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**Zechariah’s Joy:**

**Trusting God in Days of Pain - #2**

**March 19th, 2017 - Text: Zech. 1:7-17**

Keith M. Doyle, Lead Pastor – Winnetka Bible Church

**I. Setting:**

**1**. **Returning from exile**

* **Illus. Forgotten – it just doesn’t seem fair?**
* Zechariah = ***‘one whom the Lord remembers’***
* Story inside a big story…***’What kind of story is this we have fallen into?’***
1. **Context:** **How are we to read the promises given to Israel? (4 ways)**
* They are for national Israel (c/f Zech.8:13)
* There is still a future for repentant ‘Israel’ (c/f Rom.11)
* Through Christ Gentiles become partners in the promises (c/f Eph.2:12; Gal.3:29)
* Many of these promises are ‘layered’…partly fulfilled (example: Messiah’s coming in two stages, but this is ‘veiled’ in the OT, Heb.9:26)
1. **Setting**
* Zechariah = ***‘one whom the Lord remembers’***
* **Two main sections:**
* Chap.1-8 – **God will intervene! Trust His Promises!**
* Chap. 9-14 (perhaps 40 years later) – **Messiah (Jesus) is the center of God’s redemptive promises and intervention!**
* **Zech 1:1-6 we saw a call to *‘return to me…’***
1. **Summary Theme:**
* ***It is an encouragement to God’s discouraged and frightened people to pursue Him, because He will keep ALL His covenant promises (despite current circumstances) – most important of which is to send a Messiah!***
* 8 ‘Night Visions’ will teach Zechariah and His people something about God, themselves and their situation…but will also point to future Messianic hope…

***Q. Where do you turn when you feel forgotten? (temporary vs. eternal perspective)***

**II. The Message (7-9, 11 *‘…a man riding on a red horse!...’*)**

1. **The Vision Described**
* It is the ***‘word of the Lord’*** (7)
* A man…riding on a red horse…in a ravine…among myrtle trees…
* Behind him are other horses (some red, sorrel, white, 8)
* The rider of the red horse is clearly the ‘prominent one’, v.11 (‘***angel of the Lord’***)

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1. **A Scene of War**
* War horses’ (military, especially red ones)…In the midst of myrtle trees (8)
* Riders (horses)…’above’ (over) the trees (lowly, in a ravine)
* This seems to indicate two things:
* Riders dominant (red, sorrel, white, 8)
* Israel (God’s people, Israel, are ‘myrtle trees’) made lowly, submissive
1. **A Scene of Peace**
* God’s activity in governing His world
* ‘Patrolling’ the earth – God’s agents/Gentile nations
* V.9 – Zechariah asks what this means? Another angel steps in
* 3 conversations: Between Zechariah and interpreting angel (9,10); Horseman and God (11); and between God and the Angel (12,13)
* V.11 – the report is one of peace (but that’s not a good thing). Synthesizing the image.
* **Zechariah’s assignment/summary (14, 15): Preach God’s message of compassion for Jerusalem and His anger toward the nations that had punished her (15)**
1. **God’s Three Oracles (14-17)**
* He’s exceedingly jealous for His people (committed to His covenant, vs.13)
* The Lord’s anger burns towards the Gentile nations (who are now at peace, but who ***‘furthered the disaster’***, even though they serve Him) - He promises He will restore His people (15, 16)
* The Lord has not forgotten His people and will restore them (17, ***‘again’*** used 4 times)
* He has His covenant with David – He will return ‘again’ and comfort/assure

**III. The Meaning (8, 11)**

1. **Why does it feel like the wicked are at ease and the godly forgotten?**
* **Illus.** 2 Kings 6, ‘Open his eyes’
* We should not be surprised when our experiences look like the remnant in Scripture (c/f Heb.11:35-37)
* ‘Apparent’ ease and prosperity of the wicked can be deceiving (Ps.73:17-20)
* Ask God, trust God…
1. **We See His Presence (7-10)**
* Even though they have been humiliated by their enemies…God is with them
* Both in the 70 year exile and now as they return (some see this as a Christophony)
* **Illus.** Fiery furnace (c/f Dan.3); 2 Kings 6, ‘Open his eyes’

**Apply:** God ‘goes’ with His people ‘through’ their suffering and disaster

1. **We See His Prayer (12)**
* Eyes fixed on a peaceful, eternal hope…in present brokenness. What are we to do?
* ***‘How long oh Lord will you have no mercy?’*** (12)

**Apply:** We have a powerful scene of advocacy through prayer; Jesus (c/f Jn.17)

1. **We See His Promises (13-17)**
* No wicked person or nation will escape God’s judgment (2nd vision). But all their actions towards Israel were under Sovereignty
* The ‘long night’ of 70 years of waiting is over…wake up watchman!
* **Apply:** Actively taking His message of Gospel hope to a broken world…
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