

Zechariah 10 - Acting on God's Promises

Saturday, July 14, 2012
9:48 PM

To Read

1. Ezekiel 34
2. John 10

Introduction

a. Sermon Introduction

- i. As I start this morning, I want to review where we are in Zechariah
 - 1) As Dan mentioned last week, when we did chapter 8 two weeks ago, we closed the first half of the book of Zechariah which is focused on the rebuilding of the temple and the eternal significance or symbolism of that act
 - 2) Chapter 9, which we did last week, starts the second half of the book
 - a) The second half of the book may have occurred many years after the first half of the book
 - b) The rebuilding of the temple has been completed, and it has stood for perhaps many years now
 - 3) When the temple was rebuilt, though, it did not magically usher in a new triumphant era for the Jews
 - a) Most of the Jews still lived in exile, they had not all returned
 - b) The province of Judah was still a province of the Persian empire
 - c) There was no king reigning on Jerusalem's throne
 - d) The people around them were still enemies and not subdued
 - e) So, the big question in the second half of Zechariah is - now what? Now that the temple has been built and the end times have not been ushered in, what is going on?
 - 4) Reading through the second half of Zechariah and the book of Malachi, which are the only two Old Testament books written after the completion of the second temple, it appears that the returned exiles quickly fell away from the pure worship of God again
 - a) They had quickly turned to idolatry
 - b) They had quickly assumed a merely ritualistic worship of God devoid of ethical behavior
 - c) The leaders of the people, especially, had failed to point to God as the source of their hope
 - d) A valid inference would be the question we just mention - Now what? - had profoundly effected the returned exiles and not in a good way
 - e) When the temple had been rebuilt and their triumphant expectations had not been met, they quickly fell away from the God who promised restoration
 - 5) The second half of Zechariah is an answer to this question - Now what?
 - a) God gives Zechariah two oracles or two burdens that he is to proclaim to the people
 - b) Both of these oracles focus on what God is still going to do in the future, answering the question - Now what (on God's end)? And focus on what the people should do because of these promises of God, again answering the question - Now what (on the people's end)?

b. Passage Introduction - An Overview of the First Oracle

- i. The Declaration of the Promise (Chapter 9)
 - 1) The promise of God to destroy Israel's enemies (verses 1-6, 8)
 - 2) The promise of God to redeem Israel's enemies (verse 7)
 - 3) The promise of God to raise up a king for Israel (verse 9)
 - 4) The promise of God to bring peace through victory (verses 10, 13-15)
 - 5) The promise of God to redeem and restore His people (verses 11-12, 16-17)
- ii. Acting on the Promise (Chapter 10)
 - 1) The people of God must act on the promises of God (verse 1-2a)
 - 2) The leaders of God's people are particularly responsible for acting on the promises of God (verses 2b-3)
 - 3) Only the promised Messiah is truly able to be the leader who acts according to the promises of God (verses 3b-4)
 - 4) Under the promised Messiah, all of the promises of God will be fulfilled for the people of God (verses 5-12)

iii. The Judgment of the Promise (Chapter 11)

- 1) The leaders of the people would be destroyed because they did not act on the promises of God (verses 1-3)
- 2) The failure of the leaders would doom the people (verses 4-6)
- 3) The three shepherding offices (prophet, priest, king) will be judged by the true shepherd (verses 7-8a)
- 4) The people are no less guilty than the leaders and reject the true shepherd (verses 8b-10)
- 5) In rejecting the true shepherd, they would betray him for a paltry sum of money (verses 12, 13)
- 6) Their betrayal would come with a cost, they would be destroyed by the nations (FAVOR) and rejected as a people (UNION) (verses 11, 14)

c. **Read Zechariah 9 - 11**

d. **Proposition and Outline**

- i. Proposition - God's promises require action and our failure to do so necessitates the Messiah who accomplishes the promises of God
- ii. Outline
 - 1) The people of God must act on the promises of God
 - 2) The shepherds of God's people are particularly responsible for acting on the promises of God and yet do not do so
 - 3) Only the promised Messiah is able to be the leader who acts on the promises of God rightly
 - 4) Under the promised Messiah, all of the promises of God will be fulfilled for the people of God

1. The people of God must act on the promises of God

Read verse 1-2a

a. Chapter 9 ends with a very specific promise

- i. Zechariah 9:17 - For how great is his goodness, and how great his beauty! Grain shall make the young men flourish, and new wine the young women.
- ii. God promises to provide ample grain and wine for the people - this is a partially symbolic promise and a partially literal promise

b. Chapter 10 starts with a discussion of the last promise of chapter 9

- i. The topic is the provision of the spring rain that is necessary for crops to grow in Israel
 - 1) A good spring rain usually meant good crop yields, and a poor spring rain would mean poor crop yields
 - 2) So, good spring rain is primarily what was needed to fulfill the last promise of Chapter 9
- ii. The provider is 'the LORD'
 - 1) The LORD is the one who makes the clouds
 - 2) The LORD is the one who gives rain
 - 3) The LORD is the one who is able to fulfill His promise
- iii. The emphasis is on the asking - primarily FROM WHO are they going to ask rain
 - 1) "Ask rain FROM the LORD..."
 - 2) "...FROM the LORD who makes the storm clouds..."
 - 3) "...and HE will give them showers of rain..."
 - 4) The people need to seek God as the one who will fulfill His promise
- iv. The emphasis is followed up with FROM WHO they should not ask rain from
 - 1) The household gods utter nonsense
 - 2) Diviners see lies, tell false dreams and give empty consolation
 - 3) False gods and servants of false God's cannot fulfill the promise

c. Chapter 10 starts with a reflective requirement of a promise from Chapter 9

- i. Chapter 9's promise of good crops (whether figurative or literal) requires the people to seek God for the rain that provides those crops
- ii. All of God's promises come with reflective requirements - if we receive a promise from God we must act on it
 - 1) God made of promise of good crops
 - 2) God's people must therefore seek Him and only Him for rain
- iii. Why is this not a theology of works? Acting on the promises of God (completing the reflective requirement) is faith
 - 1) When we act on a promise of God we demonstrate that we believe the promise
 - a) If the people seek God and only God for rain, it shows they believe that He will provide it
 - 2) Not acting on the promise of God is not having faith in the promise
 - a) If the people seek elsewhere for rain, it shows that they doubt that God will provide it
 - 3) So, faith is never without works because the works are the acts of faith
 - a) James 2:14-18 - What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.
 - i) When we say faith without works is dead, we really mean if faith has no works it is not really faith
 - b) The most practical definition of faith is 'acting as though the promises of God are real'
 - i) So, faith is defined as **acting** as though the promise of the eternal city of God is more substantive than any earthly dwelling

Hebrews 11:8-16 - By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore. These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

- Promise - God is going to provide an eternal dwelling
- Reflective requirement - Abraham must abandon his hope of a temporal dwelling
- How obeying the requirement is faith - By abandoning his temporal home, Abraham demonstrated that He really believed there was a better eternal home waiting for Him

ii) Faith is defined as **acting** as though the promise of the resurrection is more substantive than earthly life

Hebrews 11:17-19 - By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

- Promise - God is the one who raises the dead
- Reflective requirement - Abraham must abandon his grasp on the earthly life of His son
- How obeying the requirement is faith - By abandoning his son's temporal life, Abraham demonstrated that He really believed there was a way God would resurrect the promise or his son

iii) Faith is defined as **acting** as though the promise of eternal reward is more substantive than earthly treasure

Hebrews 11:24-27 - By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.

- Promise - God promises an eternal reward to His people
- Reflective requirement - Moses must abandon the earthly wealth of Egypt
- How obeying the requirement is faith

iv) Each example in Hebrews has faith acting on a promise of God - acting on the promises of God is faith

d. Application

- i. We must consider how the promises of God make reflective requirements of us
- ii. If we have faith, we will act on these promises
 - 1) How are we, like Abraham, abandoning our earthly dwellings to demonstrate our belief in God's promise of an eternal dwelling?
 - 2) How are we, like Abraham, abandoning earthly life to demonstrate our belief in God's promise of eternal life?
 - 3) How are we, like Moses, abandoning earthly goods to demonstrate our belief in God's promise of eternal reward?
- iii. We must do as God says - when He promises good crops, we should ask Him for rain
 - 1) The people of God must act on the promises of God

2. The shepherds of God's people are particularly responsible for acting on the promises of God and yet do not do so

Read verses 2b-3a

a. The shepherds of God's people are appointed to lead the people in acting on the promises of God (verses 2-3a)

- i. When the people do not act on the promises of God, it is the shepherds who are held accountable
- ii. This is because the shepherds had a peculiar responsibility to be encouraging the people to act on the promises of God, this is why they had been appointed leaders of the people of God
- iii. The shepherd of the people of God is particularly responsible for guiding the people of God in acting on the promises of God

b. The shepherds of God's people had led the people into seeking other gods for the fulfillment of the promises (verse 2)

- i. In verse 2, the construction indicates that the shepherds were the ones who had pointed to the household gods and the diviners instead of the LORD
 - 1) Therefore the people wander as sheep...without a shepherd
 - 2) The therefore indicates that the shepherds had not been leading the sheep correctly, they had been leading them in the actions of verse 2
 - 3) The shepherds were useless as shepherds
- ii. The shepherds in Zechariah, instead of pointing to God were pointing away from God
- iii. They were not guiding the people to act on the promises of God, they were causing them to doubt the promises of God

c. When shepherds fail to lead the people, the people of God fail to enjoy the promises of God (verse 2b)

- i. Sheep wandering without a shepherd were sure to come to destruction
 - 1) They would not choose to go to or stay at places where food and water could be found
 - 2) They would not be able to protect themselves from predators
 - 3) They are liable to following any foolish sheep that leads them away
- ii. Sheep without a shepherd were therefore afflicted
 - 1) The people would not enjoy the blessings of God if they were led astray
 - 2) They would instead be destroyed by their enemies

d. Therefore, God will judge the shepherds who do not lead the people in acting on the promises of God (verse 3a)

- i. In Zechariah 10, it is the people as a whole who are not acting on the promises of God
- ii. But it is the faulty leaders who are singled out for judgment
- iii. God is angry at the leaders who have pointed away from Him and toward other God's, they have utterly failed at their charge

e. Application

- i. If the leaders of God's people are not able to act correctly on the promises of God, we must realize that the salvation of God's people cannot come from man, but from God
 - 1) Won't dwell long on this application, because it really is a precursor to the application of the next section
 - 2) But this understanding sets up the next section - we must be looking to God to provide the leader for His people that will cause them to act according to the promise of God

3. Only the promised Messiah is able to be the leader who acts on the promises of God rightly

Read verses 3b-4

a. Despite the leaders inability to shepherd rightly, God is the one who leads His people (verse 3b)

- i. God cares that the shepherds are failing at their task (verse 3a)
 - 1) It is God who will judge whether the shepherds have accomplished their charge rightly
- ii. God cares for His people (verse 3b)
- iii. God protects His people (verse 3c)

b. God will lead His people by providing the perfect leader - the promise of the Messiah (verse 4a)

- i. The Cornerstone
 - 1) The cornerstone is the most important part of the foundation of a building - incorrect placement dooms the building to destruction
 - 2) So, the cornerstone represents the most important or most fundamental part of something
 - 3) God is going to provide the most important or greatest leader of the people
 - 4) The Cornerstone is often used to refer to the Messiah that God would provide for His people
 - a) Psalm 118:22 - The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.
 - b) Isaiah 28:16 - Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: 'Whoever believes will not be in haste.'
- ii. The Tent Peg
 - 1) The tent peg is the part of the tent that provides stability and solidity to the tent
 - 2) So, the tent peg represents a leader who will bring stability to his people
- iii. The Battle Bow
 - 1) The battle bow was a powerful weapon of war if used correctly
 - 2) So, the battle bow represents the weapon of God wielded against God's enemies
 - 3) God is going to provide the leader who would conquer the enemies of God's people

c. Under the Messiah, righteous under-shepherds will be provided for the people of God (verse 4b)

- i. The rulers are under-shepherds of the flock of God
 - 1) The first three descriptions in verse 4 are singular
 - a) They all refer to one leader that would be raised up
 - b) They all have royal overtones
 - c) In other words, they all point to the Messiah
 - 2) The last description in verse 4 is plural
 - a) The word means overseers or taskmasters
 - b) It does not have royal overtones
 - c) Instead it refers to the lower leaders of the people
- ii. These under-shepherds are 'under' the Messiah's leadership
 - 1) The leader described in the first 3/4 of verse 4 is the kingly ruler
 - 2) The under-shepherds are his taskmasters, literally
- iii. God provides the under-shepherds of His people just as much as He provides the Great Shepherd
 - 1) But the under-shepherds are only provided after and through the Great Shepherd
 - 2) The under-shepherds that are not appointed through and under the Great Shepherd are not true shepherds as we saw in the verses above
 - 3) Through the Messiah, God provides a full slate of leadership for His people
- iv. These under-shepherds somehow contribute to acting rightly on the promises of God
 - 1) They do not have the place of preeminence that the Messiah has
 - 2) But they are listed as part of the Godly provision for acting rightly on His promises

d. Application

- i. Three parts to the application based on the three subpoints above
 - 1) The Messiah is the one who must act correctly on the promises of God
 - 2) The Messiah is the one who leads His people to act correctly on the promises of God
 - 3) The Messiah appoints under-shepherds to help His people act correctly on the promises of God
- ii. If the Messiah is truly the only one who can keep the requirement of God, we must trust the Messiah to keep the requirement for us
 - 1) This is the ultimate promise and reflective requirement of God
 - a) Promise - the Messiah will keep the contingent requirements of God
 - b) Reflective requirement - we must trust the Messiah to keep the requirements and abandon earning our own righteousness
 - 2) Since this is the ultimate or first promise and reflective requirement of God, this is what is usually referred to as faith
 - a) This is the first and most important act of faith - abandoning our own righteousness in favor of Christ's righteousness
 - 3) This first action of faith is essential to all the other actions of faith
 - a) Going back to the application from point 1 this morning, we cannot act out our faith unless we have acted this out first
 - b) The act of abandoning our own righteousness in favor of Christ's righteousness keeps the actions of faith from being attempted meritorious actions
 - c) It makes the 'actions of faith' actually resting and relying on the promises of God and our actions merely mirror that fact
- iii. If the Messiah is the true shepherd who leads His people in acting on the promises of God rightly, we must follow the Messiah's example in this area
 - 1) As we saw in point 2, the shepherds of God's people were to lead the people in acting on the promises of God, but they failed
 - 2) So, God provided the perfect leader - He will succeed where the other shepherds failed
 - a) He will lead the people to act on the promises of God
 - 3) As the Messiah-leader of God's people, Christ is the ultimate example of how to act on the promises of God
 - a) The conclusion to Hebrews 11 (which is the start of Hebrews 12), shows how Christ is the ultimate example of how to act on the promises of God
 - b) Hebrews 12:1-2 - Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.
 - 4) So, we must follow His example in acting on the promises of God
 - a) Abandoning our own righteousness in favor of Christ's righteousness is the first, but not the only act of faith
 - b) We must follow Christ's example in acting on all the promises of God - abandoning everything of this world in favor of the promises of God
- iv. If the Messiah appoints under-shepherds who shepherd rightly in His name, we should submit to their leadership
 - 1) **Although the under-shepherds do not, in any way, keep the requirements of God on behalf of the people of God, like the Messiah, they are appointed to help God's people keep the reflective requirements of God**
 - 2) **The under-shepherds of God also represent the authority of the chief shepherd**
 - 3) **So, since under-shepherds represent the chief shepherd and are appointed for our good, we should submit to them as they follow the chief shepherd**
 - 4) Hebrews 13:17 - **Obey your leaders and submit to them**, for **they are keeping watch over your souls**, as those who **will have to give an account**. **Let them do this with joy** and not with groaning, for **that would be of no advantage to you**.

4. Under the Messiah, all of the promises of God will be fulfilled for the people of God

Read verses 5-12

- a. **Most of Zechariah 10 lists four promises of God that the Messiah fulfills for His people**
 - i. The Messiah will strengthen them to overcome their enemies (verse 5, 7a)
 - ii. The Messiah will save them and return them from exile (verse 6, 8-10)
 - iii. The Messiah will make them have joy in God (verse 7b)
 - iv. The Messiah will make them walk in accordance with God's statutes (verse 12)
 - v. In summary, the appointment of the Messiah as the perfect leader grants the people of God all the blessings of God

- b. **The symbolism of these promises is rich in Zechariah 10 - In fulfilling the promises of God for His people, the Messiah executes a second Exodus (verse 11)**
 - i. In the first Exodus, God through Moses leads His people out of bondage through the Red Sea
 - ii. The Messiah's work for His people will be similar to this great supernatural event
 - 1) So, the Messiah will lead His people through the sea of trouble, striking down the waves of the sea - mirroring the parting of the Red Sea (verse 11a)
 - 2) The Messiah will free His people from bondage to Egypt and Assyria (verse 11b)
 - 3) The Messiah will bring His people to the promised land (verse 10b)

- c. **Having the benefit of looking back on these things, we can understand the symbolism of the second Exodus**
 - i. The Messiah does lead His people through the sea of troubles, but it is not merely a physical body of water that He passes us through safely, but every obstacle that keeps His people from reaching the promised land
 - ii. The Messiah does free His people from bondage to their enemies, but these are not merely people groups, but the bondage to sin
 - 1) Christ frees us from not only the penalty of sin, but also the practice of sin
 - iii. The Messiah does bring His people into the promised land, but this is not merely a temporal disputed land mass but the Heavenly Jerusalem

- d. **Application**
 - i. There really isn't a new application that comes from this point that is separate from the applications above
 - ii. This point really is a demonstration that the Messiah who is provided in verse 4 will, in fact, accomplish everything He is provided to do
 - iii. Therefore it is all the more imperative to:
 - 1) Trust the Messiah to act rightly on the promises of God
 - 2) Follow the Messiah in acting rightly on the promises of God
 - 3) Submit to the Messiah's under-shepherds who are guiding us to act rightly on the promises of God

Conclusion

- **We saw four things in progression this morning in Zechariah 10**
 - i. The people of God must act on the promises of God
 - ii. The shepherds of God's people are particularly responsible for acting on the promises of God and yet did not do so
 - iii. Only the promised Messiah is able to be the leader who acts on the promises of God rightly
 - iv. Under the promised Messiah, all of the promises of God will be fulfilled for the people of God

- **Out of these four points, we had four main applications**
 - We must take action as though the promises of God were true - this is the essence of Faith
 - The first action we must take is to abandon our own attempted righteousness in favor of Christ's true righteousness, acting on the promise of righteousness in the Messiah
 - We must act on the rest of the promises of God as well, following the example of Christ, who is our great leader
 - We must submit to the under-shepherds that have been appointed for us in Christ who exist to help us act on the promises of God correctly