

Zechariah 1:7-2:13, 6:1-8

Tuesday, May 22, 2012
9:47 PM

Passages

1. Isaiah 60
2. Psalm 73

Introduction

i. Sermon Introduction

- Sometimes, events around us can make it seem as though God is not active in this world
- Often it seems that the wicked succeed and the righteous perish
- Often it seems that the church, the people of God, is hopelessly corrupt and is not being renewed by God
- Often it seems as though God's purposes in the world are failing

ii. Passage Introduction

- This is where the people of Zechariah's day found themselves
- Years before, they had been excited at the clear ways God was exerting Himself to rescue His people
 - ◆ A new empire had arisen that allowed them to return to their land
 - ◆ The new empire had even decreed that they should rebuild the temple
 - ◆ The altar had been rebuilt and the foundation for the temple had been laid
 - ◆ Obviously God was among them to save
- But then everything went south
 - ◆ The people around them started attacking them to prevent the work on the temple
 - ◆ The empire changed its mind about the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple
 - ◆ The work on the temple stopped and it was not clear that it would ever start again
 - ◆ Maybe they were wrong earlier - maybe God was not acting on behalf of His people, maybe God had forgotten them
- Zechariah enters the scene here, bringing visions from God to reassure the people
 - ◆ Zechariah's encouragement is focused on who God is - the people should be assured because of the attributes of the God they serve
 - ◆ Zechariah's encouragement is focused on what God does - the people should be assured because of the actions God will take on their behalf
 - ◆ Zechariah's encouragement requires things from the people - if the people see who God is and what He does, they must react accordingly

iii. Read Zechariah 1:7-2:13, 6:1-8

iv. Proposition and Outline

- Proposition - The sovereign presence and jealous love of God motivates Him to act in this world and must motivate us to flee worldliness and fear God.
- Outline
 - a) Two attributes of God described in Zechariah's first three visions and his last vision
 - b) Four actions of God based on the attributes of God described in Zechariah's vision
 - c) Two imperatives for us based on the attributes and actions of God commanded in Zechariah's visions

1. Two Attributes of God

Zechariah's first three prophecies describe the God that is speaking to Him

- 1) They describe God as Sovereignly Present in this world
- 2) They describe God as Jealously Loving His people

i. The Sovereign Presence of God

- 1) Passages
 - a) Zechariah 1:7-11
 - b) Zechariah 2:5
 - c) Zechariah 6:1-8
- 2) Explanation
 - a) The horsemen in Zechariah 1 represent God's knowing presence throughout the world
 - i) The horsemen are sent out by God (v 10)
 - ii) The horsemen see the entire earth (v 11b)
 - iii) The horsemen report to God (v 11a)
 - iv) God's presence sees and knows everything that is going on
 - b) The chariots in Zechariah 6 represent God's powerful presence throughout the world
 - i) There are many similarities to the horsemen in Zechariah 1
 - A) They are sent out by God (v 5, 7)
 - B) They see the entire earth (v 6) - North and South are the two main directions of Israel's enemies
 - C) But we do not see them report back to God
 - ii) So, their purpose is slightly different
 - A) In Zechariah 1, the picture is scouts going to see the earth
 - B) In Zechariah 6, the picture is battle tanks going to take control of the earth
 1. Chariots were the most powerful weapon of war at the time (v 1)
 2. The horses are also specifically noted as powerful (v 2-3)
 3. Their presence in the earth satisfies God's design (v 8)
 - iii) God's presence has the power to accomplish His designs
 - c) The wall of fire in Zechariah 2 represents God's active presence in His people
 - i) God will be present to protect His people
 - ii) God's presence is not merely knowing and powerful, but it is active
 - A) It is not mere possibility, but activity
 - 3) Conclusion
 - a) The first attribute of God described here is God's sovereign presence
 - i) God is sovereign - that is He has both the AUTHORITY and the ABILITY to act
 - ii) God is present - that is He knows and sees everything and WILL act in this world
 - b) This is important to the people of Zechariah's day
 - i) In many ways, it may have looked like God was not exhibiting sovereign presence
 - A) The people were beset by their enemies
 - B) They had failed to rebuild the temple
 - ii) But, even at their lowest point, God affirms that He is still present and still in control
 - c) This is important to us
 - i) We may also look around and feel that God's purposes are not being accomplished, that He is not sovereign or present
 - ii) But, even when we feel this way we can look back at Zechariah and say, "No, God is still present and He is still in control - He will accomplish His purposes."

ii. The Jealous Love of God

- 1) Passages
 - a) Zechariah 1:14
 - b) Zechariah 2:8
- 2) Explanation
 - a) In Zechariah 2, we see that God's people are extremely valuable to Him - He loves His people
 - b) In Zechariah 1, we see that God is 'extremely jealous' over His people - He loves them with a jealous love
 - i) The jealousy of God for His people is a common theme of Scripture
 - A) Limited myself here to just the Pentateuch, but there are dozens of references to God's jealousy over His people
 - B) Exodus 20:5 (the second commandment, also Deut 5:9)- You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me,
 - C) Exodus 34:14 (prelude to the renewal of the covenant) - for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God
 - D) Numbers 25:11 (after Phinehas kills the offending Israelite) - "Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath from the people of Israel, in that he was jealous with my jealousy among them, so that I did not consume the people of Israel in my jealousy.
 - E) Deuteronomy 4:23-24 - Take care, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make a carved image, the form of anything that the LORD your God has forbidden you. For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.
 - F) Deuteronomy 6:15 - for the LORD your God in your midst is a jealous God---lest the anger of the LORD your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth.
- 3) Conclusion
 - a) So, the second attribute of God we see here is His jealous love
 - i) We might think that jealousy and love do not go together, but this describes the depth of passion of God for His people
 - ii) It is like the love of a husband for a wife that could rightly be called jealously
 - A) He devotes all of His affection on her - he loves her
 - B) He desires and even commands that all her affection is focused on him - he is jealous for her
 - iii) This is the love that God has for His people - it is an intense, jealous love
 - b) This was important to the people of Zechariah's day
 - i) Their present situation made them feel as though God had forgotten them
 - ii) They were no longer God's special people, they had been abandoned
 - iii) But God responds that His jealous love is still there, He still has the same depth of passion for His people
 - c) This is important to us as well
 - i) Looking at our present situation, we may believe God has forgotten us, that His love is turned away
 - ii) But, we can look back to Zechariah and say, "No, God has an eternal jealous love for His people, He will not forget."

2. Four Actions of God

Zechariah's visions do not simply describe God's attributes, they also demonstrate what God will do based on His attributes

- 1) God's attributes lead to God's wrath
- 2) God's attributes lead to God's mercy
- 3) God's attributes lead to God's blessing
- 4) God's attributes lead to God's ingathering of His people

i. The Sovereign Presence and Jealous Love of God Leads to Wrath

- 1) Passages
 - a) Zechariah 1:15
 - b) Zechariah 1:18-21
 - c) Zechariah 2:9
- 2) Explanation
 - a) The first vision in Zechariah 1 says that the first reaction of God's extreme jealousy for His people is extreme anger for the nations that destroyed them
 - i) We need to pause a moment and consider the statement in verse 15
 - ii) It might sound as though God is saying that the nations did more than He wanted them to do
 - A) But, we must remember that the sovereignty of God is being described here - nothing happens that He does not desire
 - iii) Instead, God is saying that He punished Israel by the use of the surrounding nations for the furtherance of His purposes and the ultimate good of His people
 - A) The nations that had participated in this did not share God's purpose
 - B) Instead they had gleefully destroyed the people of God
 - iv) The heart of God's tools that rejoiced over Israel's destruction arouses the jealous wrath of God, because of His jealous love for His people
 - b) The second vision in Zechariah 1 says that God's jealous anger will destroy the enemies of God's people
 - i) God's jealous wrath is not a passive attribute, a mere feeling
 - ii) God's sovereign presence combined with God's jealous wrath will destroy the adversary
 - c) The third vision in Zechariah 2 says that God's jealousy will reverse the situation
 - i) God's destruction of Israel had been out of jealous love for His people
 - ii) Since God's tools did not share His purpose, He will eventually reverse the situation and plunder them out of jealous love for His people
- 3) Conclusion
 - a) God's first action based on His sovereign presence and jealous love is wrath
 - i) God's love and wrath are often contrasted and some would even say that God's love makes wrath impossible
 - ii) But we see that God's love actually motivates His wrath
 - A) God's jealous love for His people means that He will destroy anyone who tries to destroy His people
 - B) God's jealous love for His people means that He will destroy anyone who tries to entice His people's affections away from Him
 - C) God's jealous love for His people means that He will destroy anyone who does not give Him all of their affection
 - b) This was important to the people of Zechariah's day
 - i) They looked around and thought that those who hated God and hated God's people would win in the end
 - ii) But Zechariah's prophecy reminds them that God will destroy those who would destroy God's people
 - iii) God's sovereign presence and His jealous love assures this
 - c) This is important to us as well
 - i) We may look around and see that those who despise God succeed in this world
 - ii) But Zechariah reminds us that evil will always eventually provoke God's wrath
 - iii) This is the point of Psalm 73 that we read earlier this morning - we should not be envious of the evildoer - God's wrath will rise against them

ii. The Sovereign Presence and Jealous Love of God Leads to Mercy

- 1) Passage - Zechariah 1:12-14, 16-17
- 2) Explanation
 - a) God answers His people in distress based on the intercession of the God/man
 - i) Notice the description of the rider in the glen
 - A) First he is a man (v 8, v 10)
 - B) Later he is the angel of the Lord (v 11, v 12)
 1. The angel of the Lord in Scripture often = physical representation of God Himself
 - C) After meditating on this, I am convinced that this is a picture of Christ, the God/man who intercedes for His people (v 12)
 - ii) God answers His people based on the intercession of the God/man (v 13)
 - A) The God who had previously appeared to be silent speaks
 - b) God answers His people with gracious and comforting words
 - i) When God speaks to His people through the mediator, they are not words of wrath, but words of grace and comfort reaffirming His jealous love for them (v 14)
 - c) God answers His people with mercy and restoration
 - i) God will have mercy on Jerusalem, restore the temple and restore their city (v 16)
 - ii) God will restore their prosperity, restore their peace and restore their position (v 17)
- 3) Conclusion
 - a) God's second action based on His sovereign presence and jealous love is mercy
 - i) God has compassion on His people and restores them
 - b) This was important to the people of Zechariah's day
 - i) It may have appeared that God had forsaken them
 - ii) But Zechariah's prophecy tells them that God will return to His people with mercy
 - iii) God is not merely concerned with destroying the evildoer, but also with saving His people
 - c) This is important to us as well
 - i) Although God's presence may not be always seen and we may be tempted to despair, we can look back to Zechariah and see that, through the mediator, God does answer us with mercy and restoration when we cry out to Him
 - ii) In Christ, God will have mercy on the New Jerusalem, restore the temple in Christ, grant His people eternal prosperity, grant us peace and set us beside Him in the heavenly realms

iii. The Sovereign Presence and Jealous Love of God Leads to Blessing

- 1) Passage - Zechariah 2:1-5, 10
- 2) Explanation
 - a) This is tied closely to God's mercy, but when we look at Zechariah 2, we see a prophecy beyond that of Zechariah 1
 - b) In Zechariah 1, God will restore Jerusalem - we see the word 'again' over and over again
 - c) In Zechariah 2, we see a promise of God that goes beyond anything His people had experienced
 - i) The city would be so large that no walls could possibly be built to contain it
 - ii) God's power would protect the city in a way never seen before
 - iii) God's presence would be in the city in a more significant way
 - d) Jerusalem is not merely returned to her former position, but blessed with abundant blessings
- 3) Conclusion
 - a) God's third action based on His sovereign presence and jealous love is blessing
 - i) A blessing that goes above and beyond merely restoring what was lost
 - b) This was important to the people of Zechariah's day
 - i) Perhaps God would rebuild the temple and rebuild the city, but what would prevent them from being destroyed again?
 - ii) Through Zechariah, God claims that He will not only restore, but bless the city
 - c) This is important to us as well
 - i) We look forward not only to God's mercy in restoring what was lost, but to abundant blessing above and beyond
 - ii) When we are tempted to look at the perceived frailty of God's promises in this world we can look back to Zechariah and say, "No, God will not merely restore, but will bless abundantly."

iv. The Sovereign Presence and Jealous Love of God Leads to Ingathering

- 1) Passage - Zechariah 2:11-12
- 2) Explanation
 - a) Really, this could be lumped under the third point, but it is specifically mentioned by itself, because of the significance and scope of this blessing
 - b) God's blessing would not be merely applied to the ethnic Jews, but all of the nations would be brought into Jerusalem to enjoy God's presence
 - c) This blessing would not be a denial of the special people of God, but would be representatives from all the nations coming in to be the people of God, so that when Jerusalem and Judah are chosen, they will be parties to the blessing
- 3) Conclusion
 - a) God's fourth action based on His sovereign presence and jealous love is ingathering
 - i) The nations coming to Jerusalem to be the people of God
 - b) This was important to the people of Zechariah's day
 - i) The nations that were against them would eventually come in and serve God with them
 - ii) There was no reason to be afraid of the nations for they would ultimately prevail over them
 - iii) We see this happen to Zechariah's temple on the day of Pentecost
 - A) Acts 2:5-13 - Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians---we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."
 - B) The nations had come to Zechariah's temple to see the presence of God
 - c) This is important to us today
 - i) We are the recipients of this blessing, we are members of the ingathering
 - ii) And we must look to continue the ingathering as we look forward to the day when Revelation 7:9-10 will be accomplished - After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

3. Two Imperatives for Us

i. God's Sovereign Presence and Jealous Love Require a Joyful Fleeing

- 1) Passage - Zechariah 2:6-7
- 2) Explanation
 - a) Because of Israel's rebellion against God, God had handed them over to the world - He had spread them abroad to the four corners of the earth
 - b) Because of the visions of God's wrath and mercy, God commands, through Zechariah, that His people must leave the place of wrath and flee to the place of mercy
 - c) Encompassed by the promises of blessing to Jerusalem, though, the command is not cast as a drudgery but a joy - the people ought to joyfully flee to Jerusalem
- 3) Conclusion
 - a) So, the first imperative is a joyful fleeing - the people should leave the nations and return to Jerusalem
 - b) What does this mean for us?
 - i) We too have been handed over to the world, to the place of wrath, because of rebellion, but have been promised mercy and blessing in Christ
 - ii) Therefore, we should joyfully flee the place of wrath and flee to the place of blessing
 - A) This first means we must repent and put our trust in Christ that we might be found as members of the New Jerusalem
 - B) This means we must continue in repentance, not becoming friends with the world, but fleeing the world and all of its influences - we look to the New Jerusalem for blessing and not the world
 1. This means that we must be battling sin - we must not rejoin the rebellion and find ourselves in the place of wrath
 2. This means that we must be setting aside things that, though not explicitly sinful, are not helping us to run after Christ - they hinder our fleeing and prove that it is not joyous
 3. This means we should not be tied to physical possessions, money, houses, lands, things, because these root us in the place of rebellion - we must remember that we are fleeing to the heavenly city and that we cannot keep anything here, but should look to how we might sacrifice possessions for the furtherance of the kingdom
 - iii) We must joyfully flee - we must flee and it must be out of a great joy looking forward to the blessings of the New Jerusalem

ii. God's Sovereign Presence and Jealous Love Require a Reverent Fear

- 1) Passage - Zechariah 2:13
- 2) Explanation
 - a) Having considered the matter, Zechariah proclaims a time of silence before God
 - b) God has risen up to accomplish His tasks
 - c) This should silence us because the glory of God is displayed
 - d) This should sober us because the wicked will be destroyed
 - e) This should cause us to stand before God with reverent fear
- 3) Conclusion
 - a) So, the second imperative is a reverent fear
 - b) Although we are joyfully fleeing, we never can approach God with a casual attitude
 - c) We must always recognize Him as the sovereign king of the universe - the sovereign king who has adopted us in Christ and blessed us with every blessing in Christ, but still the sovereign king

Conclusion

- i. Proposition - The attributes of God motivates Him to act in this world and must motivate us to flee worldliness and fear God.
- ii. Two attributes - Sovereign Presence and Jealous Love
- iii. Lead to four actions - God's Wrath, God's Mercy, God's Blessing and God's Ingathering
- iv. Which require two imperatives - Joyful Fleeing and Reverent Fear