

The Promise of a Coming King

SESSION IN A SENTENCE: God promised to send a Branch—Jesus—who would be struck down for sin to bring peace.

BACKGROUND PASSAGE: Zechariah

Imagine preparing to take children to Disney World. They are old enough to fully appreciate the experience, but they have never been there. Of course, they would be very excited, counting down the days. The pending departure would captivate their attention and even motivate their behavior. Their expectations would be nearly all-consuming.

? What was an outing, trip, or vacation, whether as a child, on your own, or with your own family, that captivated your attention as you looked forward to it?

Group Time

Point 1: God will send a Branch who will take away iniquity (Zech. 3:8-10; 6:12).

^{3:8} Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men who are a sign: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch. ⁹ For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day. ¹⁰ In that day, declares the LORD of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor to come under his vine and under his fig tree.”

.....

^{6:12} And say to him, “Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD.

The Book of Zechariah is full of meaningful imagery. In these verses we see pictures of a **branch**, a **vine** and **fig tree**, and a **stone**. Ultimately, all of these symbolic pictures show the Messiah for what He would be—our hope. He is the source of life, resurrection, salvation, adoption, and mission. Each of these pictures frames the way we see and understand Jesus Christ and shapes the way we obey Him and walk in faithfulness.



How should these images shape the way we obey and walk in faithfulness to Jesus?

When verse 9 speaks of iniquity being removed on a single day, Zechariah was making a prophecy that looked forward to the day when the Messiah would come. He was speaking of the judicial forgiveness that comes to sinners through the cross of Jesus Christ. The high priest made sacrifices at the temple to cover the sins of the people, but this was a temporary measure. The Branch, the Messiah, our Great High Priest, made the final sacrifice for sins with His own life, and as He said, “It is finished” (John 19:30).

Christ as Priest: As our Great High Priest, Jesus accomplishes the work of _____ us to God. He is the One whose perfect righteousness is presented to the Father for our _____.

Point 2: God will send a King who will bring peace (Zech. 6:13; 9:9-10).

^{6:13} It is he who shall build the temple of the LORD and shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule on his throne. And there shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”

.....

^{9:9} 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. ¹⁰ I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

Zechariah 6:13 points out that the Messiah is going to occupy multiple roles, roles that would not have been available to a single individual in the time of Zechariah. Specifically, the text describes a ruler who will be both a king *and* a priest. This ruled out the rulers of that day as kings and priests, by law, were two distinct roles of leadership for the Israelites. The Messiah would not only command the rule of nations but would also intercede spiritually on behalf of all those who have faith in Him.



How does Jesus fulfill the roles of King and Priest in our lives?

Zechariah 9:9-10 points directly to Jesus' kingship, including its humble origins. This is the prophecy describing the coming King as one who would ride into Jerusalem—on what we now know as Palm Sunday—on a donkey (Matt. 21:1-9). With this image, the Lord shows the Messiah is going to advance a kingdom not of war but of peace. His reign will exist not only locally over the Jewish nation but will also extend to the ends of the earth and include people from every tribe and tongue.

Christ as King: To restore His broken world, God promised a King who would _____ His people and _____ all of creation. The promise of a coming King finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ and looks forward to its _____ when Jesus returns for His bride, the _____.



How can we honor our humble King of kings as we face the terrors of this world?

Point 3: God will send a Shepherd who will be struck down for the sheep (Zech. 13:7-9).


⁷ “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me,” declares the LORD of hosts. “Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones.” ⁸ In the whole land, declares the LORD, two thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one third shall be left alive. ⁹ And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, ‘They are my people’; and they will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’”

The coming Messiah is here described as the Lord’s Shepherd, and He is to be struck down. The One who stands with the Lord is, in fact, the one and only Son of God, and His sheep, His followers, would be scattered. Of course, this pictures the future arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus, when His disciples abandoned Him (Matt. 26:31). But the Lord promises to preserve a remnant whom He will test and purify that they will call on Him alone as their God, and they will be His people.

Voices from the Church

“It was not nails that held Jesus to that wretched cross; it was his unqualified resolution, out of love for his Father, to do his Father’s will—and, within that framework, it was his love for sinners like me.”¹

—D. A. Carson

 In what ways has God refined your faith, even if through trials?

The persecution and death that would rise up against the Lord’s Shepherd reminds us that God’s sovereignty extends even to the most painful of moments. This matters because it enables God’s people to trust Him, knowing there is purpose in our suffering. The pain that Jesus experienced was part of God’s plan to redeem humanity. The Lord Himself called for the “sword” to strike the Shepherd, reminiscent of Isaiah’s statement that the Lord was pleased to crush His Suffering Servant for our salvation (Isa. 53:10).

Christ as Substitute: Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with humankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal _____, and in His substitutionary death on the cross, He made provision for the _____ of humanity from sin.

My Mission

Because we have peace with God through Christ, we strive to live at peace with others and advance peace in the world around us to reflect the rule of our King.

- **Of what do you need to repent to live in and enjoy the peace that God offers through faith in Christ?**
- **What are some ways your group can strive for peace within your group and church?**
- **Who in your life needs to hear the good news about peace with God and others made available through the sacrifice of King Jesus?**

Voices from the Church

“God lives in peace and sends the Prince of Peace to rule in peace so we can experience peace. Pray for peace in your church, in your community, in your local politics, and in your nation. By being a person of peace, you are reflecting God’s character and desire.”²

—*Africa Study Bible*

Notes

Daily Study

Day 1: Read Zechariah 1:1–2:13

I have three children. They're all teenagers. I can't count the number of times I've said to them, "Listen to me!" It can seem frustrating to get their attention. What's more, I have tried to help them not make the same mistakes that I have made in the past.

In these verses, God is doing much the same thing. God is trying to convince His people not to make the mistakes of their ancestors and to pay attention to Him. The beauty is that if they do, He promises that they will be with Him and He will be with them. This is the promise of the garden of Eden—once again, humanity and God walking together, experiencing the unbroken relationship of Creator and created.

God continues to say these things to us today. He wants us to learn from history, He wants us to learn from His Word, and He wants us to follow Him in faith. Our promise is the same—that we will walk with Him and He with us.



Are there areas of your life where God has been trying to get your attention? Are there areas where you need to obey Him but you have struggled to do so?

Day 2: Read Zechariah 3:1–6:12

I love what this passage tells us about the Branch as it has grown into a full vine (3:10). It says that the Branch will cast shade for those who gather under it. Read retrospectively, it says that the followers of Jesus are the ones who will sit under it. And then the passage calls God's people to invite others to join them, sitting under the shade of the vine.

This is important because, first, it reminds us that sitting under the vine is richly satisfying. That's the picture here. There is restoration for hot and thirsty souls under the vine's shade. Beyond that, though, it speaks to our role. We don't provide shade; we just point to the One who does. The world is full of hot and thirsty people. We cannot quench their thirst, but we can give them directions to the One who can quench their thirst. God is calling His children to invite those they know who do not know Christ to join them in enjoying the comfort of the shade from the vine.



Who is someone you know who does not know Christ that you should be inviting to “sit under Jesus' vine”?

Day 3: Read Zechariah 6:13–9:17

We are to rejoice, and we are to shout! These are the expectations for the children of God who have enjoyed the comfort and redemption of the Messiah (9:9). Remember this principle: *The manner of our worship says something about the object of our worship.* We celebrate the things that mean the most to us, the things that move us the most. Can you imagine a baby's first birthday and no one celebrating? Can you imagine everyone just standing around, nodding lethargically? Of course not. Those days are fabulous celebrations that we enjoy. Why do we enjoy them, and why do we celebrate so loudly? We do this because we love the child and we understand the wonder of both birth and growth. The same type of elation should apply to our worship of the Messiah who has redeemed us.



What does the manner of your worship say about the God you are worshipping?

Day 4: Read Zechariah 10:1–12:14

How much hope is present in Zechariah 10:6? It's bubbling up on the page and spilling out in the life of those of us who are reading it in faith. It's hard not to sit back and just be in awe of God's covenant-keeping. God loves His people, and the promise of God across Scripture is that God will love, restore, and dwell with His people. This is what makes the name "Immanuel" so significant: "God is with us" (Isa. 7:14; 8:8). All the way back in the Abrahamic covenant, God promised to be with His people (Gen. 17:7). And all the way forward to Revelation 21, God ultimately promises to be with His people (Rev. 21:3,7). The greatest promise recorded in Scripture from the time that Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden of Eden away from God's presence is that God will once again be with us. This is yet another picture of God fulfilling that promise. One of the most beautiful pictures of this is Psalm 23:4. Even when we walk through the darkest valleys, we do not have to fear because *God is with us*.



How does God's promise of His presence give us hope? How is God's presence able to keep us from fear?

Day 5: Read Zechariah 13:1–14:21

God promises to put His people through a refining process. Increasingly, He will shape us into His Son's image through this refinement (see Rom. 8:28-29). Refinement, though, is not easy. It is often painful and challenging. Thankfully, in this passage, God points out that we can cry out to Him as we walk through difficult moments. This guarantee is one of the beautiful realities of Jesus. He is not a God who is distant and uninterested. He is a God who loves His children, and as this passage reminds us, He is both with us and for us. The title "Immanuel," used a few places in Scripture, literally means "God with us" (Isa. 7:14; 8:8; Matt. 1:23). He knows us, He loves us, and He invites us to cry out to Him. He promises to come to us and to be with us forever.

Maybe you are struggling from time to time with some particular pain. You need to hear today that God is with you, He is for you, and He wants you to cry out to Him. He is your hope.



In what areas of your life do you need to cry out to God, sharing with Him your hurt and confirming your confidence and hope in Him?

Encourage One Another

Join together with 2-4 people from your group, or with your family, sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and you are responding.

Share your thoughts and reflections on the truths from Scripture in this session:

- God will send a Branch who will take away iniquity (Zech. 3:8-10; 6:12).
- God will send a King who will bring peace (Zech. 6:13; 9:9-10).
- God will send a Shepherd who will be struck down for the sheep (Zech. 13:7-9).



How have you responded to these truths from Scripture?



Why must sin be dealt with in order to have peace in life and with God?



In what ways can we reflect who Jesus is by embodying peace, both corporately and individually?

Notes

UNIT 16**SESSION 1**

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2. Joni Eareckson Tada, *A Place of Healing* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010), 70.

SESSION 2

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SESSION 3

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SESSION 4

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UNIT 17**SESSION 1**

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SESSION 2

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2. A. W. Tozer, *Worship: The Reason We Were Created—Collected Insights from A. W. Tozer* (Chicago: Moody, 2017) [eBook].

SESSION 3

1. Elisabeth Elliot, *On Asking God Why* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 1989), 142.
2. Yoiyah Yilpet, "Haggai," in *Africa Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 1102.
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SESSION 4

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2. "Zechariah," in *Africa Study Bible* (Oasis International Ltd, 2016), 1352.

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SESSION 2

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Think about the encouragement people often share to help others through times of adversity. We might hear someone speak of how pressure is required to

transform coal into a diamond; thus, pressure can be good for us, transforming us into someone better. Or we might be told of the hatchling that has to work to break through its eggshell, and that struggle is good for this creature—even necessary—so that it grows strong. Likewise, adversity strengthens us and positions us to be who we were meant to be.

While these illustrations might provide encouragement, they reveal something quite important about the world's view of adversity. The world sees adversity as an opportunity for a person to dig deep, gaze within their soul, and discover who he or she truly is. But the gospel tells a different story—a better story. The gospel sees adversity as an opportunity for a person to look high above, gaze upon Christ, and see who He truly is. For it is Christ, not ourselves, who carries us through all trials and suffering. Adversity positions us to rely on Christ's power, not an inner human strength that has been lying dormant.

In this volume we pick up the story of Scripture with the Jews living in bondage in a foreign land, the result of their rebellion against God. But even in the midst of judgment, God's faithful love still shines forth brightly. We will witness God continuing to guide, strengthen, and protect His people in their time of great adversity, not to help them discover who they were but rather to understand who He is. At the same time, we will see God continue to drive the events of history toward the fulfillment of His ancient promise to provide the Rescuer, the One who would free people from an even greater bondage, that of sin and death.