rich pastures are destroyed!"

Armies from the East march across the dried-up Euphrates River (Revelation 16:12) and through the land on the east side of the Jordan River, the land where the ½ tribe of Manasseh settled in Old Testament times. The dense forests there are destroyed. The oaks wail. The pasture-land of generations of shepherds is destroyed.

11:3 "Listen to the roar of the lions; the lush thicket of the Jordan is ruined! "

Those same armies from the East also march a little south of Bashan, close to Jericho, as they cross the lush jungle areas along the shores of the Jordan River. Here wild animals roamed even up until the 14th century A.D.

Where are all of these armies heading? To a valley just north of Jerusalem. A valley called Megiddo. They are gathering for war. A war to finally destroy the last stronghold of the Jews. A war led by the most evil world ruler ever....the one they call anti-christ.

He is determined to finally stomp out every last Jew remaining. If he has his way, there will be no Jews left to welcome back their Messiah. Those stubborn Jews have defied every attempt of his to come under

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his control. A few of them are in hiding the world over. Some are tucked away in caves in the deserts around Israel. But many are trapped in Jerusalem, nearly surrounded now by his armies. Their only way of escape would be to the west – and that would only lead them to the Great Mediterranean Sea – which would be fine with him. If they ran in that direction he finally would have succeeded in doing what should have been done in the 20th century... pushing them into the sea. Once Jerusalem is finally free of all Jews, then it would be a piece of cake to one-by-one find the ones in hiding, destroy them, and then Jesus Christ could never make good on His promise to return to them. Then he, the man who is “the Beast”, the son of satan, would have defeated the Son of God. The world would forever belong to him, the fallen angel, the dragon, that ancient serpent, the devil. That’s the plan.

Scene 2. Shepherd #1. This scene will be a flashback so we, the readers, can see how this horrible state of affairs came to pass. Zechariah is in this scene. He will be acting out a drama for an audience of Jews. He is like a mime...acting out a role familiar to his audience – a shepherd taking sheep out to pasture.

11:4 “This is what the LORD my God says: Pasture the flock marked for slaughter.”

The sheep he is told to care for are sheep who have already been marked for slaughter. They will soon be on their way to destruction.

11:5 “Their buyers slaughter them and go unpunished. Those who sell them say, ‘Praise the Lord, I am rich!’ Their own shepherds do not spare them.”

This flock on the way to death has been led there by their own leaders – those who should have been tenderly caring for them.

11:6 “For I will no longer have pity on the people of the land’, declares the LORD. ‘I will hand everyone over to his neighbor and his king. They will oppress the land, and I will not rescue them from their hands.’”

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Let's not misunderstand...the LORD Himself is going to allow this to happen. The time has come when the LORD will wait no longer for mercy. Judgment has been held back, but no longer.

(Now I have a question here. If judgment is about to descend, then why has Zechariah been told to pasture...to shepherd...this flock? Why not just get it over with? What is the point of tenderly caring for these sheep who will, justly, be destroyed?...hold that question.)

11:7 "So I pastured the flock marked for slaughter, particularly the oppressed of the flock. Then I took two staves and called one Favor and the other Union, and I pastured the flock. "

Zechariah is told to act out caring for a flock of sheep. In order to do that, he has 2 staves. A staff is used by the shepherd to gently rescue the sheep from the dangerous positions they can get themselves into. The crook at one end can snatch them up from ledges and tight places. Zechariah will take care of this flock with two staves which he names – no doubt to make sure his audience knows the meaning of these staves. The one he calls “favor” – or, as the KJV says, “beauty”. The other he names “union”, or “bands” in the KJV.

Directing and giving boundaries, rescuing and bringing back to safety, Zechariah uses the favor of God and the unity of the Jewish people to pasture the sheep. Playing out in front of his audience the story of God's relationship with His people.

And particularly he pastures the afflicted and oppressed. The weakest ones, who could never take care of themselves, are singled out for his special care.

11:8&9 "In one month I got rid of three shepherds. The flock detested me, and I grew weary of them and said, 'I will not be your shepherd. Let the dying die, and the perishing perish. Let those who are left eat one another's flesh.'"

I read several commentators on this verse. The consensus of opinion seems to be that there is no way to know who the three shepherds are, and no way to tell whether the one month referred to is actually a 30-day month, or just a symbol for a period of time. But what we can rightfully assume here is that in pasturing the sheep Zechariah had

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some enemies...perhaps leaders of Israel who would call themselves shepherds, too....who were not able to keep Zechariah from doing his job.

But in spite of the fact that Zechariah was able to carry out his mission of pasturing the flock of sheep, still the flock turned against him. Perhaps they got tired of being guided and directed and drug back to safety. Perhaps they began to take for granted the gentle staffs he used. So they rebelled, and Zechariah, in response to God's leading, said "enough". "You want to die? Then die."

11:10 "Then I took my staff called Favor and broke it, revoking the covenant I had made with all the nations. "

No more Favor. No more Beauty. The mercy and gentleness of God has been broken in two. The covenant God had with all the nations was that even though He might use them time and again to bring his flock back to a place of safety, they could only go so far. The Jewish people were protected even in rebellion. But that covenant is over when this staff is broken. It was now open season on Jews.

Now here's the answer to my question of a few paragraphs ago: "If judgment is about to descend, then why has Zechariah been told to pasture...to shepherd...this flock? Why not just get it over with? What is the point of tenderly caring for these sheep who will, justly, be destroyed?"

11:11 "It was revoked on that day, and so the afflicted of the flock who were watching me knew it was the word of the LORD."

The weak and disabled. The poorest of the poor. Those who could never take care of themselves. Zechariah, the shepherd, had especially cared for them. And I imagine they stayed close to him. I imagine they never strayed far from the one who would reach out and gently touch their noses, stroke their ears. Weak....but knowing they could trust their shepherd.

They were the ones who realized what was happening when Zechariah broke the staff named Favor in two. They saw that this was from the LORD. And they trusted still that even with Favor broken in two, still the shepherd would care for them.

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And He did. The reason the shepherd needed to care for the whole flock destined for destruction is that there were a few who would pull away from the rebellious flock and openly trust in their shepherd. He waited for them. He watched over them. He found them and drew them to Himself.

11:12-13 "I told them, 'If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it.' So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said to me, 'Throw it to the potter' – the handsome price at which they priced me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD to the potter."

Zechariah asks of the flock: Since I am through being your shepherd, what will you pay me for the work I have done? What has my love and care for you been worth?

Now we begin to see why Zechariah has been asked to perform this little drama. Now we understand the reason the forces of evil are gathered together at the Valley of Megiddo, as we saw in the beginning of this chapter.

Five hundred years before the event, Zechariah played out the scene. The Shepherd tenderly caring for the flock doomed to destruction. Singling out the little ones, the weak ones, who had faith in Him. Then the Beauty and Favored One of the LORD was broken in two. Murdered on a cross. And the price put on his head? Thirty pieces of silver. The price of a wounded servant. (Exodus 21:32). And those thirty pieces of silver were like fire in the hands of Zechariah – the price of blood – and were cast back into the temple. Just as they burned the hands of Judas. And in just the same way, Judas cast them back at the flock which had given them to him, and the leaders of Israel gave them to a potter – the purchase price for a burial plot for a traitor.

Jesus was the shepherd. Israel was the flock. The ones who had faith in Jesus were the weak ones. The staff called Favor was Jesus Himself. And the thirty pieces of silver were the very price Judas received to betray his LORD. And the message? When these things happen, the covenant of God with all the nations of the world will be null and void. Open season on Jews.

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And the weak and oppressed lambs the shepherd watched over with special care? Open season on them, too? Anna? Simeon? Mary? Joseph? The 11 disciples? The 120? The Jewish believers in Jesus from that time until now?

No longer protected because of their Jewishness, they entered into the same place of safety and care that you and I enjoy today. They became part of the greater plan of God – the family of God – which he always had in mind from the very beginning. Did that mean they would never experience pain or suffering...death or persecution? No, it didn't mean that for them, any more than it means that for us. But they always could stay very close to Him through every storm blowing across the mountains. And He would reach down to touch them, gather them up in His arms during the very worst of life, weep with them when they wept, and bring them safely home.

11:14 "Then I broke my second staff called Union, breaking the brotherhood between Israel and Judah."

The nation of Israel would no longer stay together. They would wander, eventually not knowing what tribe they were from originally, through the world. No more protection. No more favor. No more unity.

There are many who would take the truths so far in this chapter and say they were proof that the promises of Israel were transferred to the Church at the time of their rejection of their shepherd. They would say that Israel is no more a part of the plan of God. That all future prophetic happenings are for the Church. That Israel will never again come into a place of belief in Her Messiah.

But you would have to stop reading right here in order to believe that.

Scene 3. Shepherd #2

11:15-16 "Then the LORD said to me, 'Take again the equipment of a foolish shepherd. For I am going to raise up a shepherd over the land who will not care for the lost, or seek the young, or heal the injured,

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or feed the healthy, but will eat the meat of the choice sheep, tearing off their hoofs."

The flock of Israel rejected the True Shepherd. In doing so they lost so much – and they gained a false shepherd....yet to come. But they haven't been forgotten or left behind. The promises God has made to them are still going to be kept for them. They have to first see what fools they have been to reject the True Shepherd. A false shepherd is part of the process of opening their eyes.

This false shepherd will not watch over them tenderly. Not care for their wounds. Not lead them to green grass and fresh water. In fact, he will use them, make them suffer, eat the good food they need, and even gather the armies of the world in a valley north of Jerusalem to make one last attempt to kill them and tear them apart in his haste to rule the world.

A false shepherd for a rebellious flock – broken away from the LORD, but not forgotten.

11:17 "Woe to the worthless shepherd, who deserts the flock! May the sword strike his arm and his right eye! May his arm be completely withered, his right eye totally blinded!"

This false shepherd will not succeed. His strength will be withered, his ability to "see" blinded.

The armies gathered at Armageddon are expecting to destroy this little flock that used to belong to the LORD. They will be surprised.

Zechariah 11
Questions for Discussion or Personal Study

1. What are verses 1-3 describing?
2. (:4-14) What is the symbolism of the following?:
 - a. The flock marked for slaughter _____
 - b. The sellers of the flock _____

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- c. The bad shepherds of the flock _____
 - d. The Good Shepherd _____
 - e. The staff called Favor _____
 - f. The staff called Union _____
 - g. The afflicted of the flock _____
 - h. The covenant with the nations _____
 - i. The thirty pieces of silver _____
 - j. The worthless shepherd _____
3. (:15-17) What will happen to the worthless shepherd?
4. What does this chapter tell us about God?

On That Day... Chapter 12

Surprise, surprise – the battle for Jerusalem takes a turn

The scene is set for the battle of battles:

- Anti-Christ has ruled the world for over 3 years
- The church is gone
- The Jewish people, who at first, especially their leaders, hailed anti-christ as the savior of the world, have become hunted by him, persecuted people, some still in Israel...many in hiding
- Two outspoken “kooks” who were preaching from Jerusalem for the last 3 and ½ years, and torturing the world with their plagues and famines, have finally been killed, and then miraculously resurrected.
- At their resurrection a groundswell of Jewish thought seems to have changed...no longer running from anti-christ, or trying somehow to appease him...but now wondering....is our God speaking to us?
- Anti-Christ decides once and for all to rid himself of the Jews, and so assembles the armies of the world to attack and destroy all Jews...they gather just north of Jerusalem...at a place called Armageddon.
- They begin to attack. To destroy. To kill. To rape. Raining bombs on the city.
- And then....

But before the action begins in Chapter 12, showing us what happens next, we are introduced by Zechariah to the One Who will be speaking for the next 2 chapters:

12:1 “This is the word of the LORD concerning Israel. The LORD, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the spirit of man within him, declares....”

The LORD Himself will be speaking to us...about Israel..... Zechariah will be recording His words for us.

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How is the LORD described here? Very powerfully.

1. He is the One who stretched out the heavens. Walk outside and look at the sky right now. It is not just a big, blue empty space. It's a whole universe – placed there by our speaker.
2. He is the One who laid the foundation of the earth. Jump up and down. The reason you land on something firm, something which will sustain your life...is because our speaker put it there.
3. He is the One who created man, then put a spirit within him. Our speaker put a place within each of us which longs to communicate with our maker. A longing inside to know and touch God. That spirit within us is not the same as the Holy Spirit. It's our spirit. It is the part of each of us which is not just flesh and blood, not just intellect, not just emotions. It's the part of us that will live forever. It came from His own breath. (*Genesis 2:7 "The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into His nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."*)

After many years together, we put our ailing golden retriever to sleep. He was suffering, and we, in our love for him, knew that we had the power to stop that suffering, so we did. It was a very difficult, but necessary, act of kindness.

The reason my children won't ever put me to sleep, no matter how much I am suffering, is because I have a spirit, something our dear golden retriever did not have. My spirit was given to me from God, and sets me, and every other human being, apart from the rest of creation. I belong to God – I have His "mark" on me – a spirit....and He and He alone knows the number of my days. He is to be trusted to do what is best for the one he loves – no one else has the right to that decision.

Our response to reading this verse should be to very carefully read the rest of the chapter. We know Who is speaking. This is not to be taken lightly.

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The LORD has **three** images to burn on our brains...images of what will happen to this army outside of Jerusalem.

1. *12:2 "I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem."*
A cup. Something the world desires to drink, thinking they know what is in it, but they are surprised. The vengeance they are trying to pour out on Israel flies back in their own faces. They begin to stagger, like one overcome with wine.

2. *12:3 "On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves."*
A rock. A rock so huge that when anyone tries to move it they themselves will be injured.

Many years ago Ken and I and our 5 children lived in Tucson, Arizona. There are snakes in Arizona. One morning our son, Steve, came running into the house to tell me he had just stepped over a snake on our front porch. Ken happened to be home at the time, so we ran outside to see this (what we thought would be) little garter snake Steve had seen. It wasn't so little. Huge is a better term. Stretched out as it was (getting a little sun), I'll guess it was 9 ft. long. You don't believe that, I know – so I'll prove it to you. At one point in the saga, the snake slithered up the gutter on the side of the house (just to get away from those stupid two-legged animals who were pestering him). His head came out of the top of the gutter and his tail was still hanging out at the other end. Believe me now?

Ken decided he didn't want to get too close to the snake (me, either), so he concocted a plan. We had a flat-roofed house, with an outside staircase up to the roof. He carried heavy, heavy rocks up to the top of the house, lined them up on the edge of the roof, and then told me (down below) to chase the snake over to the edge of the house so that he could throw the mini-boulders down on the snake.



I think I had the worst job...but, anyway, it didn't work. The boulders very nicely hit the side of the house and bounced away from the snake. I know. You are doubled up with laughter right now.

But the point is....Ken ended up with back trouble for years after that event. Picking up huge rocks and then carrying them up onto the top of a roof, and then throwing them off is not only a stupid way to kill a snake, it is also a great way to injure yourself.

(I'm sorry to say we did end up killing that harmless old snake. There was no other choice. It was either that or move.)

3. *12:4 "On that day I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness," declares the LORD. "I will keep a watchful eye over the house of Judah, but I will blind all the horses of the nations."*

Horses wild with panic. Horses represented the power of an army. So picture an army of horses wild with panic, unable to be guided by their riders...and then their riders are struck with madness. They have no idea what they are doing. I think this could best be described as utter pandemonium. Confusion. Terror. The armies of the world think they hold all the power. But no power on earth can be utilized when no one has any idea what they are doing.

Notice that little phrase in the middle of this verse: *"I will keep a watchful eye over the house of Judah"* It is the power of the LORD which is accomplishing this, and for once the people of Israel realize it.

12:5 "Then the leaders of Judah will say in their hearts, 'The people of Jerusalem are strong, because the LORD Almighty is their God.'"

Wow. The LORD God is doing this. (eyes are beginning to open)

12:6 "On that day I will make the leaders of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume

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right and left all the surrounding peoples, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place."

Those awful leaders who have been ragged on time and time again about their terrible leadership...leading the Jews away from God, not to Him...suddenly they realize the LORD Himself is protecting a group of weak and nearly dead people. And that realization moves them to good decisions, and powerful tactics...and the Jews fight back and are gaining ground!!!!

12:7 "The LORD will save the dwellings of Judah first, so that the honor of the house of David and of Jerusalem's inhabitants may not be greater than that of Judah"

Not only is the tide of the battle turning for Jerusalem, but also the lands surrounding Jerusalem are being protected, too. Only the LORD God could do that. The whole country of Israel is fighting back and remaining intact.

12:8 "On that day the LORD will shield those who live in Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the Angel of the LORD going before them. "

They didn't have much to fight back with in the way of weapons or man-power...but the One Who took 5 loaves and 2 fish to feed 5,000 people doesn't have a problem using old men as warriors, arming women and children with slingshots against giants, gathering whole families to exercise the very power of God Almighty.

12:9 "On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem"

The battle is the LORD's!!!!

But here's the biggest miracle: at the same time the battle is turning outside of Jerusalem, the real battle, the battle for men's souls, is turning inside Jerusalem:

12:10a "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. "

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Here comes the Spring Rain! The people who have been blind for so long are having the scales washed from their eyes. The Holy Spirit Himself pours down on them 2 gifts:

- Grace – a huge desire to know the truth, a desire so contrary to human nature that it can only be a gift of God
- And Supplication – the ability to turn utter grief into a prayer – a plea for forgiveness.

Isaiah prophesied this day. (*Isaiah 32:15 "...till the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the desert becomes a fertile field, and the fertile field becomes a forest.*)

Ezekiel saw this day: (*Ezekiel 39:29 "I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD."*)

Zephaniah knew this would happen: (*Zechariah 3:20 "At that time I will gather you; at that time I will bring you home. I will give you honor and praise among all the peoples of the earth when I restore your fortunes before your very eyes."*)

Micah had no doubt: (*Micah 7:18,19 "Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever, but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. You will be true to Jacob and show mercy to Abraham, as you pledged on oath to our fathers in days long ago."*)

I could go on. Amos, Joel, Hosea, Daniel, Jeremiah...all the prophets of Israel knew that this day would come.

12:10b "They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for any only child, grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son."

The Jewish people are "seeing", for the first time in over 2,000 years, that Jesus Christ is, in fact, He Who was promised. He is the Savior. He is the Passover lamb.

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For 2,000 years, since the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, there have been Jewish people who believed in their Messiah. A few here. A few there. (*Romans 11:5* “So, too, at the present time, there is a remnant chosen by grace.”) But never before this has the nation as a whole come collectively to their knees in utter devastation at their blindness.

And what will they actually see? I personally think they will not yet be “looking on” the actual physical form of Jesus. He is almost there – but at their moment of truth I think they “see” Him and believe Him through the words of truth which have been spoken through the centuries, the prophecies from long ago which all came true in Jesus Christ, written in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New. These are only a few:

Prophecy	Jewish Scripture	New Testament Scripture
He would be a man	Genesis 3:15	Galatians 4:4
He would be a Jew	Genesis 12:3 Genesis 18:18	Luke 3:34 Matt. 1:2 Acts 3:25 Galatians 3:16
He would be of the tribe of Judah	Genesis 49:10	Luke 3:33 Matthew 1:2
He would be a King (of the seed of David)	Psalms 132:11,12 Jeremiah 23:5,6 Psalms 2:6-9	Matthew 1:6 Romans 1:3 Acts 2:30
He would be a prophet like Moses	Deuteronomy 18:15, 19	Matt. 21:11 John 1:45 John 6:14 Acts 3:22-23
He would be the Son of God	Psalms 2:7 Proverbs 30:4	Luke 1:32 Matthew 3:17
Homage would be given Him by great Kings	Psalms 72:10,11	Matt. 2:1-11
He would be born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:18-25 Luke 1:26-35
He would perform miracles	Isaiah 35:5,6	John 11:47 Matthew 11:3-6

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Prophecy	Jewish Scripture	New Testament Scripture
He would come before the 2 nd temple in Jerusalem was destroyed (70 A.D.)	Daniel 9:24-26	Historical fact
He would be betrayed by a friend	Psalms 41:9	John 13:18,21
He would be rejected	Psalms 118:22,23 Isaiah 8:14, 15 Isaiah 28:16	Matt 21:42,43 Acts 4:11 Romans 9:32,33 Ephesians 2:20 I Peter 2:6-8
He would be meek & mild	Isaiah 42:2,3 Isaiah 53:7	Matt. 12:18-20 Matt 26:62,63
He would minister to Gentiles	Isaiah 42:1 Isaiah 49:1,8	Matt. 12:21
He would be smitten	Isaiah 50:6	Matt. 26:67 Matt 27:26,30
He would suffer & bring salvation	Isaiah 53	The 4 Gospels
He would be pierced	Zechariah 12:10 Psalm 22:16	John 19:34,37
He would be forsaken by His disciples	Zechariah 13:7	Matthew 26:31,56
He would be crucified	Psalm 22 Psalm 69:21	Matthew 27:34-50 John 19:28-30
He would have his garments parted & cast lots for	Psalm 22:19	Luke 23:34
He would ascend to heaven	Psalm 68:18	Luke 24:51 Acts 1:9
He would have victory over death	Isaiah 25:8	John 20:1-10, 19-25
Gentiles shall seek the Messiah of Israel	Isaiah 11:10	Romans 11:25
Died for the sins of the Jewish people and the whole world	Isaiah 53:8	John 3:16
He would be God	Jeremiah 23:5,6	John 10:30 John 8:58

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"On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be great, like the weeping of Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo." (:11)

The anti-christ worshippers out on the plain of Megiddo will be weeping. Their plans destroyed...their dreams for world dominion crumbling....their worship of Satan not powerful enough.... But that will be nothing compared to the weeping of the Jews as they sink to their knees before their God.

12:12-13 "The land will mourn, each clan by itself, with their wives by themselves: the clan of the house of David and their wives, the clan of the house of Nathan and their wives, the clan of the house of Levi and their wives, the clan of Shimei and their wives, and all the rest of the clans and their wives."

The Jews are repenting as a nation, but they are doing it each man alone. Many in hiding. Many in Jerusalem. Many the world over. Together in spirit....but alone in their places of hiding.

A Jewish man in New York. A Jewish wife in England. A Jewish young man who did not even realize he had Jewish blood....a Jewish teenager in Russia who never really learned what Judaism was all about. Wherever they are, they are poured on by the Holy Spirit of God, Who knows where every one of them resides. Not yet re-united under the banner of Christ – but soon to head that way.

(Romans 11:11,12 "Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring!"

Application: Here is my request. Be prepared to tell anyone – whether you think they are a Jew or not, that Jesus Christ is the Messiah of Israel - completely fulfilling every prophecy of the Old Testament. Mark up your Bible with prophecies and fulfillments, and talk incessantly about it.



Do this and you'll have a part in what will soon happen – on that day.

Zechariah 12
Questions for Discussion or Personal Study

1. (:1) Who will be speaking in this chapter?
2. (:1) What three things are we told about Him?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
3. (:1) After Zechariah tells us these three things about the speaker in this chapter, what is our response?
4. (:2-4) In verses 2-4 the LORD gives three powerful images of what is about to happen to the armies of the world, assembled outside of Jerusalem. What are the three images?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
5. (:5&6) As the LORD powerfully turns the tables on the enemies of Israel, what will the response of the leaders of Israel be?
6. (:7-9) What will the response be of the common man?
7. (:10a) While a cup of wrath is being drunk by their enemies, what is happening to Israel?
8. (:10b) Who will the Jews clearly see at this time?
9. How will they “see” Him? (Romans 10:17)
10. (:11) What will the response be when the Jews clearly see Whom they have rejected for so long?
11. (:12-14) They will all mourn “by themselves”...or “alone”. What does this mean?

The Fountain Bursts Forth

Chapter 13

Right to Die....Pro-life....Judicial power....Weapons of Mass
Destruction...Prayer in schools...Preserve or Privatize?...Stem cell
research...Overseas investors...No-call list....The Sacred and the
Secular...

How do I know who to listen to?

Not all the voices out there are speaking good things, right?

Not every “prophet” is leading us to God.

Is our only recourse to try to shout louder and longer than the liars?

Or is there a way for God to give us all a fresh start?....To wash away
all the

Faulty thinking and self-centeredness?

...To help us see clearly again?

I’m shaking in my boots as I introduce this study with a list of current political debates...because I don’t want to be misunderstood....my views on these debates are not the subject of this Bible Study....but the very existence of struggles for power, and the many voices which throughout history have been raised in such struggles, are a good illustration of the times which will surround the people living out the prophecies of Zechariah.

The events of Zechariah 13 won’t take place in a bubble. There will be real people with real lives listening to these words of Zechariah. They will be feeding their families, working at jobs, settling fights between the kids, and they will be listening to the opinions of friends, family,

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religious leaders, and political leaders, and will, like us, be sifting through all of those voices and trying to recognize the truth.

- “This man has finally set forth a peace plan which will work!”
- *“Don’t listen to him, he is not telling you the truth.”*
- “He has taken world catastrophes and helped us recover as no world leader has ever done before.”
- *“It is not God who is giving him this wisdom...”*
- “He is asking for our cooperation – asking us to get rid of our defenses as a country – let’s do it! We can trust him.”
- *“No! We need those defenses in order to exist!”*
- “He wants every nation in the world to be on the same monetary system. We should do it...we will prosper as never before.”
- *“Wait a minute....are we sure he is really looking out for our best interests?”*
- “Don’t be ridiculous - the LORD would want us to be free from fear, to finally enjoy peace after all this time...the man can get us there.”
- *“Should we give one man so much power?”*
- “We can trust him – look at all the financial gain we have had so far.”
- *“He doesn’t seem to be keeping his promises...”*
- “He loves all people and only wants them to get along.”
- *“He is wanting us to deny our faith in the One, True God! He wants us to join a coalition of people the world over who will commit to one religion...with only one tenet – everyone can find God in their own way...no one tries to tell anyone else what the right way is.”*
- “Don’t listen to those who would lead you away from peace...and especially not to those 2 idiots parading around out in front of the temple in Jerusalem....their nonsense about a crazy prophet of 2,000 years ago is nothing less than hate-crimes, and they must die for spewing such venomous lies ”
- *“No...wait....don’t kill them....I was just starting to wonder....”*

And then the events of Zechariah 12 crash onto the scene – and on that day Jewish eyes are opened...“we....have....sinned.” Utter devastation and grief.

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“Is there a sacrifice we could offer to atone for our sins? Is there any chance we could somehow approach God, offering the blood of an animal...or a whole herd of animals...as we did in ages past? Will the LORD of all creation even consider giving us a chance to enter His presence....or are we doomed to eternal damnation?” – *the collective voice of the Jewish nation, 2,000-something, A.D.*

13:1 “On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.”

The blood of animals never could make amends for sin...even in ages past.

The death of animals in Old Testament times was always simply a way to direct people’s faith to a Person – the One Who would someday be the perfect sacrifice for sin.

*“...those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins...sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me ; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, ‘Here I am – it is written about me in the scroll – I have come to do your will, O God.’”
(Hebrews 10:3-7).*

Only the death of Jesus the Messiah could do away with sin.

The blood of Jesus Christ is that fountain which washes away every particle of sin and impurity. For all of time that fountain has been available to all....

- **first**, as the Old Testament people looked forward in faith to a coming person who would be the sacrifice for sin. Yes, ever since Adam & Eve. (“*And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.*” – spoken by the LORD to *satan* – Genesis 3:15)
- **then second**, after Jesus’ resurrection, as both Gentiles and a few Jews believed that Jesus had truly paid that price for sin,

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("He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through Him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit." Ephesians 2:17,18)

- **and now finally**, prophesied here in chapter 13, as the Jewish nation once again someday collectively bows before their LORD, and in faith accepts the gift of salvation through the already accomplished death and resurrection of their living Messiah.

And on this day his blood is like a refreshing fountain spraying into the air – covering all, cleansing all, renewing all.

Sorrow came first. It had to. For only a people ashamed of their filthiness will come to the fountain to be thoroughly washed.

13:2 "On that day I will banish the names of the idols from the land, and they will be remembered no more," declares the LORD Almighty. 'I will remove both the prophets and the spirit of impurity from the land.'"

On this day of faith in Chapter 13, which dawned with repentance in Chapter 12, three things will be – zap! – removed from the land:

1. Idols

No more idols. No worship of anything or any being but the LORD.

2. False prophets

And no more false prophets – who were teaching people to listen to lies and worship those idols

3. Demonic Influence

And no more demons to tell the lies that inspire the false prophets. Demons who were serving the father of all lies – satan. *"You belong to your father, the devil...for he is a liar and the father of lies."* (John 8:44) Where the NIV says "spirit of impurity" in verse 2, the KJV says "unclean spirit". This term is found only here in the Old Testament, but appears frequently in the Gospels, referring one who is demon-possessed.

13:3-6 "And if anyone still prophesies, his father and mother, to whom he was born, will say to him, 'You must die, because you have told lies in the LORD's name.' When he prophesies, his own parents

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will stab him. On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his prophetic vision. He will not put on a prophet's garment of hair in order to deceive. He will say, 'I am not a prophet. I am a farmer; the land has been my livelihood since my youth.' If someone asks him, 'What are these wounds on your body?' he will answer, 'The wounds I was given at the house of my friends.' "

Now we are given just a little further explanation of what will be happening on this day of faith to the ones who used to be so confident in all their worldly wisdom.

The parents of such a person will not only disown him, but will seek to kill him themselves if he would think he could once again propagate lies. And he will no longer even want to dress like and act like a "prophet" – with a coat of hair or any other tool of the trade. He will ashamedly disavow any connection with the profession of predicting the future – claiming to have been a lowly farmer all his life. And the wounds he used to inflict on himself in order to gain the attention of the "Gods"? He will strongly insist they were acquired in a scuffle of some sort....but that they most certainly are not a proof that he ever engaged in the sport of debate for power.

As we finish up the chapter, the LORD gives us a few summary verses – a way to put our arms around what has happened over the time span of more than 2,000 years:

13:7-9 "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!" declares the LORD Almighty. 'Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones. 'In the whole land,' declares the LORD, two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it. This third I will bring into 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.'"

- **A sword, at God's own bidding,** (*Isaiah 53:10 "Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer..."*)
- **will come against the true shepherd** (*John 10:14 "I am the good shepherd..."*)
- **and the sheep, the Jewish nation,** (*Zechariah 11:4 "...the flock marked for slaughter"*) **will be scattered.** 12 Apostles



- fleeing from those who captured Jesus, Roman conquerors. Spanish inquisition, Crusades, Hitler's Germany, Arab hate.
- **But, the little ones, those Jews who did believe in Christ, (Zechariah 11:11 "...the afflicted of the flock") , who recognized the true shepherd, would be lovingly kept by the Shepherd's side, protected by His hand over them.** Simeon, Anna, Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, Zechariah, John the Baptist, the 12 disciples, the 120 in the upper room, 5,000 on the day of Pentecost....untold numbers since...
 - **Fast-forward to "that day" when belief finally comes to Israel...**
 - **In all the world** (the word "land" in verse 8 is the Hebrew word "Eretz" –is used in Genesis 1:1 to indicate the whole world. "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (eretz).*")
 - **Two-thirds of the sheep (Jews) will die during this terrible time of persecution,**
 - **But one-third will make it to the day of faith.**
 - **But what they have to go through will be like walking through a fire.** (*Psalm 66:12 "You let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance."*)
 - **Which will be a refining process for them. Like gold or silver, the hotter it gets the more the precious metal is separated from the impurities. They will become pure – pure in faith.** (*Isaiah 48:10,11 "See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another."*)
 - **And on that day those who remain will know for a surety that their God has died for them....drawn them unto Himself....kept them alive for that moment in history.**

And they will walk, alive and eternally saved, into the thousand-year-reign of Jesus Christ.

Don't miss the last chapter. It's a barn-burner!!!!

Zechariah 13

Questions for Discussion and Personal Study

Name a few voices which seek to gain your thoughts, your opinions, your support in our world today: (like: Right to die, Pro-life, Judicial power, prayer in schools....etc.)

1. (:1) What "day" is verse 1 referring to?
2. (:1) What is the symbolism here? What is the "Fountain"? How does that fountain "cleans" from sin and impurity?
3. (:1) What makes the fountain begin to flow?
4. (:2) What three things are banished from the Jewish nation on that day?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
5. (:3-6) Why will a "prophet" be so ashamed of his profession? What kind of "prophet" is this?
6. Who are our "prophets" today? Can we apply this passage to them?
Will they someday be ashamed of their profession? Are we joining them in their shameful activities?
7. (:7-9) Verses 7 thru 9 give a sweeping overview of a sequence of events which began for the Jewish people at the birth of Jesus, and will culminate some day in the future, at their time of belief in Him. List these events as they are described in these verses:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - Fast-forward to the future
 - d.
 - e.
 - f.
 - g.
 - h.
 - i.

What Will it be Like...?

Chapter 14

The Jewish nation has believed!!!! Now a look at what Jerusalem is like just before the LORD returns....

14:1-2 "A day of the LORD is coming when your plunder will be divided among you. I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city."

Hey! Things are still in awful shape! What's happening? We have believed. Jesus is going to return. Where is He? What is He waiting for? *"They that wait on the LORD will renew their strength. They will mount up with wings as eagles; they will run and not be weary, they will walk and not faint."* Isaiah 40:31. Just wait. Trust your LORD to return when it is the best time to return, no matter what is happening around you. *"The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."* John 12:25. Follow in the footsteps of those who have gone before you, little flock. Don't worry about this life. Keep your eyes on the future.

There are no nations left in the world who will support Israel. No nation that cares. The world is one huge Germany and Israel is the ghetto. There is no one to turn to except the LORD. All nations have gathered at the Valley of Armageddon and are fighting against Jerusalem. The city is being captured piece by piece. Houses are being ransacked and women raped. Over half of the people have already been scattered to the winds, and ½ have remained. Yes, they are terrified, but now they have Jesus as their hope. He has promised to return. They search the skies during the day and pray through the night, as King David did so many thousands of years ago when he was surrounded in the cave:

"Look to my right and see; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my

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life. I cry to you, O LORD; I say, 'You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.' Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me. Set me free from my prison, that I may praise our name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me." (Psalm 142: 4-7)

And then, when it seems it could not get worse, there is one night when there is no way even God Himself could save the situation...but somehow they make it through the night...and at the dawning of the next day, He arrives!

"In the evening, sudden terror! Before the morning, they are gone! This is the portion of those who loot us, the lot of those who plunder us" (Isaiah 17:14)

"God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress." (Psalm 46: 5-7)

"They return at evening, snarling like dogs, and prowl about the city. They wander about for food and howl if not satisfied. But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble. O my Strength, I sing praise to you; you, O God, are my fortress, my loving God." (Psalm 59: `4-17)

And now a look at what it will be like in Jerusalem the moment He returns:

But before we look at what these next verses in Zechariah say about the moment of Jesus' return to earth, let's fill in a few details from other places in scripture....because this is a cataclysmic moment. It

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took many prophets to describe it. I imagine our LORD figured no one prophet could contain the explosiveness of this day all by himself!

As He begins to return there will be fire and lightning, thunder, great noise, windstorms, tempests, an earthquake, the heavens part, the sea bottoms are exposed, and the very foundations of the earth laid bare:

"Fire goes before him and consumes his foes on every side. His lightning lights up the world; the earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the LORD of all the earth." Psalms 94:3&4

"Part your heavens, O LORD, and come down; touch the mountains, so that they smoke. Send forth lightning and scatter the enemies; shoot your arrows and rout them. Reach down your hand from on high; deliver me and rescue me from the mighty waters, from the hand of foreigners whose mouths are full of lies, whose right hands are deceitful." Psalms 144:5-8

"...Suddenly, in an instant, the LORD Almighty will come with thunder and earthquake and great noise, with windstorm and tempest and flames of a devouring fire. " Isaiah 29:6

"The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me. In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears. The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook; they trembled because he was angry. Smoke rose from his nostrils; consuming fire came from his mouth, burning coals blazed out of it. He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under his feet. He mounted the cherubim and flew; he

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soared on the wings of the wind. He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him – the dark rain clouds of the sky. Out of the brightness of his presence clouds advanced, with hailstones and bolts of lightning. The LORD thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded. He shot his arrows and scattered the enemies, great bolts of lightning and routed them. The valleys of the seas were exposed and the foundations of the earth laid bare at your rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of breath from your nostrils. He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters. He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me. They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but the LORD was my support. He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me.”
Psalms 18: 5-19

“I saw heaven open and there before me was a white horse whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.” Rev. 19:11-16

Now, Zechariah’s details are added:

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14:3-11 "Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. 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 the holy ones with him.

On that day there will be no light, no cold or frost. It will be a unique day, without daytime or nighttime – a day known to the LORD. When evening comes, there will be light.

On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half to the eastern sea and half to the western sea, in summer and winter.

The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name.

The whole land, from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem, will become like the Arabah. But Jerusalem will be raised up and remain in its place, from the Benjamin Gate to the site of the First Gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the royal winepresses. It will be inhabited; never again will it be destroyed. Jerusalem will be secure."

The LORD will now be the one doing the fighting. He will descend from heaven, and His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives. At His touch, the Mount of Olives will be split in two, from east to west, one part of the Mount moving to the north, the other to the south, so that now there are 2 mountains.

Through this newly-formed valley, Jewish survivors, believers in Jesus Christ, will run out of the ghetto which was Jerusalem, into the arms of the LORD Himself, and into the arms of the Holy Ones who accompany Jesus. And who are the Holy Ones? *"...the armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean..." Rev. 19:14* They are us! We...the redeemed who were raptured away at some point during the 7 years of turmoil just preceding this event...we will be the Holy Ones who accompany Jesus

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to the Mount of Olives, and who spread our arms wide to receive the believing remnant of Jews fleeing the crumbling city of Jerusalem.

We will welcome them to the saved-by-grace family of God. We will shelter and comfort them as we have been sheltered and comforted by our LORD. We will begin to rejoice together. To sing and dance together. We will watch as our LORD destroys His enemies with the words of His mouth. And we will turn, with them, to pursue any who would flee. We will join the LORD in the total destruction of every enemy of God.

“I pursued my enemies and overtook them; I did not turn back till they were destroyed. I crushed them so that they could not rise; they fell beneath my feet. You armed me with strength for battle; you made my adversaries bow at my feet. You made my enemies turn their backs in flight, and I destroyed my foes. They cried for help, but there was no one to save them – to the LORD, but he did not answer. I beat them as fine as dust borne on the wind; I poured them out like mud in the streets.” Psalms 18:37-42

How could we do that? How could we join in the destruction of people – even if they are God’s enemies? We wouldn’t do it now – for this is the time of God’s mercy to all men. But we will humbly and gladly join together then to fulfill His will – for it will be His will. It will be the time when He will show mercy no more. It will be the time He executes judgment...and we will love Him more than any person who has chosen to be an enemy of God.

“Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are his judgments. He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants’. And again they shouted: ‘Hallelujah!’ ” Revelation 19: 1-3

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This day of His return will be so unusual. No light, no cold, no frost, no daytime, no nighttime...it seems to me that His very return will provide the light for the day...and that light will not dim even when it is time for evening to come. He Himself will be so light...we will not even see the light of the sun or moon. That's the way it's going to be 1,000 years after this day of His return (*"The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp."* Rev. 21:23), so it's not too hard for me to imagine it could be that way on this day, too.

And there's more. Suddenly, a stream of pure water begins to flow out from Jerusalem in two directions: to the east (into the Dead Sea) and to the west (into the Mediterranean Sea). The water will flow miraculously from the LORD, not fed by rain or natural spring...it will flow during rainy seasons, and during dry seasons. Jerusalem itself will be raised up geographically, as the land around it becomes like a plain.

From this day on, the LORD Jesus is the King over all the earth. There will be no other King. There will be no other Gods. There will be no other Name.

This day is really coming. All enemies will be gone. Peace – the kind of peace Jesus gives – will be the way life is from this point on. Secure. Solid. Calm. This day is really coming.

And what will happen to the enemies of God?

14:12-15 "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 on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. On that day men will be stricken by the LORD with great panic. Each man will seize the hand of another, and they will attack each other. Judah too will fight at Jerusalem. The wealth of all the surrounding nations will be collected – great quantities of gold and silver and clothing. A similar plague will strike the horses and mules, the camels and donkeys, and all the animals in those camps."

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It reminds me of that final scene in “Raiders of the Lost Ark” – when the hordes of armies simply melt away on the spot ...peopleanimalseverything.

Whew! I need to just take a breath for a minute. This is more than my little human brain can think about.

While we wait now for our hearts to settle, here’s something fun to think about: believing Jews from all over the world are now on their way...coming to Jerusalem – to meet their LORD and join hands with all of us as we are given responsibilities – jobs to do – in the 1,000-year reign of Jesus, King.

“In that day the LORD will thresh from the flowing Euphrates to the Wadi of Egypt, and you, O Israelites, will be gathered up one by one. And in that day a great trumpet will sound. Those who were perishing in Assyria and those who were exiled in Egypt will come and worship the LORD on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.” Isaiah 27:12,13.

“I will surely gather them from all the lands where I banish them in my furious anger and great wrath; I will bring them back to this place and let them live in safety. They will be my people, and I will be their God. I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me for their own good and the good of their children after them. I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and soul.” Jer. 32:37-41)

“At that time I will gather you; at that time I will bring you home. I will give you honor and praise among all the people of the earth when



*I restore your fortunes before your very eyes,
says the LORD." Zechariah 3:20*

*"And I saw thrones on which were seated
those who had been given authority to judge."
Rev. 20:4a*

What will it be like in the 1,000-years?

The scriptures are full of hints and peeks at that 1,000-year Millennium. Here in Zechariah 14 we get an interesting look at a few more:

14:16-19 "Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, they will have no rain. If the Egyptian people do not go up and take part, they will have no rain. The LORD will bring on them the plague he inflicts on the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. This will be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles"

There are a few questions you might have as you read these verses. Let me try to answer them:

1. This talks about survivors...who are they? I thought all the enemies of God will be destroyed?

Good question. All the enemies of God will be destroyed. The survivors are the many believers in Jesus living in enemy countries – maybe hiding from Anti-Christ. They survive. And they will enter the Millennium, alive. They are not part of the raptured church because they came to belief in Christ after the church is caught away.

2. So these survivors will travel to Jerusalem once a year for the Feast of Tabernacles...why?

Because that is the Jewish feast which in Old Testament times celebrated a future time when God Himself would "tabernacle" (live) with men. Zechariah 14 is the description of that event. That future once-a-year celebration will be a reminder of what all



of human history has been about – God loving and caring for men so much that He wanted to live together with them forever. Finally come to pass. The whole world has reason to celebrate this feast, not just the Jews.

3. Why would there be people who would not go up to Jerusalem for this feast?

Remember, the survivors who go alive into the Millennium are believers in Christ, but they weren't raptured, and didn't return with Jesus in resurrected bodies. They still have sinful bodies, just like you and I do now. At that time, we, as the raptured, resurrected church will have new bodies which can never sin and never die, but the survivors will not. They will still struggle with sin. They will still be susceptible to death. And they will still have children. Families. Grandchildren. Great-grandchildren. And those children will still need to come to a place of commitment to King Jesus, just the same as their parents and grandparents did. Some will not. And some will not wish to obey the King of the whole Earth, either – so there will be results for those sinful actions...no rain for those nations which would dare to not take a trip to worship the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Now here are the two last things Zechariah thinks to tell us as he finishes up this book of riddles, symbolism and mystery. Two small, insignificant little things. I have no doubt that they are important to God, though, else why would He include them for our thinking?

14:20-21 "On that day HOLY TO THE LORD will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, and the cooking pots in the LORD's house will be like the sacred bowls in front of the altar. Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the LORD Almighty, and all who come to sacrifice will take some of the pots and cook in them. And on that day there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD Almighty."

Even common, ordinary things, like pots and bowls will be Holy, set apart for the LORD.

And no Canaanite – no idol-worshipper – will ever enter the house of the LORD.

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A chorus from an old hymn is floating around in my mind as I finish this study:

He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock
That shadows a dry, thirsty land.
He hideth my soul in the depths of His love
And covers me there with His hand.
And covers me there with His hand.

Knowing what the Return of Christ will be like would be downright frightening if it were not for the fact that I am sure Jesus, my King, knows how to shelter me when I have had enough...and cover me when I can see no more of His glory. I trust Him to do just that. Today. Tomorrow. At the rapture. And as I mount my white horse to return with Him some day.

Zechariah 14
Questions for Discussion and Personal Study

The Jewish nation has believed!!!! Now, a look at what Jerusalem is like just before the LORD returns...

- 1. (:1-2) What will it be like in Jerusalem just before the LORD returns?**
 - a. _____ will be fighting against it.
 - b. The city will be _____.
 - c. The houses will be _____.
 - d. The women will be _____.
 - e. How many people will remain in the city? _____
 - f. They are _____ out to God. (Ps. 142:4-7)



- g. One Terrifying night...but salvation as the day dawns.
(Isaiah 17:14) (Psalm 139:18) (Psalm 46:5)(Ps. 49:14)
(Ps. 59:14-17)

2. (:3-7) What will it be like the moment He returns?

- a. Fire and lightning, thunder, great noise, windstorm, tempest, earthquake, the heavens part. (Ps. 97:3&4) (Ps. 144:5) (Is. 29:6) (Psalm 18:5-19)
- b. The _____ will now be the One fighting. (II Thess. 8b)
- c. His _____ will stand on the _____
- d. The Mount of Olives will be _____ from _____
- e. Jews will run out of _____ through a newly-formed valley. (Michah 2:13)
- f. The LORD Himself and _____ will gather them up & rescue them.
- g. There will be no _____, no _____, no _____, no _____, no _____.
- h. When evening comes on the day He returns, it will still be _____

3. (:8-15) What will it be like right after He returns?

- a. The rescued Jews turn to pursue the army that was pursuing them (Ps. 18:37-42)
- b. Living _____ will flow out of Jerusalem.
- c. Jesus Christ will be _____ over the whole earth.
- d. The land around Jerusalem will be _____
- e. Jerusalem itself will be _____
- f. Never again will Jerusalem be _____
- g. The armies of the Anti-Christ will be struck with a _____ and die while _____.
- h. Even the animals will _____
- i. The wealth of all the nations will be _____
- j. Believing Jews from the world over will be brought back to Jerusalem (Is. 27:12,13) (Zephaniah 3:20) (Jer. 32:36-38)

4. (:16-21) What will it be like as the world lives through the Millenium with Jesus as King?

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- a. Those who have _____ the tribulation will go once a year to _____.
- b. They will celebrate the _____ _____ _____.
- c. If any country does not go up to Jerusalem once a year, they will experience _____ _____.
- d. Even common, ordinary things will be _____.
- e. There will no longer be any _____ in the temple of the LORD.



Seeing the Shore (A conclusion)

The Jews of Zechariah’s day believed and obeyed. They finished the temple in Jerusalem. And 500 years later their Messiah walked in that temple. They were all gone by then – they never saw it happen. They just believed what God told them, and acted in faith.

The Dream	The Message of the Dream
#1 Man on a Red Horse, Amongst the Myrtle Trees	"I have been there all along" - Jesus
#2 Four Craftsmen	Our enemies are nothing...God is everything
#3 A Glimpse of the Jerusalem to come	Someday there will be blessings so huge you can't put your arms around it
#4 Joshua, the High Priest, gets new clothes	Can't clean yourself up – Jesus Himself will do it
#5 Zerubbabel, the would-be King, still has a job to do	The Important jobs quite often look pretty Unimportant
#6 The Flying Scroll	Sins will be shouted From the housetops
#7 The Basket filled with evil	Judgment begins as evil Gathers in one place
#8 The Four Horses pulling four chariots	Judgment ends when Jesus returns

Someday their great-great-great (too many "greats" to keep going)-grandchildren will reap the benefits of their faith. After 7 years of tribulation their Messiah will come for the Second time. And they will be waiting for Him.

"In the day of great slaughter, when the towers fall, steams of water will flow on every high mountain and every lofty hill. The moon



will shine like the sun, and the sunlight will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven full days, when the LORD binds up the bruises of his people and heals the wounds he afflicted.”
Isaiah 30:23-36

He will come as a reigning King – to rule over our world – and here’s what our world will be like: The earth -shaken by earthquakes, destroyed by blight and drought, filled with the corpses of dead bodies, rivers running red with blood, smeared with disease, buildings destroyed, cities a wasteland – what a nasty place this will be – at first. But there will be a clean up team who will take every ugly, impossible job handed to them, ask the LORD how He would like it done, and then be head-first involved in the healing and miracles:

Here’s what it will be like

Nature:

Sweet water where there was bitter: Ezekiel 47:1-12

Rain for healthy crops and green pastures: Joel 2:21-26

Living water flowing from Jerusalem – Zechariah 14:8

Natural elements (like wind & rain) will not make us fear –
Matthew 14:24-33, Mark 4:35-41

Deserts turned into flowering wonderlands – Isaiah 41:18-20

The land of Israel multiplying people and prosperity – Ezekiel 36:8-11

Mountains moved, if necessary – Matthew 21: 21,22

No more decay – Romans 8:19-21

Swarms of living creatures will thrive because of clean water: Ezekiel 47:9

No more wild beasts: Ezekiel 34:25

Deserts will become pools of water Isaiah 35:7

Food Supply:

Refreshing drink – Joel 3:18

Plentiful rain for a plentiful food supply – Isaiah 30-23,24

Israel will be a land known for its crops – Ezekiel 34:29, Zech 8:11,12

Plenty for all to eat – John 6:5-14

Wine, gardens, fruit – in abundance – Amos 9:13

No hunger – Psalms 22:26

Peaceful Existence

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Wolf lie down with lamb – Isaiah 65:25
Little children will tame wild animals – Isaiah 11:6-8,
No war – Hosea 2:18
Theaters of war will become pastures – Isaiah 29:17
Evil people will disappear – Isaiah 29:20, Zephaniah 3:11
Singing and joy will mark our lives – Isaiah 35:10
People will build houses, settle down – Isaiah 65:21
The LORD will quiet us with His love – Zephaniah 3:17
No fear – Zephaniah 3:13, 16
No violence – Isaiah 60:18
Satan will be bound in a dungeon – Revelation 20:1-3

Healing

Deaf will hear, Blind will see – Isaiah 29:18
No one will be sick – Isaiah 33:24
Lame will leap, dumb will speak – Isaiah 35:6

Long Life in the Millennium

People will live a long, long life – Isaiah 65:20
People will bear children – Isaiah 65:23
Children will not rebel – Isaiah 65:23, Psalms 22:30,31
Only the believers will enter the millennium – Zephaniah 3:12,
Psalms 22:27,28
Jesus will be with us, will reign – Zephaniah 3:15, Zechariah 14:9
Death will have no power – Psalms 22:29

And in the New Heaven & New Earth

No tears, no death, no mourning, crying, or pain – Rev. 21:4
Everything is brand new – Rev. 21:5
No sin – Rev. 21:8
A huge, valuable, beautiful dwelling place – Rev. 21:10-21
The LORD is there, everywhere, all the time – Rev. 21:22
The LORD Himself lights it up...no sun, no moon – Rev. 21:23
No sickness – Rev. 22:2
No curse on the earth – Rev. 22:3
No night – Rev. 22:5

“In 1952, young Florence Chadwick stepped into the waters of the Pacific Ocean off Catalina Island, determined to swim to the shore of mainland California. She’d already been the first woman to swim the English Channel both ways. The weather was foggy and chilly; she

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could hardly see the boats accompanying her. Still, she swam for fifteen hours. When she begged to be taken out of the water along the way, her mother, in a boat alongside, told her she was close and that she could make it. Finally, physically and emotionally exhausted, she stopped swimming and was pulled out. It wasn't until she was on the boat that she discovered the shore was less than half a mile away. At a news conference the next day she said, 'All I could see was the fog...I think if I could have seen the shore, I would have made it.' " (an excerpt from [Heaven](#), by Randy Alcorn)

If you look up the verses in this list, you will “see” your future home....and seeing what your future home is like may be “seeing the shore” for you.

Seeing you stepping out in obedience to God may be “seeing the shore” for someone who is watching your life – or for some future child, grandchild, or great, great, great.....