



Looking Inwards (15 mins) Caring For Each Other

Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an opportunity to share, not something you have to do, however, 'It's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:

- Thanksgiving?
- Prayer?
- Encouragement?
- Support in any way?



Looking Outwards (15 mins) Concern For Others

Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours or church, which you would like to share (please be sure not pass on anything that is confidential or which you think the person concerned would not wish to be shared) for:

- Thanksgiving?
- Prayer?
- Encouragement?
- Support in any way?

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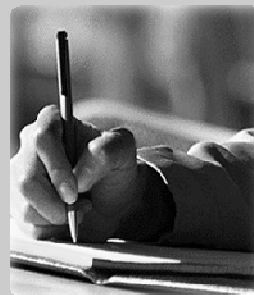


God's Big Plan For A Struggling People 6/6 HG133: True Confidence

Zechariah 12 - 14

Home Group Study Notes

27 November 2016 - Revd Paul A. Carr



**PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION
BEFORE THE MEETING!**

Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group with you, along with any previous notes and other resources which might be helpful.



Welcome (10 mins) Ice Breaker

What can you do, practically, to encourage your family and friends to attend one of our Christmas events this year?



Looking Upwards (10 mins) Worship

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...



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HG133: True Confidence

Zechariah 12 - 14

Home Group Sermon Notes

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In these final three chapters, Zechariah delivers a specific word about Jesus' return. It seems quite appropriate (along with a little bit of planning!) that we finish this series on Advent Sunday. Zechariah describes three key events in these chapters:

1. The Lord will DELIVER Jerusalem 12:1-9; 14:1-7

Jerusalem is mentioned fifty-two times in the Book of Zechariah and twenty-two of these references are in the final three chapters. In 1:14 Zechariah told us that God was "jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy." This statement reveals the heart of a loving Father for His first-born (Ex 4:22) and the desire of a faithful Husband for His unfaithful bride (Jer, 2:2; 3:2). God's timing isn't always what we would have planned, but He is wiser than we are and will keep His promises to Israel.

Jerusalem will be attacked (12:1-3; 14:1-2) The prophesy opens with an affirmation of God's sovereignty and power. If we look above us, we see the heavens He created; if we look beneath us, we see the earth that He founded; and if we look within, we find the spirit that He formed. The God of creation is the God who cares for us! "Great is our Lord and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite. The Lord lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked down to the ground" (Ps. 147:5-6, NKJV). Note the emphasis on "all nations" and "all peoples" (Zech. 12:2-3, 6, 9; 14:2, 12, 14, 16), for this attack involves the armies of the whole world and is part of the famous "battle of Armageddon" described in Joel 3:9-16; Matthew 24:27-30; and Revelation 9:13-18; 16:12-16; and 19:17-21. Three forces are involved in the gathering of this great army: 1) the nations agree to cooperate in their fight against God and His people (Ps. 2: 1-3); 2) Satan uses demonic powers to influence the nations to gather (Rev. 16:13-15); and 3) the Lord exercises His sovereign powers in gathering them (Zech. 14:2; Rev. 16:16).

To describe Jerusalem's situation "in that day," Zechariah used the images of a cup and a stone. A cup is a familiar biblical image for judgment (Ps. 75:8; Isa. 51:17,21-23; Jer. 25:15-28; Ezek. 23:31-33; Hab. 2:16; Rev. 14:10; 16:19; 18:6). The nations plan to "swallow up" Jerusalem, but when they begin to "drink the cup," its contents makes them sick and drunk! History shows that every nation that has ever tried to destroy the Jews has itself been destroyed. It will be no different when the nations collectively attack God's chosen people. But the Gentiles' hopes of destroying the city/nation will be disappointed, for the Lord will make Jerusalem like an immovable rock that won't yield. This stone will eventually cut the invading armies to pieces.

The Lord will visibly appear (14:3-7) Jesus ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:9-12), and when He returns to earth, He will stand on the Mount of Olives and cause a great earthquake to change the landscape (Isa. 29:6; Rev. 16:18-19).

4: Zechariah 13-14 promises certain victory for followers of Jesus. How does assurance of ultimate victory change the way you view temporary failures?

5: Zechariah ends with a dramatic picture of holiness pervading throughout Jerusalem. What would be different about you if the Lord's holiness permeated to the smallest parts of your own personal life?

6: As you have worked your way through our series on Zechariah, what has challenged you the most? What has encouraged you the most? What will you 'carry' with you into your future Christian life?



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



Looking Upwards (40 mins) Bible Study

Read the text for this study, and any references given, then answer the following questions. You may find it helpful to listen to the sermon and/or read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, your answers with your Home Group and, remember, these questions are only a guide to start your discussions.

1: What are some practical spiritual benefits of understanding Biblical prophecy concerning the return of Jesus? Can you list some ways that His return affects the way you will live your life today?

2: Zechariah 12:5 indicates that the Lord will use His deliverance of Jerusalem, during the Battle of Armageddon to awaken its residents' faith in Jesus. How does this coming event affect your prayers for Jerusalem, Gaza, Palestine and the Middle East?

3: God promises to use the tribulation of the end times to purify Israel. How do trials and persecution refine believers and confirm our relationship to the Lord?

The Lord will defeat the enemy (12:4-9; 14:12-15) 'The Lord is a man of war' sang the Jews after they were delivered from Egypt (Ex. 15:3) and before the nation entered the Promised Land, Moses promised them that the Lord would fight for them (Deut 1:30; 3:22). "Who is the King of glory?" asked David; and his answer was, "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle" (Ps, 24:8).

Panic, a plague, and special power given to the Jewish warriors (12:8) are the means God will use to conquer the invading armies. God will watch over His people and see to it that they are delivered. He will make the Jews to be like fire and their enemies like dry stubble. Jesus will demonstrate His great power as He defends His people.

2. The Lord will CLEANSE Israel 12:10-13:9

In delivering Israel from her enemies, God's ultimate goal is more than their national preservation, their spiritual restoration is uppermost in His heart. He wants to establish the kind of relationship that was impossible in previous centuries because of their unbelief. The people will repent (12:10-14). Repentance isn't something we work up ourselves; it's a gift from God as we hear His Word and recognize His grace (Acts 5:31; 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25). God will pour out the Spirit' upon Israel (Joel 2:28-29), and the people will realize their sins and call out to God for forgiveness. They will also see their Messiah whom the nation pierced (Ps 22:16; Isa. 53:5; John 19:34, 37) and will put their faith in Him.

Zechariah mentions that all the families (clans) of Israel will mourn, the men and women separately, and this will include royalty (David's clan), the prophets (Nathan's clan), and the priests (Levi's and Shimei's clans). "All the families that remain" covers the rest of the nation. It will be a time of deep and sincere national repentance such as has not been seen before.

The nation will be cleansed (13:1-7) Isaiah had admonished the nation, "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes" (Isa. 1:16, NKJV), but they refused to listen. Jeremiah had pleaded with his people, "O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, that you may be saved" (Jer, 4:14, NKJV), but they wouldn't obey. But now, in response to Israel's repentance and faith, the Lord will wash them clean! This forgiveness is part of the new covenant that God promised to His people (Jer, 31:31-34): "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

But not only will their hearts be cleansed, the land itself will be purged too. The idols and the false prophets will be removed, as well as the very "unclean spirit" that caused people to turn from God (Zech. 5:5-11). According to the Law, false prophets were to be killed (Deut 13); so the false prophets in that day will lie about their occupation in order to save their lives (13:2-6). They won't wear their special garments (2 Kings 1:8; Matt. 3: 4), and they'll claim to be farmers rather than prophets.

In contrast to the false prophets, the true Shepherd is presented in Zechariah 13:7. (Look again at ch11). But the Jews had crucified their Shepherd on the cross (Isa. 53:10) and this act of rejection led to the nation being scattered (Deut 28:64; 29:24-25). Israel today is a dispersed people, but one day they shall be gathered; they are a tainted people, but one day they shall be cleansed.

The nation will be refined (13:8-9) This image reminds us of the value God puts on His people: they are like gold and silver that need to be refined in the furnace of affliction. This had been their experience in Egypt (Deut 4:20) and in Babylon (Isa. 48:10), but "the time of Jacob's trouble" will be their most difficult "furnace experience."

The goldsmith refines the gold or silver so that the dross may be removed, and that's what the Tribulation in the last days will accomplish for Israel. One third of the people will be spared, the true believing remnant, while the rest will be rejected and perish. That godly remnant who called on the Lord (Acts 2:21) will be saved and become the nucleus of the promised kingdom, for the Lord will acknowledge them as His own people (see Hosea 2:21-23).

Before we leave this section, what is the spiritual application for God's people today? Certainly, we are a sinful people who need to repent and be cleansed, and the promise of forgiveness is still valid (1 John 1:9). God often has to put us through the furnace of suffering before we'll call on Him and seek His face (Heb. 12:3-11; 1 Peter 4:12). If God's people will follow the instructions of 2 Chronicles 7:14, the Lord will cleanse and bless the church and bring healing to the land.

3. The Lord will REIGN over all the earth 14:8-11; 16-21

"And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one" (14:9). After the nations have been punished and Israel has been purified, the Lord will establish His righteous kingdom and reign on David's throne (Luke 1:32-33; Rev. 17:14; 19:16). His reign will be universal, He will be the only God worshiped, and His name will be the only name honoured. (See Ps. 72; Jer. 30:7-9.) What will happen when the King reigns supremely?

The land will be healed (14:8) Jerusalem is the only great city of antiquity that wasn't built near a large river. But during the Kingdom Age, a river of "living waters" will flow from Jerusalem and bring healing and fertility to the land. (See Ezek. 47:1-12 and Joel 3:18.) The river will divide so the waters can flow to the Dead Sea and to the Mediterranean. For centuries people have been wondering how the Dead Sea could be rescued, but it won't be accomplished until the new kingdom arrives (For a beautiful description of the land during the Kingdom Age, read Isaiah 35).

The landscape will be changed (14:10-11) Besides the changes caused by the earthquake at Jesus' return, two other changes will occur: 1) the land around Jerusalem will be lowered and levelled and become a plain; 2) Jerusalem itself will be raised above the land around it. These changes will be the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy: "Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it" (Isa. 2:2, NKJV; and see Zech. 8:1-3 and Micah 4:1-3). Jerusalem will be the most important city on earth and the temple area the most important part of that glorious new city.

All dangers will be removed (14:11) The city no longer faces danger from enemy invasion (Ezek. 34:22-31) because the Messiah is reigning. Zechariah has already told us that the children will play in the streets, and the old men and women will sit in the sun and talk together (Zech. 8:4-8).

The Gentiles will worship at Jerusalem (14:16) Israel will have a ministry to the Gentiles who will trust the true and living God and come to Jerusalem to worship at His temple (Isa. 2:2-5; Zech. 2:10-13).

The Lord will exercise Justice (14:17-19) The nations that don't send their representatives to Jerusalem to worship will be disciplined by getting no rain for their land. This is the way God disciplined Israel when she refused to obey Him (Deut 28:22-24). Egypt is mentioned specifically because that nation especially depended on the annual flooding of the Nile for irrigation, and without the rains, the river could not rise.

Holiness will characterise all of life (14:20-21) Why would the common utensils in the home be treated like vessels used in the temple? This is God's way of saying, "In the Kingdom Age every aspect of life will be holy to the Lord."

God had called Israel to be "a kingdom of priests" (Ex. 19:6), and now they would be just that by God's grace. For the believer today, this is the Old Testament version of 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (NKJV). There is no "secular" or "sacred" in the Christian life, because everything comes from God and should be used for His glory.

Conclusion

Well, that's the book of Zechariah. In Ezra 6:14 we are told that the people prospered through the message of Zechariah. I hope you have prospered through this short sermon series just as much as Pauline and I have as we've prepared our talks. It's not been an easy one to follow but it's been full of so much truth and gives us so much hope when we know that God is in control and that he has a plan for his world but also for Jerusalem and his chosen people - and that includes us! The theme of Zechariah can be summed up in one word: Jesus.

- In chapter 1 He's the RIDING one.
- In chapter 2 He's the MEASURING one.
- In chapter 3 He's the CLEANSING one.
- In chapter 4 He's the EMPOWERING one.
- In chapter 5 He's the JUDGING one.
- In chapter 6 He's the CROWNED one.
- In chapter 7 He's the REBUKING one.
- In chapter 8 He's the RESTORING one.
- In chapter 9 He's the KINGLY one.
- In chapter 10 He's the BLESSING one.
- In chapter 11 He's the SHEPHERDING one.
- In chapter 12 He's the RETURNING one.
- In chapter 13 He's the SMITTEN one.
- In chapter 14 He's the REIGNING one.

The Bible promises that Jesus Christ is coming. His second coming is mentioned repeatedly in the OT. In fact, there are more prophecies about the second coming of Jesus in the OT than there are about His first coming. All nine authors of the NT mention the second coming of Jesus in some way. But why does God's word keep revealing, over and over again, the second coming of Jesus? There are many reasons. Knowing that Jesus is coming again gives us hope. His return reminds us of the certainty of God's promise and causes us to remember His faithfulness, His justice and our salvation. The reality of Jesus' return encourages us to be aware of His power that works in our lives right now. The second coming reminds us of God's love for His people and that His Lordship will prevail. Moreover, the second coming reminds us that God has a plan for the ages. Though the world may seem like it's spinning out of control, the promise of the second coming assures us that God is still ruling and reigning over time, history, and eternity. Ultimately, He has everything fully under His control. All of these things are taught to us through truth of the second coming of Jesus. Zechariah saw Jesus. I hope you do too.

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

2 Chronicles 7:14