

A PEOPLE CLEANSED

+ **SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

A day is coming when God will win the victory for His people and reign over them forevermore.

+ **BACKGROUND PASSAGE:**

Zechariah 13–14

+ **SETTING:**

God had set His people free from captivity in Babylon. Yet the people still needed spiritual renewal and repentance. Having returned to the land, the prophet Zechariah called God’s people to mourn over their sins. The Lord promised to give to His people a new spirit, one of grace, so they would be able to see the One who was coming to be “pierced” for their sins (Zech. 12:10). In the face of dark times, the Lord will remind His people that just as He won previous battles, He will win the future battle so that their future will be secure forever with Him.

DAY 1

READ:

Zechariah 13

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Zechariah 13:1

NOTES

William Cowper is probably best known as a great hymn writer. Some of his most popular hymns include “God Moves in a Mysterious Way” and “O for a Closer Walk with God.” But his best known hymn comes from Zechariah 13:1. It was because of this passage that Cowper penned his own experience of “that day” he was set free from sin and death.

Cowper would spend his life dealing with depression. At a young age, his mother died. This loss shook him deeply. He would attempt to busy himself with schooling to keep his mind occupied. But later, his father passed and a hope for marriage was rejected on account of his lowly estate. Then an overwhelming circumstance regarding his occupation and reputation led him to consider and attempt suicide numerous times before his desire for self-destruction was discovered by friends and he was institutionalized.

During this time, he was cared for by a Christian friend who shared the liberating power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the One who was pierced for his sins. Cowper’s experience of God’s cleansing power caused him to say, “Immediately I received strength to believe it and all the full beams of the Sun of Righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement he had made, my pardon was sealed in his blood, and all the fullness and completeness of his justification. In a moment I believed and received the Gospel.”¹

In this hymn, Cowper expressed the truths of Zechariah 13:1:

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath
that flood, Lose all their guilty stains . . .
E’er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.²

What are some effects the cleansing work of Christ has had upon your heart?

DAY 2

READ:

Hebrews 10

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Hebrews 10:21-22

NOTES

Spend time in any sports venue and you'll find that there are points where access is denied. Players are kept safe in the locker rooms and on the field of play. Unless you have security clearance, those who are entrusted with keeping the premises safe will forbid access. Those who have security passes, however, are allowed access into areas that others cannot go.

The same is true with God's holy presence. Those who come to worship the Lord and come before His throne of grace do not have access on their own merits. They need to show that they have received "security clearance" and are not going to barge in on their own terms.

Christians come to God in prayer and worship in the name of Jesus Christ. His cleansing work washes us clean from all of our sin and impurity. But His cleansing work does more than just remove our filth. He gives us His righteousness. Like a security pass, we are given access into the most holy place—the throne room of God—by the blood of His Son. We do not have to feel guilty coming before God when we come in the name of Jesus Christ. We come with hearts sprinkled clean and our consciences purified.

Christ's atoning work ought to give us confidence. It means that God does not merely tolerate us coming before Him. He is not only going to act with graciousness and kindness towards us, He welcomes us into His presence with joy as His own children. Because of Jesus Christ, we can come as those who have been redeemed from death, restored from the fall, and forgiven of our sin.

How do you feel about entering God's presence with boldness and assurance of faith on account of Christ's death? Why?

DAY 3

READ:

Zechariah 14:1-7

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Zechariah 14:3

NOTES

VOICES from THE CHURCH

“God does not always settle His accounts . . . in our lifetimes, or even in centuries of history. Injustice and great wickedness seem sometimes to go unaddressed by our holy and righteous God. But He will settle His accounts. Jesus will come to rule the world in God’s justice and righteousness. The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. And He shall reign forever and ever, hallelujah! His certain victory, in His own time, gives us reason to praise Him and to give thanks in every circumstance.”³

–Stephen Rummage

When Richard Nixon assumed the office of President of the United States, he attempted to become one of the most famous presidents in history and wanted to secure his success by having all of his Oval Office conversations recorded.

As an investigation proceeded around a break-in that had occurred at the Democratic National Headquarters, the trail led to a cover up by the President. As the Watergate scandal unfolded, the very tapes that Nixon had used to record his conversations were used against him, resulting in his resignation before impeachment charges could be brought against him.

The Lord uses human pride to bring judgment upon those who continue in sin. When people try to succeed through immoral schemes, the Lord brings their plans to nothing. In Zechariah 14, the ungodly nations come against Jerusalem at the prompting of the Lord. But in an act of great irony, the Lord who gathers the nations at Jerusalem becomes the One who fights against these very same nations.

God has a way of fighting for His people when times and situations look impossible. When Israel fled Egypt and found themselves pressed against the Red Sea as Pharaoh and his army came against them, Moses told the people not to be afraid and to stand firm for the Lord would fight for them (Exodus 14:13-14).

This great reversal is the way of God. When things look hopeless, we remember that God fights for us. He will vindicate His people who bear His name. So don’t be afraid, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord who fights for you!

In what trials do you need stand firm in faith today?

DAY 4

READ:

Zechariah 14:1-7

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Zechariah 14:4

NOTES

On October 17, 1989, just moments before Game 3 of the World Series was to begin, a 6.9 magnitude earthquake struck the Bay Area. Candlestick Park, the site of Game 3, suffered substantial damage. Television viewers watched as things rattled until the power went out. The damage would be widespread across Oakland and San Francisco. A portion of the double-deck Nimitz Freeway in Oakland would collapse, and several people would lose their lives in the quake.

When the ground beneath your feet shakes, it can leave you unsettled. The foundation that you put your feet upon feels secure until it starts to rattle and shake. Then you can wonder if anything is secure.

One day, God will shake the heavens and the earth (Haggai 2:6; Hebrews 12:26-28). He will plant His feet upon the mountains, and the nations will tremble and be defeated. While the shaking of the earth might cause us to fear, God has promised to shake the heavens and the earth, and through these cosmic events, He will establish His kingdom and His reign.

Once the heavens and the earth are shaken and God establishes His rule, He will set up a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:28). Because we are going to receive a kingdom that cannot be shaken, we can have confidence that God's covenantal love will remain (Isaiah 54:10). We can be thankful that we are secure in His love, and we can serve God with reverence and awe (Hebrews 12:28).

How should God's promise of His coming kingdom change your daily perspective?

DAY 5

READ:

Zechariah 14:8-21

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Zechariah 14:9

NOTES



ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE #80: PEOPLE OF GOD

Scripture describes the church as “the people of God” (2 Corinthians 6:16). Comprised of both Jew and Gentile, the church is created by God through the atoning death of Christ. The term “church” is used in two senses—of individual local churches composed of people who have covenanted together under the lordship of Christ and of the universal church composed of all believers in Christ in all times. As the people of God, the church seeks to live under God’s ruling care while we are protected and cared for by Him.

In *The Return of the King*, J. R. R. Tolkien’s final novel in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, Aragorn arises after being crowned. The response from those who watched is described with vivid detail:

All that beheld him gazed in silence, for it seemed to them that he was revealed to them now for the first time. Tall . . . he stood above all that were near; ancient of days he seemed and yet in the flower of manhood; and wisdom sat upon his brow, and strength and healing were in his hands, and a light was about him.

Then Aragorn’s steward cried out, “Behold the King!”⁴

This description is an apt summary of the Lord’s return in Zechariah 14. When the Lord sets His feet upon the mountain of Jerusalem, defeats His enemies, and sets up His reign, He will reverse all of the effects of the curse that have afflicted the world since Genesis 3.

What Zechariah anticipated on that day is that the people will behold the glory of the Lord and see Him as He truly is. There will be no confusion about who is the true ruler and king over all of the earth. The Lord, victorious, will reign forever and ever.

There is coming a day when all of the Lord’s enemies will be defeated and will be crushed underneath His feet. When that happens, there will be no rivals to His throne, no challenges to His glory, and no confusion about who is Lord and God alone.

What hope does the promise of Jesus’s victorious reign give you for today?

GROUP

NOTES

POINT 1: The Lord will cleanse the impurities of His people (Zech. 13:1-4).

God foretold of a day when the hearts of His people would be _____ and _____ to follow Him perfectly.



What responses should people have to God's offer of forgiveness and cleansing from sin?

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POINT 2: The Lord will fight and win the victory for His people (Zech. 14:1-7).

Zechariah reminded the hopeless nation of Judah that the Lord _____ for His people in His _____, and He is always _____.



What are some ways we can remind ourselves of God's faithfulness and eternal victory in the midst of our trials?

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

“There are no ‘ifs’ in God's world. And no places that are safer than other places. The center of His will is our only safety.”⁵

—Betsie ten Boom (1885-1944)

The day of the Lord points to Christ's _____ ,
when He will _____ the nations and gather His
people in final triumph on an undisclosed day.

NOTES

**POINT 3: The Lord will reign with
provision and security for His people**
(Zech. 14:8-11).

On the day of the Lord, a flow of water will
_____ the world as the Lord proclaims His
ultimate _____ over all.



**What are some ways you can show the world that
Jesus is King over your life?**

Zechariah spoke about the _____ Jerusalem, a
place that will bring peace and _____
for God's people on the day of the Lord at
Christ's _____ .



**How should the promise of Christ's coming kingdom
cause you to live today?**

MY RESPONSE

Because the Lord is returning, we live with urgency
each day telling all others about salvation found only
in Him so that they too might experience His victory.

- **HEAD:** How should Christ's final victory give you encouragement for today?
- **HEART:** How will you express your gratitude for the Lord's victory over sin?
- **HANDS:** With whom will you share God's mighty works to restore, save, and provide for sinners?

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"Lo! He comes with clouds
descending, once for ev'ry
sinners slain; thousand,
thousand saints attending
swell the triumph of his train:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! Christ
reveals his endless reign."⁶

—Charles Wesley (1707-1788)