**BCM Bible Study –January 25-26, 2023**

**Zechariah 3-5: The Cleansing of The People**

The biggest theme connecting the visions found in these three chapters is the cleaning of Judah amidst God’s restoration. Not just does God want the Jewish people to be in Jerusalem again, but he wants them to follow his commands and pursue holiness.

**Read Haggai 1:1-2, 12-15**

These verses introduce Joshua and Zerubbabel, two important people for today’s study. They also help further paint the picture of how the returned exiles are doing.

**Read Zechariah 3**

* What does the Lord say to Satan?
  + In a similar way, how is God protecting us from the accuser?
* **Read Exodus 28:3-4, 36-38**
* As you read this, why do you think the clothes of the high priest matter?
* What are Joshua’s clothes meant to represent?
  + How does this imagery help you to understand how sin affects us before God?
  + How does the imagery of “fine garments” in v.4-5 shape how you can view yourself before God thanks to Jesus?
  + “This placing of the priestly turban on Joshua’s head, along with the new vestments was emblematic of the restoration to a former position accomplished in the divine cleansing (i.e. Joshua to his service as high priest, and Israel as the people of God.)” (Hill)
* What can we learn from the repeated statements in Zechariah dependent on obedience (Zech. 1:3, 3:6-7)?
* Why does God choose to mention the Branch (v.8) to Joshua in this moment?
* **Read 1 Kings 4:25, Deuteronomy 8:7-8** What will happen in the time of the Branch then?

**Read Zechariah 4**

“The solid gold lampstand is a reference to the golden menorah of the Mosaic tabernacle replicated as the lamp for the Second Temple, in contrast to the ten lampstands of Solomon’s temple (Exod. 25:31, 1 Kgs 7:49). The bowl at the top is the fuel reservoir…” (Hill)

* How would you summarize the message of this vision?
* What is the tone of the words that God delivers to Zerubbabel?
  + While v.6 is offered specifically to Zerubbabel, what can we learn from it in how we seek to serve God?
  + Do you celebrate small things or more often overlook them?
  + “The foundation for the Second Temple was laid sometime in 538 or 537 BC… The meager project was soon abandoned, and the construction of the site lay neglected for nearly two decades. Not until the teaching of Haggai in 520 BC did the initiative to rebuild the temple resume.” (Hill)
  + What would it look like to change the way you approach small things to align with v.10?
* It is likely that the two olive branches next to the gold pipes in this passage are Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel, who are working together in Jerusalem’s restoration. How can this image help us in our following and serving the Lord?
  + Can you think of any other dynamic duos (or groups) in Scripture that highlight community’s value?

**Read Zechariah 5:1-4**

A better understanding here than a curse might be an oath. Normally, when people made a covenant together that could be understood as taking an oath and accepting the appropriate consequences (ie: curse) if that oath was broken. So, this would be based on the Mosaic covenant.

* A cubit is about 30 feet. How would you respond if you saw a Bible that big flying toward you in a dream?
* This is definitely a strange vision. What is its connection to the other visions we’ve read tonight?
* Why is it important for the cleansing of these two sinful groups from the land to happen?
  + How do we value righteousness in a way that does not lead us to a ‘holier than thou’ mindset?

**Read Zechariah 5:5-11**

“The symbolism of the vision would suggest that this spirit of idolatry has been confined, but still threatens the restoration community. For this reason, God sends it back to Babylonia.” (Hill) This could suggest the wickedness which made a home in Israel was frequently due to foreign influences.

* Why would a lead top be used on a basket?
* This kind of personification is common in the Old Testament, with both wisdom (Proverbs 1:20-21) and folly (Proverbs 9:13-18) receiving this treatment in Proverbs.
* What does the angel’s reaction tell us about the seriousness of this situation?
* What does it mean that wickedness will have a house built for it in Babylon?
* How do you respond when you see sin or wickedness within your own life? What would a response more similar to this one look like?

**Challenge**

For many of us, it is easy to live “by might or by power”, yet God calls us to live by His Spirit (Zech. 4:8). Over the next week, spend time praying to, listening for, and responding to the Holy Spirit and His leading.