CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS

OCTOBER12 2024

Scripture Story: Zechariah 1:1–3:5.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings*, chapter 47.

I want you back!



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flashlight

"The assaults of Satan are strong, his delusions are subtle; but the Lord's eye is upon His people. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but Jesus will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire. Their earthliness will be removed, that through them the image of Christ may be perfectly revealed" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 589).

keytext

"Therefore tell the people: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Return to me,' declares the LORD Almighty, 'and I will return to you,' says the LORD Almighty."

(Zechariah 1:3, NIV)

what do you think?

On a scale from 1 to 10, which of the following challenges would be most difficult (1) to beat, and which would be least challenging (10) to overcome?

___ Your father loses his job.
___ Your application to the college of your choice is denied.
___ Your grandfather dies.
___ Your parents decide to divorce.
___ Your best friend betrays you.
___ You fail the final of your most difficult class.
___ Your negligence while driving causes an accident.
___ You have a really bad habit that you can't seem to shake.

did you know?

Did you know that the name Zechariah means "Yahweh remembers" or "God remembers"? As is the case with many of the Bible's prophets, the name of the prophet is often a summary of the prophet's message. What is the significance of Zechariah's name? God through Zechariah wanted the returning exiles to know that He hadn't forgotten the covenant made with them at Mount Sinai when He gave them the Ten Commandments. In return for their obedience, God had promised to bless them, and He wasn't about to forget His promise.

INTO THE STORY

"In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berekiah, the son of Iddo:

" 'The LORD was very angry with your ancestors. Therefore tell the people: This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Return to me," declares the LORD Almighty, "and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty. Do not be like your ancestors, 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. Where are your ancestors now? And the prophets, do they live forever? But did not my words and my decrees, which I commanded my servants the prophets, overtake your ancestors?

" 'Then they repented and said, "The LORD Almighty has done to us what our ways and practices deserve, just as he determined to do." ' "

" 'Shout and be glad, Daughter Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you,' declares the LORD. 'Many nations will be joined with the LORD in that day and will become my people. I will live among you and you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you.' "

"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. 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?'

"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.'

"Then he said to Joshua, 'See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you.'

"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 will walk in obedience to me 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." ' "

(Zechariah 1:1-6; 2:10, 11; 3:1-7, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What is something that caught your attention in this passage?

_____
_____
_____

List two spiritual insights that you gained after reading the *Into the Story* passage.

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_____

What do you think is the main point that God is making to the people of Judah?

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_____

What word would you use to describe God's tone? Is He angry? calm? loving? judgmental?

_____

Why does God rehash the fact that many of Judah's descendants were disobedient? Why bring that up after Judah has undergone 70 years of brutal captivity?

_____
_____

Circle the promises God made concerning Judah.

Place an X by any Scripture in which you see God's grace extended to His people.

Why do you think God gave Zechariah a vision of Joshua, the high priest, dressed in dirty, tattered clothes? What do you think the dirty clothes symbolize?

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_____
_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: 'Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down' " **(Revelation 12:10, NIV).**

"Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you" **(Acts 13:38, NIV).**

"Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered" **(Psalm 32:1, NIV).**

further insight

"As Satan accused Joshua and his people, so in all ages he accuses those who seek the mercy and favor of God. . . . But He who was the hope of Israel then, their defense, their justification and redemption, is the hope of the church today."—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 585

"The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, faithful children of God."—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 591

Sabbath

Read Zechariah 3.

All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. . . . To assist His people in this controversy, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and the loyal angels to guide, protect, and sustain them in the way of salvation" (Fundamental Belief 8, The Great Controversy).

How is the great controversy revealed in today's Bible passage? What was Satan's response concerning Joshua, the high priest? What was God's response to Joshua? What encouragement can you gain from this story when you are reminded of your sins?

Sunday

Read Zechariah 2:10.

After reading the *Into the Story* section, explore the passage using the *Out of the Story* prompts. The book of Zechariah is made up of several visions that God gives Zechariah to encourage the remnant of Judah that returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the ancient Temple that was destroyed by Babylon.

Put yourself in the shoes of one of the returning members of Judah. Write a sentence expressing how these words would make you feel.

Monday

Read Exodus 19:1-8.

This Sabbath's *Key Text* makes it clear that God stood ready to return to the people of Judah, but Judah had a part to play in the process. What do you think God meant when He said to Judah, "Return to me"?

Many of God's promises to His people are conditional. What did God promise to do in today's Bible reading? What did the people of Israel—of which the tribe of Judah was a part—promise to do?

Do we sometimes expect God to keep His promises to us when we are breaking ours to Him?

Tuesday

Read Genesis 3:21 and Zechariah 3:1-7.

What common elements do you see between these two passages? The Bible calls Satan the "accuser of our brothers and sisters" (Revelation 12:10, NIV).

He tempted and led into sin Adam and Eve and as a result the entire human race plunged into the degradation of sin. After the fall of Adam and Eve, however, God sacrificed a lamb and clothed them in garments made of animal skin. The sacrifice pointed to the Redeemer, to Jesus' sacrificial death to save the human race from sin. In what ways did the clean garments that God gave to Joshua, the high priest, compare to the garments given to Adam and Eve?

While Satan accuses us, God offers each of us a clean robe that represents Christ's righteousness (see Zechariah 3:4). If we accept His robe of righteousness, He will protect us against the accusations of the devil. What will you do to accept Christ's robe of righteousness?

What ray of hope does this week's *Flashlight* shine on our path?

Wednesday

Take a look at this week's *Punch Lines*. This week's Scripture painted a picture of sin's devastating effects. While in vision, Zechariah saw Joshua, the high priest of Judah, dressed in filthy, tattered clothes—something that God would never tolerate, especially for a priest. Joshua's manner of dress symbolized Israel's degraded spiritual condition.

How does God go about fixing this condition?

Do you think Psalm 32:1 accurately captures how you feel when God forgives you of sin? Explain.

Thursday

Read Psalm 139:7-12.

Think of a time in your life you felt abandoned. Perhaps it was after you failed a test, or committed a sin that you'd vowed never to do again. How did you deal with the feeling of separation from God? When you feel abandoned by God, how can the Bible help you reconnect with Him? How can godly friends help you return to God?

Write down your commitment to God to remain faithful to Him:

Friday

Read Zechariah 3:7.

If you will walk in obedience to me 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" (Zechariah 3:7, NIV). Those are the words that the angel of God spoke to Joshua in Jeremiah's dream. God promised Joshua and Judah a place in His kingdom, provided that they remained obedient to His requests.

In what area of your life are you struggling to obey God? Stop right now and pray, asking God to give you the willingness and strength to obey Him.

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings, chapter 47.

**Royalty and Ruin* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it by going to www.cornerstoneconnections.net and clicking on "Conflict of the Ages series." By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.