

## **The hope of Jesus sustains.**

**Zechariah 8:1–9** “And the word of the LORD of hosts came, saying, [2] “Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath. [3] Thus says the LORD: I have returned to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts, the holy mountain. [4] Thus says the LORD of hosts: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of great age. [5] And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets. [6] Thus says the LORD of hosts: If it is marvelous in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, should it also be marvelous in my sight, declares the LORD of hosts? [7] Thus says the LORD of hosts: Behold, I will save my people from the east country and from the west country, [8] and I will bring them to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness.”

[9] Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Let your hands be strong, you who in these days have been hearing these words from the mouth of the prophets who were present on the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built.” (ESV)

## **The hope of Jesus sustains.**

This week the question “is it worth it?” has been rolling around my head. It is a common question we may not realize we are asking. Is going for a run worth it when I could sit around?! Is that second donut worth it?!

But it occurs in more serious ways as well. How I use my time and balance between work and family. Is the study worth it to ease the pressure of an exam? Usually our heroes have answered the question in the affirmative and achieved great things... Since we announced John’s eldership appointment today, we might think of the Washington Football Team’s Alex Smith. Suffering traumatic leg injury and determined to come back to do the work... it was worth it.

Easily answered for things that matter and a check for us in things that ruin us. Is the risk worth it? Is the embarrassment worth it? Is the sweat worth it?

It is a consistent question when it comes to our faith, and living in response to it. Is it worth it to see my neighbor as myself, to love my enemies? Is the sacrifice worth it? Is uprooting our life to live among those most in need of the gospel worth it? When celebrity leaders fall, is continued faithfulness worth it?

When building the church is a brick by brick endeavor, taking years, is it worth it?

God speaks to his people via Zechariah saying to them, it is worth it, to be obedient, to do the work I have set before you. While you can't see the final result, depressed by the small things of reality, hold on. What is on the other end of the blood, sweat, and tears is worth it, there is hope on the horizon.

And it is that hope that carries the remnant, and us.

*Context:* Speaking to the people directly behind Haggai - this is the word to the remnant in Jerusalem. They have returned from exile, purposed to rebuild the temple, but facing opposition they stopped, instead sweating for themselves and their comfort.

God stirred them up to work again by telling them that he was with them and builds better - greater glory was coming. Zechariah, who's name actually means "the Lord remembers," serves as a reminder to the people of their history and their future. Both things that should keep them steady as they lay brick after brick.

It is the longest of the Minor Prophets and is among the most quoted pieces of Old Testament in the New Testament. So it mattered to the church. And it should matter to us.

Two parts, one dealing with the past and the concerns of the present, the second presenting the hopes of the future. There are some vivid visions, that are interpreted by Angel of the Lord. All of it is to move a people who are "despising the day of small things" to take up the work of building.

**Zechariah 4:10a** "For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel."

Though this is just a survey of this significant book, we can see important things about God. Things that compel us forward and keep us through the ebbs and flows of life.

We can take away this truth: **The hope of Jesus sustains.**

The first things we can glean from Zechariah is that,

### **God wants a people.**

The visions of this prophet are telling the redemptive story of Judah and even from the open salvo we recognize that God desires for a people to be his, committed to him, dependent on him, experiencing his blessing.

**Zechariah 1:2–6** “The LORD was very angry with your fathers. [3] Therefore say to them, Thus declares the LORD of hosts: **Return to me**, says the LORD of hosts, and **I will return to you**, says the LORD of hosts. [4] Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets cried out, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, Return from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.’ But they did not hear or pay attention to me, declares the LORD. [5] Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? [6] But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not overtake your fathers? So they repented and said, ‘As the LORD of hosts purposed to deal with us for our ways and deeds, so has he dealt with us.’” (ESV)

All along this has been the thing hasn't it. That the people wouldn't choose idols, or self over God, but that they would be his, wholeheartedly his.

He recounts how he worked rescue for Israel and called them to life - his way. But they kept rebelling.

**Zechariah 7:9–12** “Thus says the LORD of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, [10] do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart.” [11] But they refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears that they might not hear. [12] They made their hearts diamond-hard lest they should hear the law and the words that the LORD of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore great anger came from the LORD of hosts.” (ESV)

The people face discipline and judgment, but God always keeps appealing for their hearts.

The explanation for the continual cycle of unfaithfulness in their lives, and in ours, is the problem of sin.

"What unites these visions is that they all deal with threats to the well-being and success of the post-exilic community. They reveal that there are two major enemies which threaten to destroy the community... external enemies... and internal sinfulness and disobedience to God." Selvaggio

The remnant however is on the other side of exile. They can be the faithful, obedient people who rely on Yahweh for all of life. That is the appeal of Zechariah.

God is jealous for them, he desires them, he wants a people. In that moment they don't have a context for what it means that he will come to them, but this pursuit. The Creator of the universe wants to be in a relationship with those that bear his image.

The appeal hasn't ended in the church age. He still wants a people for himself. It's why he broadens the tent, it is why we preach salvation in Christ alone, because it is God making his appeal through us for reconciliation, reliance, real life.

We have the description of two generations who respond to God's word in different ways. The "fathers" prior to the exile heard God's word repeatedly but did not respond and faced wrath. Zechariah's generation, however, responded positively to the call to turn to God and would see God turn to them. We too stand before two paths, one of refusal, one of surrender.

Belong always begins with being chosen. Thinking of playing a game on the sandlots of life. The anxious wait to be chosen, our abilities known, unsure if we will be picked and have a team... or if we will have to wait until last.

God does it different. He knows us better than anyone and still is quick to pick us, to choose us. He is after you!

We often approach faith with a mentality that says "I want God." Which isn't awful, but the biblical narrative reveals it should actually be "God wants me."

He wants a people. And he has provided the way.

**God provides the King we need.**

Embedded in a vision of the high priest Joshua being cleansed by the Lord as a rebuke to Satan's accusations, God promises to deliver his people.

**Zechariah 3:8–10** “Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men who are a sign: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch. [9] For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day. [10] In that day, declares the LORD of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor to come under his vine and under his fig tree.” (ESV)

The Branch, from the stump of Jesse, the anointed One, the promise.

From the “small things” of slow progress, fading beauty of the temple and city of their present, God casts a vision for the ultimate King - and it is the hope the remnant needs to keep going.

And I think you might recognize him!

**Zechariah 9:9–12** “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Behold, your king is coming to you;  
righteous and having salvation is he,  
humble and mounted on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

[10] I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim  
and the war horse from Jerusalem;  
and the battle bow shall be cut off,  
and he shall speak peace to the nations;  
his rule shall be from sea to sea,  
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

[11] As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,  
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

[12] Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;  
today I declare that I will restore to you double.” (ESV)

They have been freed under the reign of another king. And now are subjects of yet another. But as they rebuild, there is restoration on the horizon. Brought by this King who is righteous and brings salvation.

**Zechariah 9:16–17** “On that day the LORD their God will save them,  
as the flock of his people;  
for like the jewels of a crown

they shall shine on his land.

[17] For how great is his goodness, and how great his beauty!  
Grain shall make the young men flourish,  
and new wine the young women.” (ESV)

This is the King they need. A righteous King. More than just a King he is also a priest.  
Told to forge a crown and rest in on the priests God says:

**Zechariah 6:12–15** “...“Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD. [13] It is he who shall build the temple of the LORD and shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule on his throne. And there shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.” [14] And the crown shall be in the temple of the LORD as a reminder to Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah.

[15] “And those who are far off shall come and help to build the temple of the LORD. And you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. And this shall come to pass, if you will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.” (ESV)

The branch. A King and priest. Bringing salvation and restoration. Gathering those far off to build the new temple!

And he is God... **Zechariah 12:10** “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look **on me**, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.” (ESV)

From mourning to joy... **Zechariah 13:1** “On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.” (ESV)

This is Jesus! The anointed One, the ancient of days, the branch, the sympathetic high priest, the ruling King, the lamb who takes away the sins of the world.

He is God in flesh, dwelling among his people, living a sinless, obedient life. Pierced for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquity. He meets the wrath of God against sin in our place on the cross. On that single day he removed the iniquity of the land.

Removed the burden from our backs. Giving new life as he walked out of the grave. Forgiven and freed all who believe. All that become his people.

As king, Jesus represents God to us, and as priest, he represents us to God.

It is Christ who establishes the new temple in his own body. Uniting the two offices of king and priest, making his people kings and priests to God (Rev. 5:10). The result of his coming is peace between us and God (Rom. 5:1) and ultimately throughout the cosmos (Eph 5:21-23). This leaves no room for despair, even if our personal corner of time and space seems to be a day of small things (Zech. 4:10).

That's enough to stir up obedience and action. But God is always more...

### **God promises a future of peace.**

The future he is set to bring is marked by how he brings it. "In goodness, gently setting things right in our lives. And in humility, not storming the gates of our cities but entering those gates in the most unpretentious of ways. He comes in peace, restoring everything we've lost." EP

What is coming is eternal amazing. In one vision Zechariah sees a man with a measuring line in his hand for the purpose of measuring Jerusalem, to make sure it is big enough for who is coming in.

The rebuilding, the reliance on God, being his people, the coming King, it is all headed to worship for the full remnant, the people he calls his own.

**Zechariah 10:8–9** "I will whistle for them and gather them in,

for I have redeemed them,

and they shall be as many as they were before.

[9] Though I scattered them among the nations,

yet in far countries they shall remember me,

and with their children they shall live and return." (ESV)

Bigger than we could dream...

Angelic beings worshiping before the Lamb. **Revelation 5:9–10** “And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, [10] and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.” (ESV)

Because the past is dealt with, because all sin is handled by this King, because the promise of a future with him for eternity is sure, we can keep going. “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit says the LORD.” (4:6)

"The point of this forward looking emphasis was to encourage the people of God about their future, to remind them that God is in control of the future and that he will bring his promises to fulfillment. Zechariah revealed that this glorious future would be ushered in, administrated and transformed by a coming king."

The people of Jerusalem are sustained in raising the bricks. We are sustained in our waiting, in our building and can rejoice having tasted the first fruits of his grace and mercy. His life.

He is the restoration of Judah. He is the One worth trusting in. He is the place of salvation and peace. He has removed our sins and paid the penalty for them. He holds our future because he is our King. He is the King we need.

"Although the reign of Jesus has already commenced, Christians today continue to look forward to our glorious future which will be transformed by Christ. We look forward to his return. We look forward to the end of suffering and sin. We look forward to the consummation of all things. We look forward to our heavenly home. We look forward to being with Christ and being like Christ. We have so much to look forward to and we know it will come to pass because Jesus holds our future." Selvaggio

Whatever you are facing today, relying on Jesus, choosing his way, not despising the day of small things, it is worth it. He is worth it.

Dear friends, keep going. Press on. Live for this King by the power of the Spirit.

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**Present the past** - Surrender what lies behind, the struggles of your present. Turn to Christ. There is a fountain open for the cleansing of his people.

**Press on under the King - Zechariah 8:16** “These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace;” (ESV) Live as his people, part of his Kingdom. Wait with hope, be confident that our King will return victoriously to bring about our full salvation. And invite others into this hope.

Today you will be faced with the question of if what you are pursuing is worth it, in Christ, for his glory and our good this is.

Climbing the mountain begins with one step, and all the steps that follow are worth it because I have been to the summit, I have seen what is over the horizon, the hope of what is coming is beyond description. May we have hope in this each step of the way.