**BCM Bible Study – February 22/23, 2023**

**Zechariah 13-14: Israel’s Cleansing and God’s Final Reign**

These chapters continue the prophecy started last week in Chapter 12 about the Day of the Lord. There are a ton of parallels between Zechariah and Revelation in these two chapters which offer hope about the joy to come, due to God’s final and true reign over all.

**Read Zechariah 13:1-6**

* How do these verses continue to highlight God’s concern for the purity of his people?
  + Why might God interact so differently with those of Jerusalem and these prophets?
* What is so significant about these prophets and their words/clothes?
* This serious treatment of sin and wickedness has been repeated throughout Zechariah, occuring many times already. What do these verses add to God’s message about the seriousness of sin?

“The *prophets* mentioned are false prophets, whether those who make false claims in YHWH’s name or those who prophesy in the name of other gods… The speech-act of prophecy is such an affront that even parents will charge and execute their own children as false prophets, in keeping with Deuteronomic law (Deut. 13:1-5).” (Hill)

**Read John 4:13-14, Revelation 22:1-2**

* Why must Jesus be pierced (Zech. 12:10) before the fountain of cleansing water can happen?
  + Have you ever experienced Jesus as cleansing water in your life? How did that happen?
  + What areas may still need to be cleansed of sin or impurity for you?
* How do these verses offer the fulfillment of Zechariah (Zech. 6:9-15 as an example) and God’s desire for his people to be holy?

**Read Zechariah 13:7-9**

* What does this passage continue to reveal about God’s care?
* Why might people scatter when their leader disappears?
* Jesus quotes this passage shortly before his arrest. **Read Matthew 26:31-32**
* In what ways are Zech. 13:7-9 accurate or inaccurate for the disciples?

**Read Ezekiel 5:1-4,12 and Revelation 9:17-18**

* Both of these passages mention thirds and seem to have a bit of a parallel with the Zechariah passage, but are not precise.
* Even with this uncertainty, how might we understand the use of thirds here?
  + God’s mercy can be found in Zech. 13:8 and other passages as he does spare people.
* How is the refining process a helpful way to think about Christian life?

**Read Zechariah 14**

* How would you describe this passage?
* What’s frightening or unsettling about the illustration in v. 1-5? What is hopeful?

**Read Revelation 22:5, Ezekiel 47:1-12**

* How do the references to the new Eden (v.6-9) here offer hope to you?
  + Why should we value and understand the long-term parts of our faith?
* Arabah is a geographic section of land that is southeast of Jerusalem approximately between the Dead Sea and Gulf of Aqaba. It is primarily a dry wilderness, sometimes translated as “the Wasteland”.
  + What does it mean in v.10 that all of the land south of Jerusalem would become like the Arabah?
  + How is the fate of Jerusalem different from the rest of the land?
  + How can we better incorporate these prophecies and hope like Revelation in our understanding of the Gospel?
* How are v. 9 and v. 12-15 dependent on one another?
  + “God’s intervention as Israel’s Divine Warrior culminates in his universal rule and the restoration and permanent security of Jerusalem.” (Hill)
  + How can we read about something like the plagues here and still trust that God is good?
* What do v. 16-19 have to say about God’s final rule over all the nations?
* The phrase “HOLY TO THE LORD” was once inscribed on an additional piece added to the High Priest’s turban that he wore so the gifts of the Israelites would “be acceptable to the LORD.” (Exodus 28:36-38)
  + What does it mean that even the horses bells and regular cooking pots will one day be that holy/sacred?
* Who were the Canaanites in Scripture? (Hint: Judges 1, especially v.27-33).
  + What might the second half of verse 21 suggest about Canaanites in the long-term before God?
  + Given many of the similarities to Revelation and the end-times prophecies and that this is after God’s justice against the nations it is very likely that this is about the inclusion of all peoples, even some of Israel’s fiercest enemies in the kingdom of God!

Some Zechariah Reflection Questions:

* How would this book have served as an encouragement to its original audience, the first wave of Israelites that had returned after the exile?
* How did this book encourage your faith?
* What did you think about all of the different references to Jesus?