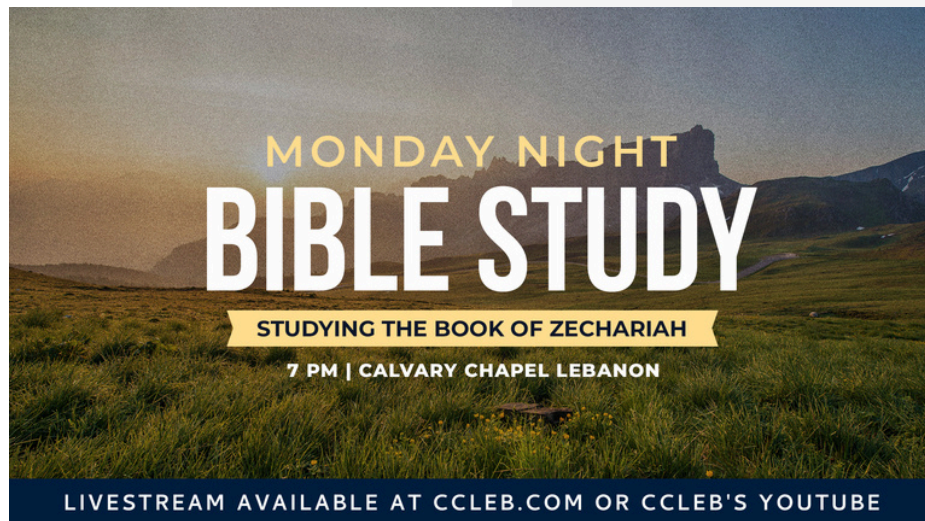


CCLEB BIBLE STUDY

NOTES

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ZECHARIAH 10 PART 2

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Verse 8: God will whistle to gather His people from the nations they were scattered to. Zechariah prophesied while the Jews were returning from Persia after Babylonian captivity. They came in waves from about 540ishBC-the 400sBC. So maybe, in one way, this was talking about God whistling for them in Zechariah's day. In fact, when Zechariah was prophesying this, I believe he thought he was talking about the returns going on in his day, but I think this is epigenetic—two Greek words, epi: upon, or along, genetic: genes, so along the genes, meaning that it happens once then happens again, like if your great grandpa has a medical condition, but your grandpa doesn't, and your dad doesn't, but you do, it passes along the genes—but I believe this is epigenetic because after this return of the Jews, they are removed once again in 135AD. Then, after being displaced for the next 1800 years, they were brought back to the land after WWII.

Now, that is not to say that the Jews won't be displaced again and be brought back again, but hopefully, this whistling is going on now. With all that has happened in history, what stands between now and the rapture? Nothing. But even if there is another dispersion of the Jews **Verse 8**

With the dispersion of the Jewish people from their land, the promise to Abraham was called into question. God told Abraham that He would give his children the land of Canaan, which became the land of Israel. **Genesis 15:9-21**

But when the Jews were kicked out of the land, it looked like God had rejected this promise, this covenant to Abraham. But God made this promise with a covenant cutting ritual Abraham would have been very familiar with. Abraham cut some animals in half, laid them on a slope so the blood would flow in a stream, then God walked through it, essentially saying, "May what happened to these animals happen to Me if I do not keep my part of the bargain." Now Abraham did not have to walk through these pieces, so Abraham was not required to keep an end of the bargain. The covenant was to him because of a promise God made to him.

So when the Jews were removed from their land, it looked like God had failed to keep His end of the bargain. But here we are 4,000 years later, and who lives there? Israel. Now, every time that God made a covenant with Israel that Israel was required to keep their end, Israel failed to keep it.

Not only Israel, but also all of humanity. So humanity had to pay, and how did they pay? Jesus came as the representative of Israel, of humanity, and took the punishment so that God could keep His covenant, not only with Israel, but with all humanity. With you and with me, that if we call on Jesus as our Savior, we will escape judgment, and Israel will occupy that land they do today.

Verse 9: Though He has sent them to distant nations, though they are far away from the promised land, they will remember the Lord. This makes me think of **Jeremiah 29:1-14**.

God tells the people of Israel to keep living life even though they are in captivity. Not to give up, feel sorry for themselves, or lose hope. Just because they are in a place of punishment, a place of captivity, does not mean that God is not with them and will not keep them. Captivity, punishment can be shaping times in our lives. That is really good news. If Russia was to take over the United States, think of the fears you would have. Is it safe to have children if they would be treated lesser than? Is it safe to go out in public, do business in the markets, live life at all? God's word to His people is that He is going to be with them and prosper them. I know recently, the stuff they are teaching in public schools have been enough to question whether or not we can even trust our own country.

But who knows, it could be that this very captivity, this punishment, is the thing that makes His Name known among the nations. **Matthew 2:1-12**

Well who are these "wise men from the East?" The word is Magoi, and it comes from the Persian word meaning scholar or priest. Well, where were the Jews in captivity? Persia. Who spoke about a coming Messiah who lived in Persia? Daniel. But knowledge of this star was known outside of Israel, for Balaam, who would have likely lived North of Israel and was a non-Israelite diviner, is quoted in **Numbers 24:17-19**.

As the Israelites were called to go on living a faithful life in the nations where they were captive, foreigners so to say, so we, as strangers in a strange land, foreigners to earthly soil are to live out God's Kingdom here and now, while we await His whistle. **1 Peter 2:1-12**

A couple years ago I was doing a weekly Bible study with a church in Burma. Now, if you aren't familiar with what is going on in Burma, there was a military coup in February of 2021, where the military threw the democratic leaders in prison and took over by martial law. They are treating the people terribly, doing airstrikes, midnight raids taking people to prison and/or torturing them, and a friend I met at Seminary, Naing Thang, has been stuck in the US since then. He has an 8 year old daughter he has never met in person.

But anyway, I was doing this Bible study with them, and one particular study, I was getting the sense that I was being asked what I thought about them joining the resistance movement for the civil war. My encouragement to them was to spread the Gospel. The number 1 religion in Burma is Buddhism. Buddhism teaches that you should avoid all emotions, escapism is a way to say it, because if you experience emotions it keeps you trapped in this flesh, and you won't reach Nirvana—the enlightened spiritual state. But, how do you escape your emotions when bombs are blowing up around you and bullets are whizzing by your head?

But Christianity's answer for suffering and persecution?

"Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce. Marry and have children. Then find spouses for them so that you may have many grandchildren. Multiply! Do not dwindle away! And work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare."

Verse 9: A final word about **verse 9** is that the word for "return," and the word for "bring them back" in **verse 10** is the word Shuv. Shuv is one of the Hebrew words translated as repent, but this particular word means to turn. An example of it being the word for repent comes up in **Jeremiah 25:5 NKJV**.

The word for repent there is Shuv. But Repentance has the idea of turning back. So, we are called by God to repent, to turn from our sin, and turn to God. Here in Zechariah, God is telling the people that He will turn them back to the land, which He promised to give them. When they turn from evil God will turn them back to their land.

Verse 10: Lebanon to the North, Gilead just to the East of Jordan, were both centers of fertility. Gilead was a land with high elevation and plenty of rain. Lebanon, of course, was known for its great cedars, growing as tall as 60 foot high. These were prized by many in the ancient east, as small trees produced small boards, and large trees produced large boards. With large boards you could build large buildings such as palaces and temples. Solomon's palace and the first temple were built with these cedars. Lebanon, particularly Tyre, also used the cedars to build ships, not boats, but ships. These were able to be driven by, at the height of their navy prowess, 300 oarmen.

Tyre was the capital of Lebanon. God had a lot to say about Lebanon in the Bible. Perhaps you wonder why.

Verse 10: But whatever Gilead and Lebanon were, Israel would be settling there. You know, the idea of cities is not necessarily a good thing in the Old Testament. God told them in Genesis to be fruitful, multiply, and bring the garden to the ends of the earth. Then they build the Tower of Babel, concentrate together, so God confuses their language and disperses them. But here, God is ultra concentrating the Jews to a small area. **Verse 10**

I don't think the point of this Old Testament idea is that cities are evil, but that God wants us to influence and occupy to the ends of the earth. Once the earth is influenced and occupied, you have no choice but to be concentrated in central areas, or cities. So, if you live in the city, don't feel like you have to move to the country to obey God. We have spread out pretty well.

I believe the way the concept about cities applies to us today is that Jesus tells us to take the gospel to the ends of the earth, and when we keep our faith in churches, it is kind of like building a city when God tells you to spread the garden. Church is vital to our walk with God, but so is living and sharing our faith with those who are not in the church. If our faith stays in the church, no one will ever hear about it.

Verse 10-11: Now we are getting into some Exodus language. The first part, of course, is that God will bring them back from the land of Egypt. This is, of course, coupled with Israel being brought back from Assyria, seeming to make a comparison. In the same way that God brought Israel out of Egypt, so He will whistle for them and bring them out of Assyria/Babylon/Persia.

The next word is "They shall pass." The Hebrew word is "avur," and it is the word used when God "passes over" the houses with the lamb's blood. It is also the word used when the Israelites "pass through" the Red Sea. And, in **verse 11**, this sea is described as the sea of affliction. The word for affliction is Tsarah.

So, to the reader in Zechariah's day, the connection is clear. The call out of Assyria/Babylon/Persia is like the call out of Egypt. These lands where the Jews were sent into exile will be judged, while God blesses His people. This will be true for every land that Israel was taken captive in, and this will be true for the land that oppresses the people of God, His church.

But if the whistling here is simply another calling His people out of Egypt, what good will it do? When the Israelites came out of Egypt what did they do? They rebelled and were sent back into exile. Then God brought them back again after Babylonian exile. Then they were exiled again after rejecting Jesus. And now they are there again, only, it is not a peaceful existence. Is this the rest, the Shabbath for God's people? They get the land but have to keep fighting for it?

The exile of God's people is not here or there, it is now. We are exiled from God's presence in a land that is hostile to Him, does not fear Him, does not know Him.

Egypt, in the Exodus is representative of our sinful lifestyle. When God calls us out of Egypt, He calls us out of sin and into freedom. **Hebrews 3-4:13**

We, like the Israelites still wait for a Sabbath rest. The best day you have ever had is not worth comparing to what God has coming. It is worth stretching out your tent, building your house in the land of captivity because God will bring you safely through this exile to the Sabbath rest that remains for the people of God, and when He does that, we can be confident, because **Verse 12**

You know, sometimes the prepositions used in the Bible can be confusing. "In the Lord," "in the Name," "through Christ," "through faith," such as that. What is it saying? "I will strengthen them 'in' the LORD, and they shall walk up and down 'in' His Name." I think it is right on par with **Zechariah 4:10** which says, "Not by power or by might, but by My Spirit, says the LORD." But again, "by" My Spirit. That is a little more clear, in that it is not your strength that will get you through, but God's strength. God will supernaturally come alongside you and help you through.

There is a principle in hermeneutics, that's a 50 cent word, but hermeneo is a Greek word that means to interpret, so hermeneutics means interpretation. But the principle is: The less clear passages are to be interpreted by the clear passages. "Not by power or by might, but by My Spirit, says the LORD," shines light on what **Verse 12** is saying.

What the NLT is doing, is using easier to understand language to say what this verse is saying **Verse 12**

God is going to give the world to His people as an inheritance. We will be with Him, He will be our God, and by the authority of His Name—because He is God and no one else is above Him— this earth will be ours. But it will come, not by power: not by a political ruler, not on Air Force One. Not by might: not through war, not through fighting. But through God redeeming creation to Himself.

And if we are to take away application from tonight's and last week's teaching, maybe a better way of saying it is, "How do I live out God's Kingdom here and now?"

1. By taking bold confidence in that you are forgiven if you have made Christ your Lord and Savior, there is no sin, past, present, or future that can take you out of His kingdom.
2. That your motivation to work out your sanctification and put sin to death is not fear of judgment, but love for the Savior. Sin is death, sanctification is life.
3. Build a house, sure, a temporary house, but build a house in the presence of the people around you as a foreigner and stranger. You don't belong here, so you don't do what they do, you do what God does, and that will show them Christ. Geography?
4. Finally, a Sabbath rest remains for God's people, and we will inherit this earth. We will live in peace and harmony, with God Himself as our ruler and friend, and we will live forever without the corruption of decay. No more death, no more arthritis, no more sciatica issues, only joy.

I wonder how many prisoners of war have been spared due to pity, when they looked and saw the whites of their eyes.

But in God's case, there is a final judgment. When that judgment comes, the time for pity will be over. This time we live in now, is the time of pity, it is the time of grace. God could have wiped us all out, but instead He sent His Son, that whoever believes in Him, would not perish but have eternal life. God did not send His Son to condemn the world, but the world was already condemned, because they did not believe in the message of pity from God when He came near and saw the whites in their eyes.

Verse 16-17: And finally, to close out the chapter, we see that the battle belongs to the Lord. The Lord will rescue His people, the Lord will Shepherd His flock. Just a couple chapters before, Zechariah 4, God says, "Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit." That is how the battle is fought, that is how the battle is won. It is not my eloquence that communicates the word of God to you tonight, but His Spirit. It is not your charm that wins people to Christ, it is His Spirit. Rely on His Spirit, and He will use you. God does not call the equip, but equips the called, by His Spirit.

The final thing to say, is that God says, His people will sparkle like jewels, they will be wonderful and beautiful. You hear that? God says that you are like a jewel in a crown. You are wonderful and beautiful. How many of us struggle with self-image? That is not because of anything God has said. Part of our walk of faith is seeing ourselves how God sees us, not how we and the world define us.

In the same way that it takes time to trust God fully in matters like: provision, sanctification, not fearing death, etc. So it takes times to put off how we view ourselves, and put on how God views us. One thing I hear quite often, is people saying, "I just can't forgive myself." Well, I have good news for you, you don't have to. Your forgiveness cost nothing more than the life of the eternal Son of God, God of very God, and the issue is not you forgiving yourself, it is grasping the scope of the payment that was paid for YOU. God thought it not worth staying in the comforts of heaven for YOU! God became a servant for: YOU! God suffered for YOU! God was tortured and crucified for: YOU! And the greatest news of all, which gives us great hope, God was raised from the dead for YOU! And because He was raised, you too will be raised if you trust Him for salvation.

We are all on different levels of sanctification. Some don't see how ends will meet and panic, some are confident God will provide. The confident ones have panicked before, they have just had several examples of God providing in their life. So it is with seeing yourself as God sees you. The world will chew you up and spit you out. The world will tell you you are a worthless pile of rubble, and they will tell you that so they feel better about themselves. But, though in sin we are dust and return to dust, in Christ **Verse 16-17**