

Harvest

Evangelical Free Church

SERIES: Confidence in a Broken World • Lesson 3
 For Adult Bible Fellowships and Small Groups March 14-20, 2010

Join us in being on mission with God!

OUR VISION

To continually mature and grow as a united body of Jesus-imitators who live out God's greatest commandment to "Love" by exalting God and serving one another, and His greatest commission to "Go" by reaching into and shaping our local, regional, and global communities.

"God's Las Vegas: A kingdom in the desert"

Zechariah Chapters 2 and 3

Getting Started

After an introductory time, discuss the following questions in your group or class.

Sometimes we allow our past to dictate our future in unhealthy ways.

- Think of the person who tried playing a musical instrument when they were in grade school. For various reasons it did not work out. Ever since they label themselves as non-musical.
- Consider someone who drove wild and fast and never had an accident or received a well-deserved ticket for speeding. They still take unnecessary risks when driving, feeling like they are immune.
- Imagine an adult who grew up poor whom God has blessed with resources. They tend to be stingy with their wife and children, go to great lengths to save a nickel, and believe that church leaders should never buy anything new or use resources to celebrate ministry success.

Q: What are some of the ways in which your past experiences tend to constrict or narrow your view of tomorrow? (Your answer could relate to issues of relationships, money, optimism, trying new things, etc.)

An Overwhelming Task

1. Name one or more goals for Harvest that would be so big that only God could accomplish them.

2. If God were to drop all of us an email that this big goal is something we were to do, how would you feel? What kind of questions would go through your mind?

We can become anxious when we look at the future, especially when we remember some of the limitations we've encountered in the past. We can become slightly pessimistic, glass-half-full kinds of people.

God wants to give us hope when the life challenges feel before us feel enormous. He wants us to see that the possibilities and opportunities before us are greater than what we might guess. In chapters 2 and 3 we have two additional visions.



Zechariah 2 & 3

Key Verses:

Zechariah 2:5 And I myself will be a wall of fire around it,' declares the LORD, 'and I will be its glory within.'

Zechariah 2:8 For this is what the LORD Almighty says: "After he has honored me and has sent me against the nations that have plundered you-- for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye--

Zechariah 2:11 "Many nations will be joined with the LORD in that day and will become my people. I will live among you and you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you.

Zechariah 2:12 The LORD will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem.

Zechariah 3:4 The angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes." Then he said to Joshua, "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you."

Zechariah 3:10 "In that day each of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and fig tree,' declares the LORD Almighty."

- The first reminds the dispirited readers that God is heavily invested in their lives and their futures, and that he has not abandoned them.
- The second reminds the builders that even though they may still feel polluted and contaminated from the punishment of their past, God is willing to cleanse them and purify them for the tasks at hand.

The vision in chapter 2 repeats the usual question and answer structure we see in chapter 1, where the interpreting angel (or messenger) does things and Zechariah asks, "What does this mean?"

3. What does the angel or messenger do in verse 1? How does he explain his actions in verse 2?

4. What would be surprising about measuring the size of a town that had been devastated by war?

Imagine traveling to parts of New Orleans devastated by hurricane Katrina. You're walking among the blocks of wreckage and see two men measuring areas in a city block. What kind of thoughts might come to your mind?

5. Measuring is usually a preface to new construction. If God were to take a measuring tape to your life, in what area do you think he would be measuring you for growth right now?

- A certain spiritual discipline (prayer, Bible study, evangelism, meditation, reading)
- A certain fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control)
- A certain area of social responsibility (as a mate, friend, parent, businessman or businesswoman, student)
- A certain type of service to the church (ministry partner, coach, team player)

6. The hopeful sign is made more encouraging by what happens in verses 3-4. How does the action of the second angel prove to be more encouraging than that of the first one?

God's Las Vegas: A kingdom in the desert

7. God promises to serve the people of Jerusalem in two ways in verse 5. What does he do himself? How does this reflect Exodus 13:21?

8. In verses 6-7 God gives an invitation to a selected group of people. Who does this invitation go out to? What does this imply about many of the Jews who lived in Babylon?

9. In this case, there was a contingent of Jews who stayed in Babylon and did not migrate back to Jerusalem. Sometimes we lose heart and become unwilling to take risks for God. What are some excuses we give for staying in our “comfort zone,”—no matter how unpleasant it may be—rather than trust God and step into new opportunities by faith?

10. Describe one situation where you took a risk to trust God in a new way and it paid off.

11. What does God do to those who take advantage of his people when he puts them under his discipline? (See verses 8-9.) How would you respond to someone who objected to the idea that the God of the Bible is vengeful?

12. What is the surprising future for God's people promised in verse 11? How do you think the Jews who camped amid the rubble of Jerusalem felt when they heard these words?

13. How does verse 11 parallel Jesus prayer for the church in John 17:21?

14. What do verses 11-13 tell us about the kind of impact God wants to have through our trust and obedience?



Reaching Up and Reaching Out

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16. What do we learn about the habits of Satan in the vision in Zechariah 3:1? (Look at Revelation 12:10.)

17. What do you think Satan tries to accomplish in accusing you of being unfit or unclean before God? List some of the messages that he might whisper in your ear.

18. When we feel unfit to serve God, he responds with grace. List the things that God does to respond to Satan's charge against the Jewish high priest Joshua in verses 2-7.

19. What does God do for you in Christ in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11?

20. How would you counsel a Christian who struggled in feeling cleansed by God for service to his kingdom?

21. What does God expect of the high priest in order for him to continue in service to him? (See verse 6-7.) What does he expect of you?

Note: we will look at verses 8-10 when we examine Zechariah 6:12, where he discusses the role of the Branch in more detail.

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