

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at [pastorpat@waukeshabile.org](mailto:pastorpat@waukeshabile.org).

**Date:** December 20, 2009 - 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

**Title:** The Prophets Speak to the Hero's Arrival

**Text:** Zechariah 3:8-10; 9:9; 14:6-9

**Theme:** There is a day unlike any other day when God will fully and finally finish the Story He wrote.

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in the Storyline of the Bible. She is determined by design to have a God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching focused on personal discipleship through intentional and systematic instruction; a Global-impacting mission that resolves to be a church planting church; and a Grace-based fellowship where disciples are invited to live under a reigning grace characterized by a Gospel-driven sanctification that celebrates a divine monergism to the Christian life.

## Waiting for His Arrival and the Storyline of the Bible

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### Introduction:

The believing remnant lived in a context of political and moral corruption and decay. The nation would be forcefully removed from their ancestral land and be dispersed and deported into a foreign land as captives. They would live in hope, never seeing the promise fulfilled or the picture completed. They died in hope having not yet received the promise (Heb. 11:39, 40).

<sup>39</sup> “And all these, having gained approval through their faith, **did not receive what was promised**, <sup>40</sup> because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect” (Heb. 11:39, 40).

In every day of every week of every month of every year of every decade of every century, they lived in hope at His arrival bringing with Him deliverance from their internal and external enemies. Centuries become millennia and still they waited.

Life became routine and mundane, and yet the believing would keep feast days and rituals to remember the Story. They would teach their children the Story through the image and symbol. It is just as true now as it was then. It is through the image and ritual that we remind and retell the Story to ourselves and to our families. National calamity would come through inept and evil rulers, yet in the shadows God spoke of something greater and still yet future . . . so they waited. Promises that appeared so real became lost in the passing of time. Pictures became obstacles rather than stimulants. Blindness caused people to stop with the image and fall captive to the shadow.

Yet God remembers. He is too wise to make a mistake and too loving to be unkind. The primary means of God reminding and retelling the Story would come to and through the nation of Israel. Her prophets would be the oracles, the keepers of the dream. They were the sages through whom wisdom would be preserved and perpetuated. Collectively, the nation to whom and through whom the promises and pictures came would become idolatrous through spiritual whoredom, yet God would continue to speak. The prophets would often be maligned and martyred, yet they would remain faithful to their charge. Within the nation there was a collective rebellion against God, but He would always have a believing remnant who longed for His arrival. The prophets spoke to this and to this we will give our attention. The nature of our study prohibits us from venturing too far into the literature, but we will seek to represent what all of them address. Our concentration will rest on the prophet Zechariah. Appropriately, his name means, “The LORD remembers.”

It is always important to put the prophets in their historical, cultural and theological context.

“When the Jews reviewed their history, it looked like a long slide downhill. After centuries of warning, punishment had come. Jerusalem was flattened. The survivors marched off in chains toward the other end of the world. They had not merely lost a battle. They had lost, seemingly, their place in God’s heart and their future as his special people. But hope for a new start came in exile. When Persian emperor Cyrus took power, he offered Jews a chance to return to their land and rebuild their temple. Upon their return, they found a disheartening scene. Their once-beautiful city was a ghost town. Everything of value had been destroyed. The temple stayed in a state of disrepair for nearly 20 years [536-516BC], until the prophets Haggai and Zechariah stirred up renewed interest.” (*The New Student Bible*) From within this context Zechariah, along with Haggai, speak of a future day when the promises of God will find their ultimately fulfillment. His writings are **apocalyptic** in nature. He uses visions and prophecies of things that are to come. He speaks in shadow of something greater. He stands as an **encouragement** to the nation of Judah.

Through the imaging and picturing of Zion’s glorification, the overthrow of Israel’s enemies and the universal reign of the Messiah, the prophet speaks of hope. Within this rich brew, provided by the apocalyptic genre, there is a strong pastoral overtone, because it speaks to the promises and pictures found throughout Israel’s history, “The messianic emphasis of Zechariah accounts for its frequent citation by New Testament authors. [There are approximately] 41 New Testament citations or allusions to Zechariah’s book.” (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary, OT, 1545*)

God’s hero sits at center stage. Zechariah proclaims the Hero’s arrival and what this “revelation” means to His people. It is fitting for the prophet to bear the name, “YHWH remembers.” “**He ‘remembers’ his covenant promises and takes action to fulfill them.** In the book of Zechariah God’s promised deliverance from Babylonian exile, including a restored kingdom community and a functioning temple (the earthly throne of the divine King), leads into even grander pictures of the salvation and restoration to come through the Messiah.”

<http://www.ibs.org/niv/studybible/zechariah.php>

**Advent Prayer:** The Book of Common Prayer

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

**The Storyline:**

For at least two millennia the people of God have waited for the full and final installment of God’s Story. Prior to humanity’s rebellion against God, they would wait for Him in His Garden. After their rebellion, God stepped in and redeemed them from sin’s debt and once more adopted them as His sons and daughters. From the very beginning God taught them to wait for Him through promises and pictures, and they learned of Him by means of the same.

**The Problem:**

Our circumstances and life's trials often rob from us the hope of His arrival. We lose ourselves in "the worries of the world and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word," and thus become anxious and agitated. It is only as we wait for His arrival that we have peace and rest in our immediate circumstances.

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.

**To Know:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to know the day is coming when God will finish His Story.

**To Choose:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose to rest in the certainty of the outcome because of the Story's author.

**To Feel:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of seeing yourself in the one Story of God.

**Outline:**

- I. That day will be a unique day, different than all preceding days (14:6, 7).

Notice the following references found throughout Zechariah's book: 1:16, 17; 2:4, 5, 10-13; 3:8-10; 5:4; 6:11-13; 8:2-8, 11-14, 20-23; 9:9-17; 10:6-12; 12:4-10; 13:1, 2; 14:1-21. Zechariah paints an impossible picture of hope and glory for God and His people.

"It is probably best, on the basis of the principle of parallelism so evident in the prophetic and poetic books of the Old Testament as well as in the literature of the Near East, to understand that last clause as a reiteration in figurative language of that which is stated in prose in the first clause. That day will be so epoch-making that the prophet describes it in further detail." (Charles L. Feinberg, *God Remembers: A Study of Zechariah*, 198).

"A day altogether unique, different from all others." (*Jamieson, Fausse, and Brown on Zechariah 14:7*)

Revelation speaks to this day.

"And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb" (Rev. 21:23).

"And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever" (Rev. 22:5).

Friend, there is coming a day so unlike any other day that it stands alone in its uniqueness and wonderment. From this we are to hope in God.

II. God will dwell among His people (2:10, 11; 8:3).

When we read 8:3 it is impossible not to see how this statement is fulfilled in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, when truth was embodied and dwelled among His people.

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<sup>4</sup> “And **in that day** you will say, ‘Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name. Make known His deeds among the peoples; Make them remember that His name is exalted.’ <sup>5</sup> Praise the LORD in song, for He has done excellent things; Let this be known throughout the earth. <sup>6</sup> Cry aloud and shout for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, **For great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel**” (Isa. 12:4-6).

For those who waited, God would come to dwell among them. From this we are to hope in God.

III. The nations shall join themselves to the LORD (2:11; 3:10; 8:20-23; 14:16).

I am always encouraged when I read the text of Scripture and it speaks of a time when all the nations of the world will bow before Him and confess Him as King to the glory of the Father. Here we see the Father’s design and commission fulfilled. Worshipers from every tongue, tribe, people and nation shall gather to worship Him. Consider the nature of the curse whereby animosity and enmity exists between earth’s inhabitants. Our warring is in direct violation of God’s redemptive work.

“The nations are unwittingly awaiting this very hour. Note that the *goyim rabbim* will be so unified as to become one ‘*am*.’” (Charles L. Feinberg, *God Remembers: A Study of Zechariah*, 40). This is the “itch” that all seek to scratch. In the absence of God, all attempts end in tragedy.

IV. The garden’s curse will no longer be there (14:11).

“**Cherum** - devoting to utter destruction and describes the evil condition rather than the outcome.” (H.C. Leupold, *Exposition of Zechariah*, 269).

“No ‘cherem,’ no anathema, in a religious sense; in the old translation it is, “and there shall be no more cursing”; there will be no curse in the Jerusalem state, ( Revelation 22:3 ) which words seem to be taken from hence; no cursed thing, nor cursed person, or any curse or anathema denounced against any.” (*John Gill’s Exposition of the Bible* on Zechariah 14:11).

I marvel at the Scripture’s continuity. Because of the initial fall, all creation lies under the burden of the curse. The prophet’s speak to a time when the curse will no longer be. Revelation ends with this hopeful promise.

“There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him” (Rev. 22:3).

V. The Story's Hero will be king over all the earth (14:9, 16).

"All polytheism will come to an end in that day. The Lord Jesus Christ will be owned and recognized as sole Ruler of the earth." (Charles L. Feinberg, *God Remembers: A Study of Zechariah*, 199).

"The fact that He is King over all has always been true. He shall now really be regarded as what He actually is, for men will have come to a true knowledge of Him." (H.C. Leupold, *Exposition of Zechariah*, 267).

I want you to see how the prophets spoke of the Hero's arrival and how this is their consistent theme. Notice how Ezekiel picks up this same thought (Ezek. 37:22-28).

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<sup>22</sup> "and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and **one king will be king for all of them**; and they will no longer be two nations and no longer be divided into two kingdoms. <sup>23</sup> They will no longer defile themselves with their idols, or with their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. And **they will be My people, and I will be their God**. <sup>24</sup> **My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd**; and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them. <sup>25</sup> They will live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons and their sons' sons, forever; and **David My servant will be their prince forever**. <sup>26</sup> I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and **will set My sanctuary in their midst forever**. <sup>27</sup> **My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people**. <sup>28</sup> **And the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever**" (Ezek. 37:22-28).

It is because God dwells among His people through the Hero's arrival that the day spoken of is distinct. It is a day of global solidarity whereby all the people of the earth become His people and He will dwell in their midst (Zech. 2:10-13). It is a day when the iniquity of the land shall be removed (Zech. 3:9, 10; 13:1, 2). In that day, His people will be forever protected from their enemies and they shall see Him in His beauty (Zech. 9:14-17; 12:7-9). That day will be a unique day, a day when the Story of God finds its fulfillment (Zech. 14:6-9).

This is the rich tapestry woven for those who wait. Like our believing forefathers we long for His arrival. Malachi will be the last of the writing prophets and for 400 years the voice of God will be found in the written text that remains. He will speak of the forerunner who will prepare the way for the Lord.

**"Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me.** And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of

the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming,' says the LORD of hosts" (Mal. 3:1).

His people will wait. Like Simeon and Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher (Luke 2:25-38) they will "wait for the consolation of Israel" (Luke 2:25). Until the one who was promised and pictured in shadow would arrive we continue to wait; even so, "Come quickly Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

Shepherding the Sheep: (What's the NEXT STEP?)

1. Are you waiting for God's arrival?
2. Do you wait for Him to show up each day?
3. Are you preparing for and making provision for His arrival?
4. Do you believe He will keep His promise and show up on time?

*The Revised Common Lectionary* (a service of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library)

- Thematic

O God of Elizabeth and Mary, you visited your servants with news of the world's redemption in the coming of the Savior. Make our hearts leap with joy, and fill our mouths with songs of praise, that we may announce glad tidings of peace, and welcome the Christ in our midst. Amen.

- Intercessory

Brothers and sisters, as we joyfully await the glorious coming of the Christ, let us pray for the needs of the church, our community, and the world.

*Prayers of the People, concluding with:*

God of promise, you have given us a sign of your love through the gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior, who was promised from ages past. We believe as Joseph did the message of your presence whispered by an angel, and offer our prayers for your world, confident of your care and mercy for all creation. Amen.