

Read Zechariah 1

"Therefore thus says the LORD, "I will return to Jerusalem with compassion; My house will be built in it," declares the LORD of hosts, "and a measuring line will be stretched over Jerusalem." Zech 1:16

An author came to visit a friend of his who was a sculptor. When the author arrived at his studio, he noticed a block of stone in the corner. The author asked his friend what it was for. The sculptor replied, "I don't know yet. I'm still making plans." The author replied, "You plan your work? I change my mind several times a day!" The sculptor answered back, "That's fine for a four-ounce manuscript, but not with a four-ton block."

Zechariah's writing takes place after Jerusalem has fallen to the Babylonians and now is controlled by the Persians. We see some brief discussions in this chapter that indicate God's plans were still in effect despite the hardships of Israel. He had not forgotten about Jerusalem or His people and He says to Zechariah that His compassion will return to Jerusalem. The temple will be rebuilt, but the Lord also says a measuring line will be stretched over Jerusalem. This means that the repairs and new dimensions of the city are to be laid out exactly, and God already knows how it's going to look. He will not return the people to a haphazard process of rebuilding, but to a city and life that has been planned for their success. God is not making random plans, but has steps that will lead us somewhere as we seek and obey. **As you go through your day today you will probably find yourself with short-term goals: make it to lunch, make it to quitting time, make it home. And while we go about those small chunks of our day and life, God has long-term plans for our life. A measuring line has been laid out for the steps He wants to see us take. Will you talk to God about long-term plans today, or will you continue to live a short-term life? When we start living day to day with little thought of the future, our prayers become short sighted and we can miss the plans God has for our tomorrow while we're plodding through today.**

Read Zechariah 2

Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD; for He is aroused from His holy habitation. Zech 2:13

Casey Stengel was a major league baseball manager for many years who was known for saying what was on his mind. After retirement he held a position on the board of a California bank. When asked by the Wall Street Journal what his duties were, Stengel gave one of his regular honest answers. "There ain't nothing to it. You go into the fancy meeting room and you just sit there and never open your yap. As long as you don't say nothin' they don't know whether you're smart or dumb."

Stengel knew when to be quiet, but a lost world who tries to reason with a holy God often doesn't. They want to explain and justify their actions. And here in Zechariah 2:13, God uses similar words to Habakkuk 2:20, "But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him." The words in Habakkuk were before the captivity had happened. Zechariah is writing during it. In both cases, God says that the apparent circumstances have no bearing on His ability to do what He wants. In fact, He

recommends silence because there is nothing left to say. **He knows the truth and knows what needs to happen. Do you babble before God? Are you repenting or justifying when it comes to your sin? There is nothing wrong in talking to God about anything, but there are times we need to just be silent and listen to Him. God will communicate to us if we'll stop and quiet ourselves.**

Read Zechariah 3

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

I've learned that there are two sides to every story. Early in my adult life I saw things as very black and white and no need for a rebuttal from the other party, but having kids changed that for me. My daughter one day said that her brother hit her. So instead of just taking her word for it, I asked him what happened. He said he hit her because she kicked him. So I went back to my daughter who said that she had kicked her brother before the hit took place. In the end they both got in trouble, and I learned a lesson about listening to accusations.

Joshua was the high priest, and he was like everyone else...flawed. And we see Satan was accusing this man before the Lord. And while the Devil is a liar, on this point he was telling the truth. Joshua was guilty of what the Devil accused him of. Satan accuses us before the Father on a regular basis. And on probably every point, he's exactly right. However, as much as Satan likes to accuse, the Father loves to forgive. In verse 4, God removes the iniquity of Joshua and gives him clean robes to show the change that has been made. Do you find yourself feeling defeated because of your sin? Satan wanted to beat Joshua down because Joshua was responsible for worship happening in the temple. If he could beat Joshua, he could hurt many people through it. **Remember, Satan wants to bring you down to keep you there...God brings you down so He can bring you back up. Are you feeling down? Who put you there? Your next move should be one of repentance. God wants you, and despite the lies of Satan, there is no mistake you could ever make that would cause God to abandon you.**

Read Zechariah 4

Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts. Zech 4:6

Think of something that you really gave over to God in your life. It was a difficult or seemingly impossible situation, and you realized that you weren't going to be able to do anything about it. After months of searching for my last ministry position, I realized I was doing too much searching. I was attempting by my own efforts and resume to grab the attention of a church so that we could discuss our futures together. Slowly I realized that what man joins together can be easily broken apart. So even though I had been praying, I began to really hand the situation over to God. I didn't dwell on it or worry, but simply waited. And soon after, the right church for the right time came along and it's been a huge blessing in my life and in the life of my family.

Zechariah is living in a Jerusalem of rubble. The repairs have not taken place yet under Nehemiah, and there were probably some days that the "freedom" of living in their homeland didn't feel like much of a prize. And in verse 6 we see a statement regarding not just the restoration of the city, but of the people. It will not be by might or power, but by God's Spirit. Notice that might is not capitalized and neither is power. These are human attempts to bring about a result that can only be fully realized through the working of God. **So what situation are you attempting to work out by your own power and might? Are you attempting to build a career that way? Are you attempting to raise your children that way? Human power and might supplies us with ruins all over this planet. The cities of old and the families of today lie in ruins because they were built by man, and not by Holy Spirit. How can you allow God to move more freely in your life today? It's not just by prayer, but by specifically saying to God, "There are no areas that are off limits in my life."**

Read Zechariah 5

Then he said to me, "This is the curse that is going forth over the face of the whole land ; surely everyone who steals will be purged away according to the writing on one side, and everyone who swears will be purged away according to the writing on the other side. Zech 5:3

During my days in elementary school, every teacher had a large poster with classroom rules. These rules ranged from "raise your hand to speak" all the way to "keep feet and hands to yourself". As I grew older I saw fewer classroom rule sets in junior high and eventually high school. I also noticed a lot more behavior problems. Am I saying that large posters on the walls of high school classrooms would solve the problem? No, but I think the murkiness of what was acceptable and what wasn't caused many issues.

God is making it clear here that if Israel wants to stay in Jerusalem, things cannot continue as they once had. Sin can no longer be tolerated, and the later part of the chapter shows a woman (sin) being carried away in a basket (and notice that women also carry away the basket...some think this alludes to Mary giving birth to Jesus and overcoming sin). So we see this large flying scroll. It's about 7 1/2 feet wide and 15 feet long and has two sides. On one side there are statements against thieves and the other side deals with those who swear. Apparently these were two big issues that needed to be resolved within the lives of those who were returning to live in Jerusalem. And the words of God were very clear and easily accessible to all so that no one would have an excuse. **In the same way, we lack excuses today. We have the word of God and just because we are ignorant of God's Word doesn't mean that we aren't guilty when we fail to obey it. How many copies do you have in your home? How often do you read it? When you read, what do you do with what you've read? Do you pray about issues that you didn't understand or that you clearly saw yourself in? God has written His word so that we will know what we are to get close to and what we are to stay away from.**

Read Zechariah 6

Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the LORD, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices . Zech 6:13

Sports management has developed a new job position over the past decade that is the dream of every coach. Instead of just coaching the games, these coaches also want to be in charge of personnel decisions. Usually there is a general manager who signs the players and then the coach uses those players. But what if the man who coached the games could pick his players? Wouldn't the performance on the field be more likely to improve when he can pick players that work in his system? It depends on how well he does both jobs. Some coaches have done a terrific job of this, while some have proven they should stick to one job at a time.

Jesus has more than one job in your life; He is not just the spiritual authority. Verse 13 says there will be peace between the office of king and priest, and that is a clear description of Jesus Christ. He wants control of your life between Sundays. And as believers, we have promised Him that control, and He is definitely capable of bringing all areas of your under His subjection. **But think in your life if He has it? Even on Sundays, is Jesus honored throughout the day, or just while you're in church? Do you live out that Sabbath obeying the commands of Jesus in how you treat the waitress or love your family? On Monday, does your faith in Christ affect how you work at your job, manage your home, or how you interact with your teachers? Christianity is giving up the reigns of your life, in every area, to a God who wants complete control in order to make you the person He desires for you to be.**

Read Zechariah 7

Thus has the LORD of hosts said, 'Dispense true justice and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother; Zech 7:9

A soldier was driving home drunk one evening and was pulled over by a local police officer. When the officer asked for his driver's license, the soldier handed it over with his military id. After checking it out for a few minutes, the officer asked the soldier how much further it was to his house. The soldier claimed it wasn't far, and the officer followed him home safely and then never reported the incident. This isn't right. We need to treat one another fairly, and the compassion we show to a friend should be the same we show a stranger.

As God brings His people home He wants them to be different. No longer would people charge insane interest against a fellow Jew. No longer would you be treated differently by knowing the right people. Everyone knows the same God and He deals with us all the same. Every one of us are judged and examined by one standard...God. So stop allowing there to be a difference in the way you treat people. **Everyone has been created by God in His image, and deserves compassion and the love of Christ to be shown towards them. The longer I walk with Jesus, the more I understand His compassion. Those who have received it, should be giving it. Who are you looking upon with contempt**

instead of concern? Who isn't good enough for you? How are you judging people differently, and is it a standard that pleases God?

Read Zechariah 8

Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you. Zech 8:23

While I was growing up I never gave any consideration to becoming a Christian. I didn't know anyone who ever talked to me about my need to be saved. I never met anyone who claimed to be a Christian who was anything but a jerk to me in elementary school and junior high. I finally came to know Christ when very compassionate older believer took interest in me and helped me to learn about the love of Jesus for me.

Leading up to this time in Zechariah, Israel has constantly been despised. Whether they were the least of nations confined to Babylon or the greatest under kings like David and Solomon, Israel was never sought out for honor by the people of other nations. That is until we see verse 23. Who are these men who are coming to the Jews to know of their God? These are Gentiles like me, who have heard about the salvation that came through Jesus Christ and that the promises of Abraham are for us too. **And so I ask, who is grasping onto you as a believer? Just as the Gentiles sought out the Messiah amongst the Jews, is anyone seeking Him out in your life? Does your faith cause you to live differently than most people around you? If so, whether for better or worse, people will come to you about your faith. They may come looking to understand as you do, or to tear you down so they feel better about their sin. But you should decide today to become a beacon of salvation amongst lost people who need to hear about the one and only way to Heaven. Who has God been sending to you, but you've been withholding the message from?**

Read Zechariah 9

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout *in triumph*, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Zech 9:9

Have you ever had to go somewhere and meet up with a person you've never met? I've sold things online before and sometimes you have to meet up with a person somewhere to finish the transaction. So if we meet at a central location for both of us the conversation usually includes a description of our cars and something personal: I'm wearing a red hat or a yellow shirt. We don't want to wander around all day when we could have just asked what the other person looked like.

Here is one of many descriptions of Jesus that we find in the Old Testament, preparing the Jews for the coming of the Messiah. Why do we find such specific descriptions of Jesus? Isaiah told us Jesus would be born of a virgin. Micah told us that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. Here Zechariah tells us that the people will shout for their king as he rides in on the colt of a donkey. And while this sounds like the silliest of all the

prophecies, if this had never been fulfilled, then Jesus would have been a liar. Even the most obscure prophecy had to be fulfilled by Jesus because God is not a God of oversights. **What promise of God do you tend to remember? Do you remember that He will never leave or forsake you? Do you find yourself recalling that if we confess our sins, that He is faithful and just to forgive them? No matter what scripture and promise of God you might be holding onto, it's sufficient. If God said it one time, it's valid. Jesus loved us enough to humble Himself, even to the point of death on a cross. He did that because He has a great love for you. Consider that love today, and all the ways God has shown it to us. That love was visible even as Jesus rode in on that donkey.**

Read Zechariah 10

I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them back, because I have had compassion on them; And they will be as though I had not rejected them, for I am the LORD their God and I will answer them. Zech 10:6

When I was in high school, Crime Stoppers was a regular commercial on TV in our town. It gave quick blurbs about local crimes and asked the public for help in catching the criminals. At the end of each commercial, informants were offered two things: cash and anonymity, so tipsters would be assured that whoever they snitched on wouldn't know it was them.

Some people don't want to take responsibility for punishment being level on another person. God is not this way. He makes it clear that He had rejected the Jews for a time while He brought discipline on them in order to bring them to repentance. And now look as God prepares to restore, it is all about Him. "I will strengthen", "I will save", "I will bring them back". It wasn't the work of Israel that restored them, but God's compassion and willingness to save. **Are you allowing God to work in your life, or do you see the work as yours alone? I sometimes forget that I am a co-laborer with Christ and that He works in me and allows me to work. I cannot serve Him without Him, and so part of the issue is that I need to be reminded that I serve Him, and not other way around. I have a great need to acknowledge this fact on a regular basis.**

Read Zechariah 11

Then the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter, *that* magnificent price at which I was valued by them." So I took the thirty *shekels* of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD. Zech 11:13

As I was reading this passage, I understood that this is a prophecy of the betrayal of Judas, right down to the amount of money he would receive. Didn't the Pharisees read the scriptures? Wouldn't this number be in their minds, because they were the ones who set the price for Judas' betrayal. But also in this verse, Zechariah is instructed to throw the money to the potter. After Judas returned the money, the Pharisees refused to put it back into the treasury because of what it had been used for. So they bought a field from a local

potter. This prophecy was completely fulfilled down the number of pieces of silver and even who the money would go to.

And despite all of this, there are so many times that we fail to turn our lives over to the plans of God. We don't understand God's plans, but He has them together down to the smallest detail. Yet, it is our responsibility to follow them. Every time we choose sin, we reject God's plans. **Sin is always a detour because God never approves of sin or allows room for it. So when we choose to disobey God, we delay the wonderful things He has planned for us. Have you asked God to show you His plans for today? Are you willing to trust them, or do you simply say you are. Your faith is proved by what you do, not what you say.**

Read Zechariah 12

I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. Zech 12:10

Watching the Passion of the Christ the first time, I walked away with a profound sense of everything Jesus went through because of my sin. There were weeks of discussions on who killed Jesus, and whether the Jews or the Romans were to blame. Ultimately, we're all to blame. If we weren't sinners, then there would have been no need for Jesus to go to the cross. But we are, so He did. How easily we forget the sacrifice that brought us salvation.

God is laying out the final days of history here, and He says that Israel will have many enemies, but no greater ally than Himself. Israel constantly finds itself on somebody's hit list, but the fact that God loves Israel and calls them His own is what preserves them. This was the nation that directly rejected His Son. So often He called loudly to them throughout history, only to be ignored and exchanged for worthless idols. But one day, Israel will recognize the one they pierced. They will mourn for Him and recognize the sacrifice, just as we did early in the days of our salvation. **It's time we remember the one who was pierced for us. Jesus died not so that we could go to church or Heaven. He died to take away the punishment for our sins. He was saving us from Hell more than He was sending us to Heaven. And what are we doing in light of that sacrifice? If that news is so good, who have you told about it? Jesus paid a terrible price for our terrible lives, and yet we continue to allow sin to have victory in our lives. Remember the one who was pierced, and that He wants to see good things coming out of your life as a result.**

Read Zechariah 13

"And I will bring the third part through the fire, refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. 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 my God.' " Zech 13:9

In my defense, I decided I wanted to name my son Tyler when I was in high school. But now that he is 9, I realize that there are a ton of Tyler's out there. Going to his football games, I heard "Tyler" called out several times on different teams. So why didn't my son go running to each of these parents as they called out to him? Because He didn't know them, and is not obligated to respond just because they started yelling out his name.

I actually heard an atheist use this verse as his proof that God does not exist. He said that God claims to be ready to answer when we call on Him. So the atheist would say, "God answer me." Then he would count to five and say because God didn't answer, this verse was untrue and God didn't exist. The truth is that God responds to His people, and those who truly know Him understand that God isn't yelling out to each and every one of us in the same way. We call on His name and then we wait for Him to respond in our prayers, our reading of the Bible, through godly counsel of others, and sometimes just through circumstances. **Call on the Lord and wait on Him to answer in His timing and His way. Watch that your expectations aren't actually attempting limitations on God. I praise Him that He speaks through the Bible. I can underline, memorize, and reference over and over these answers that I have sought from Him. So be prepared to call on God, and open yourself up to hear Him in the many ways He is capable.**

Read Zechariah 14

People will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security. Zech 14:11

During a visit to a dangerous neighborhood outside Birmingham, Alabama, I noticed that most of the homes had what are known as "burglar bars" that covered the windows. These are hardened steel bars that are not moved, but prevent access to the home through open windows as a means of security. One of the drawbacks was that when houses in the area caught on fire, people found themselves fatally trapped inside rooms due to their own security measures.

Security rarely seems to be a sure thing. Security guards, security systems, security procedures never can eliminate all the dangers and threats we face in life. But God is offering a Jerusalem a different kind of security. This is a reference to the final days as we enter the end of human time, and the beginning of eternity for all of God's creation. Jerusalem is a city that has been wiped out and rebuilt countless times. Their future as a nation today seems as perilous as it did when they first left Egypt. But this will not always be the case. One day, this Jerusalem will stand for all of God's people who have entered in His family through Jesus Christ. **Do you look forward to your eternity with apprehension? Sometimes the prospect of death can feel so overwhelming that Christians begin to worry about what will happen to them. Will their salvation be judged as real? Is there some step they missed that God has been waiting to check off the list for them? The reality is, you have never been more secure than you are in the salvation of Jesus. It's not a security that starts at eternity, but one that is verified into eternity. As a believer in Jesus, our security and our eternity began at the moment of our salvation. Let's live in the comfort of that knowledge.**