

The Measure of What God Will Do
Zechariah 2:1-13, Revelation 21:1-4

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As I was thinking about the passage from our Minor Prophet today, it made me think about “hallucinations.”

The human brain’s emotions and senses are so complex a hallucination can occur depending on the right conditions.

Did you know there are seven different kind of hallucinations? Visual hallucinations are common in delirium.

Auditory (hearing) hallucinations are common in people who suffer from schizophrenia and other psychiatric issues.

Olfactory, smell, hallucinations can be caused by a brain tumor. Gustatory, taste, hallucinations exist but are rare.

Tactile hallucinations, when you feel things on your skin or body that aren’t really there, are common in substance abuse withdrawal.

Then there are hypnagogic hallucinations which are dream-like visions that occur when you’re going to sleep. They usually feature complex narratives, vivid characters, or intricate scenes

Hypnopompic hallucinations usually happen when you’re waking up. They tend to feel more realistic, brief, and often have a strong visual component.

In the Bible, God communicated many ways but none of them were hallucinations or misinterpretations of a dream.

They didn't occur to someone with a brain tumor or someone who was smoking the wrong plant. God spoke to and through people we call prophets.

Prophets had many roles and many jobs and one of those jobs was to reveal the future as God directed and what God would do among His people as He revealed His plan.

This morning I want to focus on Zechariah, and the message of hope that he brought to the people of God.

Now, Zechariah's prophecies are a little different than some of the other prophets because God gave Zechariah waking, symbolic visions of what He would do and what He wanted from His people.

Repeatedly in Zechariah, the words "*I looked up*" described what happened to him. Even in chapter 4, Zechariah shared with us that an angel woke him up so he could physically see the next vision.

Zechariah also received oracles, burdens and Words from God like the other prophets, but Zechariah alone seems to be the only one who had these vivid images come to him while he was awake.

Throughout this book, we see that Zechariah had eight visions: visions of horses, chariots, craftsmen, a high priest made holy, lampstands among olive trees, a flying scroll and a basket of sin being taken away to a distant land.

This morning I'm focusing on Zechariah's third vision which is written about in the second chapter of Zechariah where he sees a vision about measuring Jerusalem.

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Zechariah 2:1-5, “Then I looked up, and there before me was a man with a measuring line in his hand. I asked, “Where are you going?” He answered me, “To measure Jerusalem, to find out how wide and how long it is.” While the angel who was speaking to me was leaving, another angel came to meet him and said to him: “Run, tell that young man, ‘Jerusalem will be a city without walls because of the great number of people and animals in it. And I myself will be a wall of fire around it,’ declares the Lord, ‘and I will be its glory within.’”

In this vision, Zechariah saw an image of a man carrying “*a measuring line*.”

Today, if a man sees another person carrying around a measuring tape, he’s probably going to ask: “Whatcha gona measure?” It’s in our male DNA.

This was probably why, when Zechariah saw a man who was about to measure some stuff, asked where he was headed.

We should have noticed that Zechariah wasn’t just an observer in this vision. He asked a question of the man with the *measuring line* and the man answered. The man was going to the city of Jerusalem to measure it.

We need to take note that at the time of Zechariah’s ministry, not much of Jerusalem had been rebuilt since it was destroyed in 586 BC by the Babylonians.

It’s still about 75 years until Nehemiah gets wind that the walls are still in ruins and leads the efforts to rebuild them. So, why is this man going to measure Jerusalem?

It’s at this point that an angel of God jumps in and helps with the vision. The angel gives the vision some direction and some answers.

Here's where a word study of scripture is valuable. Verses 4-5 have a particular future tense to it that are important.

Verse 4 says, "*Jerusalem will be*" or in some translations it says, "*Jerusalem shall be*" and verse 5 says "*I will be*" twice. "Shall be" and "will be" are future tense.

Whatever was happening had to do with the future of Jerusalem, God's people and God's plan. Whatever was happening in this vision had nothing to do with the now, but everything to do with what God will do in the future.

In verse 4, the angel brought the Word of God that Jerusalem would be filled with so people and livestock that the city might as well not have walls. This was ironically funny since Jerusalem, at that time, had no walls.

The population that would fill Jerusalem would be overflowing and no measurement of the boundaries of Jerusalem would contain all the people that would be in it.

God was sharing, through Zechariah, that the city of Jerusalem would not only be rebuilt, spreading past its boundaries, but it would be prosperous, too.

In verse 5, the angel brought the Word of God that Jerusalem would have God as its wall and that He would be in the midst of all the people.

It's precisely in verse 5 that we're supposed to think: "Wait a minute." Questions should come to our mind as to the nature of this vision.

Is Zechariah seeing a vision about the physical Jerusalem that would be rebuilt, or is Zechariah seeing a vision about some other kind of metaphorical or spiritual Jerusalem that would be built?

The answer is ‘yes’ to both questions. Not only was God sharing that physical Jerusalem would be rebuilt, but an even greater, spiritual Jerusalem.

Zechariah was receiving a vision that was to widen the minds of the Jews of his day.

God’s plan might begin in Jerusalem, but it wouldn’t be confined to that one place. God’s plan was going to spill out past the boundaries of that one city.

What the people needed to understand was that the future glory of Jerusalem was spiritual. The future glory of Jerusalem was in the Kingdom of God.

This is an important truth. It’s the central meaning of the vision and the center of the hope that we have today.

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This is why, when we study this chapter more closely, we find that God was showing Zechariah a vision that wasn’t necessarily focusing on physical Jerusalem.

But Zechariah’s vision doesn’t end here at verse 5; it unfolds further in verses 6-13 where Zechariah and the Jews of his day were given hope and as well as hope for us today.

Zechariah 2:6-13, “Come! Come! Flee from the land of the north,” declares the Lord, “for I have scattered you to the four winds of heaven,” declares the Lord. “Come, Zion! Escape, you who live in Daughter Babylon!” For this is what the Lord Almighty says: “After the Glorious One has sent me against the nations that have plundered you—for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye—

I will surely raise my hand against them so that their slaves will plunder them. Then you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me. "Shout and be glad, Daughter Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you," declares the Lord. "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. The Lord will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem. Be still before the Lord, all mankind, because he has roused himself from his holy dwelling."

These verses are a little confusing because sometimes God was speaking Himself and sometimes He was speaking about Himself.

Then, sometimes Zechariah was speaking and sometimes Zechariah was being spoken to. These conversations switched between verses with no warning.

So, amid all these confusing verses, we have several truths presented that give hope.

The most important and key phrase is found in verse 6, "*I have scattered you.*" Again, we have a phrase with a special tense that's important.

In Hebrew it's the "prophetic perfect tense." This simple little phrase, "*I have scattered you,*" means "*the spreading out is a future expansion with no doubt.*"

God was going to spread His people out from Jerusalem to all over the world and there was no doubt that it would actually happen.

God has great purpose for those who are the apple of His eye, but also remember that, at the time of this vision, His people were stuck in Babylon.

They wanted to return to the Promised Land, so God was telling His people that He was going to shake the nations that were against Him and bring favor to those who were with Him.

This not only gave them hope, but it gives us hope because God's preparing His people for victory and blessing.

Sometimes it might feel like everyone gets ahead and wins except those who're faithful to God, but God has promised that when we're faithful to Him, He'll provide for us in a spiritual kingdom that's without equal.

Another important word found in this passage is "*Zion*." The word "*Zion*" in verses 7 and 10 reiterates that God wasn't just speaking about physical Jerusalem but was speaking about spiritual things.

Whenever we see "*Zion*" in the Scriptures, which occurs approximately 169 times, we should take note that spiritual truths are being presented in a mighty way.

Zion means the Kingdom of God. Zion means the remnant of those who hold God as their God and no others. Zion means the Kingdom of Heaven where God's will is done by those in it.

Because the use of this word occurs in the New Testament as well, Zion means the Church and followers of Jesus Christ. Zion is a special spiritual word that not only means Jerusalem, but so much more.

"Zion" is a name that had special meaning for the people in Zechariah's day and more meaning for us today! It's not a meaningless name!

This description of Jerusalem as Zion gave the Israelites hope and gives us hope, too, because God's preparing His people for victory, prosperity and His presence.

God promises that when we're faithful to Him, that He'll provide for us in a spiritual kingdom that's without equal.

Zion is the Kingdom of God and has room for everyone who accepts Jesus Christ. Zion is the Kingdom of Heaven, a spiritual kingdom that lasts forever.

Zion is the Kingdom of God where we see God face-to-face. Zion is the Kingdom of Heaven where all of God's promises come true and are fulfilled.

Another important phrase is found in verse 11: *"Many nations will be joined with the Lord in that day and will become my people."*

God was giving Zechariah a vision that anyone in the world who believes in God belongs to Him. Verse 12 repeats this promise in that we, who're faithful, are part of God's inheritance. We're portioned out and belong to Him.

This is hope-filled and comforting language. If you aren't sure where you fit or to Whom you belong, this message should put your mind at ease.

God declared that those who occupy Zion belong to Him and He's their wall of protection. His presence was among them and marked them as His.

The last phrase I want to mention comes from Zechariah 2:13, *"Be still before the Lord, all mankind, because he has roused himself from his holy dwelling."*

At first glance, I noticed the people were told to be silent before God. God's awesome and holy and the picture of verse 13 is that all people are struck silent because of His awesomeness.

Even though that's true, that's not the point of this verse. The important point of this verse is found in the last phrase, *"He has roused Himself from His holy dwelling."*

The question is: Where's God going? He has roused Himself from His holy dwelling and is on the move going somewhere, but where's He going? The answer to that question isn't given until we get to John 1:14.

John 1:14, *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."*

Jesus is the foundation, the fulfillment and the means for Zion to be all it's predicted to be in this vision. None of it takes place unless Jesus Christ comes.

God rouses Himself from His holy dwelling, spends time with us and saves us from our sins. Jesus is the beginning, middle and end of Zion! Jesus is the hope predicted in this vision!

Slide 4

Conclusion

We have just looked at number three out of eight of Zechariah's symbolic "awake" visions. It's a vision that centered on Jerusalem being rebuilt, but it's more than that.

The promise of a spiritual Jerusalem being built was given which has its foundation in Christ Jesus and its purpose in Jesus as well.

Before we leave, I'd like to share one more passage of Scripture. It explains everything that Zechariah saw, but in different words.

Revelation 21:1-4, *“Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”*

Do you see all that God has planned for you when you believe in Jesus Christ? Do you see all you’ll miss if you don’t believe in Jesus Christ?