



# zechariah

## CHOOSING TO DREAM AGAIN

“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6 ESV). Zechariah spoke these words to a discouraged and defeatist group of people to inspire and revive them to dream again. They were in the right place, but not living for the right purpose. God’s Word through His prophet, Zechariah, is one of encouragement and hope. God worked in the past. God works in the present. And God will yet work in the future. In fact, there is not a more future-focused book in the Old Testament than Zechariah. God’s power is not locked in an ancient, distant past; it is available to you today!

Before we begin our study in the book of Zechariah, let’s look at some key passages in the book of Ezra. It is in Ezra where we find the context through which Zechariah was called to make great the name of the Lord.

Here’s how it happened:

“In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: ‘Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has charged me to build Him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all His people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and

rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel—He is the God who is in Jerusalem. And let each survivor, in whatever place he sojourns, be assisted by the men of his place with silver and gold, with goods and with beasts, besides freewill offerings for the house of God that is in Jerusalem” (Ezra 1:1-4 ESV).

The Babylonians destroyed the walls of Jerusalem and the temple, and in 586 B.C., took captive the people living in Jerusalem and Judea (known as the Babylonian Exile or Babylonian Captivity). Approximately 50 years later, Cyrus, the king of Persia, defeated the Babylonians.

This Persian king was not a Jew, and by all appearances, he was an unlikely instrument in the hand of God. But God used and raised up this man to give the Jews freedom to go back and occupy their

homeland. He not only gave these exiles freedom, he told them to do it.

Cyrus said (paraphrased), *“I want you to go back and rebuild. God has given this land to you as your heritage and it is something He has put in my heart for you to do. I encourage you to do it.”*

Scripture tells us about some of these exiles who left captivity to go back to their homeland:

*“They came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, and Baanah” (Ezra 2:2 ESV).*

The first name mentioned is Zerubbabel. He was not a king; he was a governor appointed by Cyrus to lead the party back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. Nehemiah led the way to rebuild the walls of the city, and Zerubbabel helped to rebuild the temple.

*“Now the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel who was over them. Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak arose and began to rebuild the house of God that is in Jerusalem, and the prophets of God were with them, supporting them” (Ezra 5:1-2 ESV).*

Here we see an amazing partnership—prophets working

alongside government officials. God used the officials to pull together resources and plans, and to improve civic life. God used the prophets to impact the moral character of the nation.

Prophets and leaders worked together, and Zechariah was one of the prophets.

*“And the elders of the Jews built and prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. They finished their building by decree of the God of Israel and by decree of Cyrus and Darius and Artaxerxes king of Persia” (Ezra 6:14 ESV).*

The three kings (Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes) were all non-Jews, but these kings were used of God to provide protection and resource for the people to go back to the land.

So we learn from Ezra about this patriotic group of Jews who left Babylon to go to Jerusalem, and they had great zeal for the opportunity that was in front of them.

But we learn in Zechariah that although these Jews had been blessed with the opportunity to go back and rebuild, their enthusiasm and excitement began to wane.

Discouragement set in. The Jews did not have the numbers of people that were there before. They weren't able to re-create

the same visage of the temple that once dazzled sojourners. And as a result, the people were discouraged and stopped working. Their exhilaration and excitement of going back home turned into the same old same old. They were living in the land, but not living for the Lord.

This is such an important spiritual truth for us. We can be in the right place, but not live for the right purpose.

In this case, the people were wonderfully, miraculously back in the land of promise, and yet in their hearts, they weren't living out their faith.

Zechariah was concerned about this spirit of discouragement. He wanted to renew their hope in God's promise to be with them, to work through them, and to bring glory to His name.

The name, Zechariah, simply means, *God remembers*. In our lives, sometimes we just need to be reminded that God remembers, God moves, and God works.

The book Zechariah is one of the most consoling books of encouragement in the Old Testament, and yet, it is one of the most complicated books.

Martin Luther, John Calvin, and many other reformers often referenced the incredible encouragement they received when reading the book of Zechariah.

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**"This doctrine** may be fitly applied to our age: for we see how Satan raises up great forces, we see how the whole world conspires against the Church, to prevent the increase or the progress of the kingdom of Christ. When we consider how great are the difficulties which meet us, we are ready to faint and to become wholly dejected. Let us then remember that it is no new thing for enemies to surpass great mountains in elevation; but that the Lord can at length reduce them to a plain. This, then, our shield can cast down and lay prostrated whatever greatness the Devil may set up to terrify us: for as the Lord then reduces a great mountain to a plain, when Zerubbabel was able to do nothing, so at this day, however boldly may multiplied adversaries resist Christ in the work of building a spiritual temple to God the Father, yet all their efforts will be in vain."

—John Calvin

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To paraphrase, Calvin said our God is a God who is mighty and powerful, and no one and nothing can usurp authority over Him. But when Calvin said, "This doctrine," what doctrine was he referencing? There is clearly a missing piece, right?

Calvin was referencing Zechariah:

"Then he said to me, 'This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD

of hosts. Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of "Grace, grace to it!" (Zechariah 4:6-7 ESV).

God used the prophet, Zechariah, to speak to the governor, Zerubbabel. The prophet reminded Zerubbabel that in the midst of discouragement, overwhelming odds, points of resistance and uncertainty about the future, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6 ESV).

As believers today, we need to embrace these words in our minds and hearts. We need to be renewed in our understanding that our God remembers and He works on behalf of His people.

The Spirit of God is our strength. The Spirit of God is the secret to effectiveness in service. The Spirit of God is the mighty force, power, and movement in our lives. Through Him, we can make both a recognizable and recoverable difference in the communities in which we live, in the families with whom we serve, and ultimately, in the world in which God has placed us. The Holy Spirit of God gives life, strength, power and fruitfulness to the church of God!

It is like the old songwriter said: "All is vain unless the Spirit of the Holy One comes down." —George Adkins, *Brethren, We Have Met to Worship*, 1819

We don't want our ministry to be something that is well organized and well executed, but spiritually impotent. The source of our power doesn't come from who we are, what we have, or what we can do. It is the power of the Spirit of God working within us.

The first thing Zechariah had to confront was the condition of the of the heart.

Zechariah is the largest book of the minor prophets with the exception of Hosea. Mariano Di Gangi, a wonderful Christian theologian, outlined the book of Zechariah in a very simple fashion that I think will help us form our study:

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—Mariano Di Gangi

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## A Merciful Message

Where do we see the mercy of God poured out in the book of Zechariah?

"The LORD was very angry with your fathers. Therefore say to them, Thus declares the LORD of hosts: Return to Me, says the LORD of hosts, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts" (Zechariah 1:2-3 ESV).

The book of Zechariah opens with a call to the people of God to come back to Him.

As a parent, you probably had times in your life when you looked at your child and said, "You come over here!" Maybe it was a situation where the child wasn't inclined to come because there was an edge of threat in your voice, "*You come here!*"

On the other hand, you probably had times when you got down on one knee and said, "Come here, come here," and the child ran to you.

God's call to return was not a threatening one, but an appeal to come to Him. We see a similar appeal in the New Testament:

"Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you" (James 4:8a ESV).

It was not enough for the people to just return to the land. It was not enough for them to simply do the right things. They had to come back to the Lord in their hearts.

It is the same for us today. As the people of God, the "change agent" is not just what we *do*, but *who we become* on the inside. We need to come back to God in our hearts as a nation, as a community, as a church, and individually.

How vital it is for us to ask God to work in us before He works through us! We need to pray, seek and ask Him to help us recover our mission so that whatever else happens, we are about the business that God has called us to

do. In every age and generation, true worship is first and foremost an issue of the heart.

Where is your heart in relationship to God today? Is your heart rightly related to Him?

God is not interested in religious performance—just what you do when you gather in houses of worship—nor is God interested in the freedom of worship as you come.

God wants you to live out your faith in practical religion and practices wherever you go, whatever you do. That may mean you need to seek again the mercy of God so that you will become the conduit of His mercy in a society that so desperately needs to see His grace, love, and care.

"Thus says the Lord of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart" (Zechariah 7:9-10 ESV).

"These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace; do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, declares the LORD" (Zechariah 8:16-17 ESV).

God is looking for people who live out a faith that is real and

genuine because they walk in relationship with Him. One of the great needs of our lives and in our churches is to walk what we say we believe—not just a *talking* faith, but a *walking* faith. I could call it a “walkie-talkie” faith in that order—living out your faith for all to see and hear.

In Zechariah, we also read about Joshua, the High Priest. Joshua was a “representative man”—the man of God who represented the people to God.

“Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him” (Zechariah 3:1 ESV).

Many times throughout the Bible, we read about our adversary, the devil. Satan accuses us continually before God and seeks to use our faults and failures to abuse us, to make us believe God could never use us. But Scripture tells us differently:

“And the LORD said to Satan, ‘The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?’ Now Joshua was standing before the Angel, clothed with filthy garments. And the Angel said to those who were standing before Him, ‘Remove the filthy garments from him.’ And to him He said, ‘Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments.’ And I

said, ‘Let them put a clean turban on his head.’ So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the Angel of the LORD was standing by” (Zechariah 3:2-5 ESV).

God cleansed and renewed the life of His priest, Joshua, so that he could be faithful and effective in ministering to the people. This is a movement of God’s restoration—taking away sin and making people right.

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“Surely this is a marvelous portrayal of the biblical doctrine of justification by faith. We who are stained by sin, accused by Satan, and incapable of rendering acceptable service to the holy God can, nevertheless, experience acquittal and acceptance. Paul says our sin can be removed and we can be clothed in the robe of righteousness of Christ—(Philippians 3:9).”

—Mariano Di Gangi

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God is appealing to us to renew and surrender—to live lives of righteousness and holiness before Him.

The Apostle Paul said in Romans:

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by

the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:1-2 ESV).

Do you need to recover a response to the mercy and grace of God in your heart? Do you need to renew the commitment of your life to live in righteousness and holiness in the pursuit of the Lord?

### A Mysterious Message

Over and over, Zechariah talks about the source of his revelation—"the angel who talked with me." Look at these examples in the first six chapters:

"I saw in the night, and behold, a man riding on a red horse! He was standing among the myrtle trees in the glen, and behind him were red, sorrel, and white horses. Then I said, 'What are these, my lord?' **The angel who talked with me** said to me, 'I will show you what they are'... So **the angel who talked with me** said to me, 'Cry out, Thus says the Lord of hosts: I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion'... And I said to **the angel who talked with me**, 'What are these?' And he said to me, 'These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.' Then the Lord showed me four craftsmen" (Zechariah 1:8-9, 14, 19 ESV, *emphasis added*).

"And behold, **the angel who talked with me** came forward, and another angel came forward

to meet him" (Zechariah 2:3 ESV, *emphasis added*).

"And **the angel who talked with me** came again and woke me, like a man who is awakened out of his sleep" (Zechariah 4:1 ESV, *emphasis added*).

"Then **the angel who talked with me** came forward and said to me, 'Lift your eyes and see what this is that is going out'" (Zechariah 5:5 ESV, *emphasis added*).

"Then I answered and said to **the angel who talked with me**, 'What are these, my lord?'" (Zechariah 6:4 ESV, *emphasis added*).

Throughout the book of Zechariah, we find revelations and prophecies of how God worked in the past, how He works in the present, and how He will yet work in the future.

There is not a more future-focused book in the Old Testament than Zechariah. In fact, Zechariah has been called "The Apocalyptic Book of the Old Testament" because it is more like the book of Revelation.

Have you ever read the book of Revelation and found yourself struggling to understand all the scenes and images? It is the same with the book of Zechariah. There are mysteries and messages included within the book that we may not fully understand, but they help us see that God is not finished. There are incredible things yet to come. The mystery

of this book goes back to God's fulfillment of a promise He made to Israel...

### A Messianic Message

The messianic message found in Zechariah is the message of Jesus. There is no Old Testament book with more of Jesus in it than the book of Zechariah. Although this book was written at least 500 years (or more) before the coming of Christ, there are amazing pictures of the unveiling of Jesus and the anticipation of His coming.

The following is a quick sampling:  
*Messiah Revealed...*

Servant	Zech. 3:8	Matt.12:18
Branch	Zech. 3:8; 6:12	Luke 1:78
King-Priest	Zech. 6:13	Heb. 6:20-21
Palm Sunday	Zech. 9:9-10	Matt.1:4-5

*Messiah Rejected...*

Betrayal	Zech. 11:12-13	Matt. 27:7-9
Pierced One	Zech. 12:10	John 19:37
Shepherd	Zech. 13:7-9	Matt. 26:31

*Messiah Rewarded...*

Returns	Zech. 14:4	Rev. 19:11-16
Restores	Zech. 14:6-8	Rev. 21:1-8
Reigns	Zech. 14:16	Rev. 21:22-27

### *Messiah Revealed*

In Zechariah, we see Jesus as the servant of God, the Branch, and the King-Priest. We even have a direct correlation to Palm Sunday:

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is He, humble and

mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9 ESV).

The prophecy was fulfilled several centuries later when Jesus rode into the city of Jerusalem on a donkey.

### *Messiah Rejected*

Zechariah tells us about the betrayal of Christ and the 30 pieces of silver (paid to Judas). He tells us about Jesus being like a shepherd who was smitten and the sheep who were scattered. Zechariah also tells us about Jesus being pierced:

"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on Me, on Him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over Him, as one weeps over a firstborn" (Zechariah 12:10 ESV).

### *Messiah Rewarded*

In Zechariah, we read about the return of Christ, the restoration of Christ and the reign of Christ.

It is overwhelming what Zechariah tells us about the coming of Christ:

"On that day His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very



wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward” (Zechariah 14:4 ESV).

This same Jesus who stood on the Mount of Olives and ascended into heaven will come again one day to rule and reign. He will put His foot on the top of the Mount of Olives and in that moment, everything will change!

This is the very fulfillment of what Jesus said to a group of disciples who walked with Him on the road to Emmaus:

“And beginning with Moses and all the *Prophets*, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:27 ESV, *emphasis added*).

Whether we read Genesis, Revelation, or any book in between, the Bible is always about Jesus! As followers of Jesus Christ, we live by faith. Our hope, confidence and joy are found in the fulfillment of what God will do in Christ when He establishes His kingdom and throne.

### **A Missional Message**

“Then he said to me, ‘This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts’” (Zechariah 4:6 ESV).

In order to refocus, renew and motivate a group of people in the ancient world to rebuild the

temple, God (through Zechariah) reminded them of His promise and power in their lives.

And through these same words, we gain encouragement for life and faith today.

### *The Power of God is Available to You*

The power of God is not locked in some ancient, distant past. This same power is available to believers in Jesus Christ living today.

God forbid we would neglect the source of our strength which is the power of God’s Spirit living in us. It would be tragic if we went to a store, bought a cell phone, charged it one time, used it, and then said, “Well, I guess I can’t use it again because it doesn’t have any power. The power is gone.”

Yet, many people do just that. They hear the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ, they understand that Jesus is mighty to save, they come to a saving faith in Christ, but over time they become discouraged—they wear out and wear down.

Does this describe you today? If so, remember the power of God is available to you! Natural power is never enough for supernatural work. You are reliant upon the strength and movement of the Holy Spirit.

As a believer in Jesus Christ, God has given you the eternal,

renewable resource of the Holy Spirit who is the power of God day after day. You can experience the POWER of God in your life.

The psalmist said it this way: “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God” (Psalm 20:7 ESV).

Our God can do more in a moment than you can do in a lifetime. Commit yourself to the power of God.

*The Purpose of God  
is Achievable*

“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts. Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain” (Zechariah 4:6b-7a ESV).

God is able to do amazing things through His people when His people are committed to His purpose. God has called and assigned us to Himself to live out His purpose—to take the gospel to our city, to our nation, and to our world.

Don’t back off. Don’t back down! We exist to proclaim and declare the gospel through the power and purpose of God. God never fails to work on behalf of His people.

*God’s Promises  
are Unchangeable*

“And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the

LORD will be one and His name one” (Zechariah 14:9 ESV).

Our God is mighty. Our God is great. The promises of God will never fade or fail. It is time for us—as the people of God—to dream, to believe, to trust in the power of His name!

In my lifetime, there are few musicals that can compare with the passionate and provocative words found in the melodies of *Les Miserables*.

*Les Miserables* debuted in Paris in 1980. To date, it is the longest running musical, seen by over 70 million people in 42 countries, and the winner of 76 international awards.

In this incredible story (based on the historical novel written by Victor Hugo), the French Revolution is traced through a variety of different, very brilliant characters. These characters help to personalize the struggles of those in poverty, oppression and freedom. One of the cornerstone solos expressing their struggle is “I Dreamed a Dream.”

This dream was overshadowed by discouragement and lamented by the heroin, Fantine. Fantine dreamed a dream reminiscent of happier times because so many felt their were dreams were being squashed or lost.

Do you feel that “life has killed the dream [you] dreamed”? It is time

for the people of God to dream again!—where we are, who we are, what God is doing in our lives as His people through His Word and with His Spirit.

Our world is ever-changing and ever-increasing in conflict and uncertainty. We need to remember and reclaim this fact: the greatest hope of our lives is the kingdom of God and the citizenship of heaven!

By the way, do you know the words, *les miserables*, are often translated in English as *the miserable ones* or *the poor ones*? However, the literal French-English translation is *the poor in spirit*.

If you read Matthew using a French-English translation, you will read, “Blessed are the poor in spirit [*les miserables*], for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3 ESV).

Our hope is beyond this world, beyond this life! The Apostle Paul said it this way:

“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will

transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the **power** that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself” (Philippians 3:20-21 ESV, *emphasis added*).

So... “Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10 ESV).



*Lord, today I pray for renewal of our hearts, our lives, our focus and our confidence because of who You are and what You said. Today, let us hear Your words speaking to Your church, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6 ESV).*

*Father, we want to be a people who yield to and reflect out the power of the Holy Spirit’s working in our lives. I pray You will do something that we have never imagined in the history of our church thus far, given what You do by Your spirit in the days that are yet to come. God, move us, mobilize us, and let us be people who live to make great the name of Jesus in this generation, for we pray in Jesus’ name, Amen.*

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