



BIBLE IN A YEAR 2020

ZECHARIAH



**LOOK AT WHAT
GOD IS DOING**

Saturday 26 December: Zechariah 1-5

God speaks to me in my dreams Owen Lynch writes:

What did I like about today's reading?

Happy Boxing Day!! We are looking over three days at the Prophet Zechariah and I warn you it's a bit bizarre! First some background:

Zechariah is written after the return of the Israelites from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem. Ezra tells us (Ezra 5:1-2) that Zechariah is a prophet who supports the work of the High Priest Joshua and the heir of King David - Zerubbabel in rebuilding the temple.

Like all prophets in the Old Testament Zechariah speaks words of challenge and comfort to the Israelites. See the Israelites believed that they were God's favourites, that God had established an everlasting covenant (like a marriage) with Abraham and all his descendants (known as Jews or Israelites). God promised to be faithful to them forevermore and Abraham and his descendants promised to be faithful to God. Although, they often weren't!

Zechariah starts (1:1-6) by challenging the Jews to not be like their ancestors who were un-faithful to God, but to change their ways and become faithful once more.

In 1:7 (through to 6:15), we then dive into eight dreams that Zechariah has, which like our dreams are pretty weird and bizarre, depending on how much pizza you have eaten before you go to bed!

If you have ever been to a festival and walked past a tent where people offer to interpret your dreams and thought that was weird, well you should know that dream interpretation is very biblical - look at Genesis 28,37,41 as well as all of the prophets.

Zechariah's dreams are a mixture of bizarre and normal - you know what that's like right?

So the first dream the world is at peace (1:7-17), which in Zechariah's day was when Persia had conquered Babylon and brought peace to the Middle East resulting in the end of the Israelites exile in Babylon. But then the second dream has horns (which are a symbol of Assyria and Babylon who destroyed Israel and Judah) and craftsmen (which are a symbol of Persia which destroyed the empires of Assyria and Babylon).

Thankfully for Zechariah, there's an angel in his dreams who interprets the bizarre visions and this continues through to chapter 6.

I love the fact that God speaks to people in dreams and doesn't just leave us wondering what they mean, he provides an angel to interpret them!

What did it show me about Father God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit?

It reminds me that God could if he wanted to communicate with me through my dreams. The question is, do I want him to? Have you ever had God speak to you in a dream? If you ever wake in the night in the middle of a dream that seems to mean something, although you are sure what, then ask the Holy Spirit to explain it to you. I have done this a few times and woken in the morning with a profound sense of God speaking to me.

What am I going to do differently as a result?

I am going to invite the Holy Spirit to speak to me more often through my dreams.

Who am I going to share this with?

All of you!

Monday 28 December: Zechariah 6-8

The Lionel Messi of Biblical Fulfilment Owen Lynch writes:

What did I like about today's reading?

I'm not a fan of Arsenal Football Club, but my friends Andy and Tom are. And right now I pity them, because Arsenal are having a torrid time, sitting 15th in the league and getting knocked out of the Carabao Cup mid-week. Arsenal's motto is *Victoria Concordia Crescit*, which means "victory grows through harmony". Sadly, there's not a lot of harmony in the team and rather than working together, the team are working against each other and their manager.

I'm reminded of this as I read Zechariah 6:12-13 where Zechariah hears God choose Joshua to be the High Priest and another - possibly Zerubbabel to be the King or Ruler of the new Jerusalem. There's that phrase - the King will sit on a throne and the High Priest will sit on a throne and there will be harmony between the two.

There's a double entendre here - current and future; Joshua is descended from the Priestly tribe of Levi and Zerubbabel is descended from King David - so here we have the two men charged with the responsibility for rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem - one from the line of priests and one from the line of kings. Priest and King - the two highest offices in Jewish religious/culture working in harmony to rebuild the temple.

But there's a deeper meaning here as well. In your Bible, you might see the King referred to as the 'Branch'. After Zechariah put the crown on Joshua's head, God told him to announce that a man whose name is Branch who would sit as a priest on David's throne (vv. 12-13). Both Isaiah and Jeremiah use the word 'branch' for 'Messiah' (Is 11:1, Jer 23:5). Zechariah is communicating that the Messiah will one day sit on the throne of David and not only will he be King, he will also be the High Priest. The two highest positions in Biblical theology in the same person - the Messiah. Hebrews 7 confirms that person is Jesus - who as High Priest does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, because he sacrificed for all humanity's sins once for all when he offered himself on the cross. Not only that, Jesus rebuilds the dwelling place of God (the temple) in each and every person.

Victory through Harmony - who'd have thought that Arsenal's motto was a Messianic prophecy! This is beautiful theology that adds Zechariah to Isaiah and Jeremiah on the list of Messianic prophets.

What did it show me about Father God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit?

It shows me that Jesus is the complete package, he's the Lionel Messi of Biblical prophecy - Priest and King. He can do everything!! And as we celebrate his birth, it's no wonder that his birth was announced in the stars and heralded by angels! And Zechariah 6:15 also reminds us that the Messiah would be a saviour not just for the Jews, but for everyone. Everyone gets preferential treatment because of Jesus, everyone!!

What am I going to do differently as a result?

I think the expectation that the vaccines will save us from this wretched corona virus has given me a new perspective on what it would be like for the whole world to be crying out for salvation. I'm going to pray that everyone on the planet and a few people known to me personally would feel their need for God's unconditional love as much as they feel their need for a corona virus vaccine right now.

Who am I going to share this with?

You all, why don't you pray for this too as we start 2021?

Tuesday 29 December: Zechariah 9-14

The Messiah Owen Lynch writes:

What did I like about today's reading?

I love all of the Messianic imagery in these chapters.

I love the image in chapter 9 of the Messiah King riding into Jerusalem like a victorious King returning after vanquishing an enemy, but riding on the humblest of creatures - a donkey - not on a chariot or a Stallion!

The Messiah will be a humble, servant King who will not exploit and dominate.

I love the image of the Messiah as a Shepherd in chapter 11, who searches for the lost, takes care of the young, heals the injured and feeds the healthy.

The Messiah will care for humanity, like a good shepherd cares for their sheep.

I love the image of the Messiah in chapter 12 as confronting evil in all its forms and bringing justice and compassion to every community.

The Messiah will rule with justice and compassion.

I love the image of the Messiah in chapter 14 restoring the earth and reconciling humanity both one to another and with God.

The Messiah will reconcile all things to himself in heaven and on earth.

What did it show me about Father God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit?

Not only does it show me what Jesus Messiah ('Christ' in Greek) is like and is doing; it also shows me that this has been going on for a long time. That this story of God becoming a human being called Jesus is BIG and I am very small. It leaves me feeling humbled and secure in his unconditional love for me.

What am I going to do differently as a result?

I'm going to meditate on these images of the Messiah so that I associate them more readily with the Jesus we read about in the gospels.

Who am I going to share this with?

My wife and you all.