

Lesson 11—May 10, 2020

DEVOTIONAL READING: Zechariah 8:18-23

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Zechariah 8

PRINT PASSAGE: Zechariah 8:1-8, 11-17

Key Verse—So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not. (Zechariah 8:15, KJV)

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“So now I have determined to do good again to Jerusalem and Judah. Do not be afraid.”
(Zechariah 8:15, NIV)

A New Day Is Coming!



Teacher's Resource Kit

- Townsend Press Commentary: Teacher's Edition
- Townsend Press Flashlight Commentary
- Bible Studies for Adults
- Bible Studies for Young Adults
- (Optional: Adults/Young Adults Leadership Resource Kit [materials for this lesson])

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, the participants should be able to do these things:

- Comprehend the impact of God's presence in a community.
- Yearn for God's perpetual presence and the promise of justice it brings.
- Pray for God's presence to result in a communal sense of justice, prosperity, and unity.



*Key Terms

Blessing (verse 13)—Hebrew: *berakah* (ber-aw-kaw'): a blessing; gift; to be generous.

Dwell (verse 3)—Hebrew: *yashab* (yā-shav'): to abide, sit, remain, establish.

Remnant (verse 6)—Hebrew: *sheerith* (sheh-ay-reeth'): rest; residue; remainder.

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 4)

Preparing the Lesson

- Refer to the *Townsend Press SS Commentary Teacher's Edition* for an additional lesson plan—with word studies, insights on teaching adults, learner matrices, etc.
- Review last week's student assignments ("Your Life" and Your World!").
- This guide offers two options for leading your class.

- Thoroughly review your student book for your adult or young adult class.
- See page 7 for how to plan each week's lesson.
- See page 6 for a student *Personal Growth Plan*.
- See page 113 for the *Faith in 3-D* as it explains how to live out their faith in the world.

WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

Sometimes people respond to evil conditions in the world with a sense of hopelessness, regret, and doom. Where can they find motivation for continuing? The prophet Zechariah delivers God's promise of a new world of peace and prosperity for God's people.

THE LESSON IN FOCUS

Times were difficult for the 50,000 Jews who had returned to Palestine to reestablish the city of Jerusalem and Temple worship. Returning in 536 BC, this remnant laid the foundation for a new temple in 535 BC, but hostile opposition halted this work and discouraged the people. The leaders and people needed encouragement to finish the work they had begun. God called Haggai and a younger man, Zechariah, to rouse them to action and in response to their joint ministry, they finished the work in 525 BC. Zechariah was both prophet and priest. The name *Zechariah* means, "the Lord remembers." His father's (Berechiah's) name means "Jehovah blesses," and his grandfather Iddo's, "His time." A combination of these names means, "Jehovah remembers to bless in His time" (Wiersbe, W. W. [1993]. *Wiersbe's Expository Outline on the Old Testament*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books). Zechariah's visionary prophecy fulfills this truth in these combined names. In a series of ten distinct visions, Zechariah looked beyond his day to the millennial future of the nation of Israel and Jerusalem, reminding them that God had plans to bless them in His set time.

THE LESSON IN CONTEXT

The book of Zechariah, like Daniel's book, unveils God's future plans for His chosen people, the

Jews. It has been described as the most messianic, apocalyptic, and eschatological book in the Old Testament (*The MacArthur Study Bible*. Zechariah, page 1308). The visions Zechariah was given and had recorded moved beyond his time to the return of Christ and the establishment of His righteous kingdom on earth. Suggested outlines of the book identify three major sections. Chapters 1–6 describe eight visions that reveal Israel's future. Chapters 7–8 record questions posed by some of the Jews from Bethel about continuing fasts and the prophet's response. The final section, chapters 9–14, climaxes his prophecy with details concerning God's ultimate victory over the Gentile nations. The printed text of this lesson is from chapter 8 in the book's second division and presents Zechariah's response to the Jews' question about the commemorative fasts and a description of God's concern for and plans to restore the Jewish nation.

OPENING INQUIRY (Choose from the questions below)

1. How does Zechariah begin his response to the Jews and why is it significant? (verse 1)
2. God's promise to inhabit Jerusalem will result in a threefold name change (verse 3). How will this change the city's status?
3. Describe the changes God will make in the returned remnant's fortunes. (verses 12-13)
4. What evidence is given in verse 14 that confirms God's plans to restore the Jews and Jerusalem?

INSIGHTS

The history of the nation of Israel has been one of oppression, enslavement, and dispersion among the nations of the world. As God's unilaterally chosen people, selected to be the source of blessing to all nations, Israel failed miserably and suffered the consequence of that failure. Today, questions arise as to the survival and ultimate possession of the Promised Land inheritance by the nation. A review of God's dealings with Israel throughout her history, biblically and experientially, will affirm that the Jewish people are still and will continue to be the object of His love because of His faithfulness to His

covenant promise. God revealed this to Zechariah, who was privileged to look beyond his time to the new day of peace and prosperity God had planned for His people. The good news is that those who have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior are now part of God's family and can look forward to a new day as well. Our status and the blessings that are a part of it are guaranteed because God has promised that we are eternally secure (see John 10:28), have the guarantee of life eternal (see Ephesians 1:13-14), and that nothing can ever separate us from His love (see Romans 8:26-39).

EXPLORATION

This lesson can be used to encourage and challenge your students to continue to remain faithful to God despite the injustice, the absence of peace, the wickedness, and other social ills in our communities, nation, and the world at-large. Although the promises of a new day in this context are specifically to Israel and not the church, there are spiritually applicable principles to be found in them. Using the identifiable blessings to be received by the Jews in the future, have your students list and discuss how they are related to God's people today. For example, the renaming of the city of Jerusalem relates to a change in her relationship with God. Ask them to suggest how this relates to their relationship in Christ. As an application possibility, challenge your students to suggest practical ways to use the focus of this lesson in their daily lives.

ADDITIONAL EXPOSITORY INSIGHTS FOR THE TEACHER

Commentary on Zechariah 8:1-8

KJV

AGAIN THE word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying,

2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury.

3 Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will *dwell* in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth;

and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain.

4 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age.

5 And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.

6 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If it be marvelous in the eyes of the *remnant* of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the LORD of hosts.

7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country;

8 And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.

NIV

THE WORD of the LORD Almighty came to me.

2 This is what the LORD Almighty says: "I am very jealous for Zion; I am burning with jealousy for her."

3 This is what the LORD says: "I will return to Zion and *dwell* in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the Faithful City, and the mountain of the LORD Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain."

4 This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Once again men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each of them with cane in hand because of their age.

5 "The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there."

6 This is what the LORD Almighty says: "It may seem marvelous to the *remnant* of this people at that time, but will it seem marvelous to me?" declares the LORD Almighty.

7 This is what the LORD Almighty says: "I will save my people from the countries of the east and the west.

8 "I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem;

they will be my people, and I will be faithful and righteous to them as their God.”

Zechariah abruptly switches from his response to the delegation from Bethel concerning continuing the ritual fasts in commemoration of Jerusalem’s fall to a description of God’s future plans for Jerusalem (the people). He states that this message was directly from the “LORD of hosts” (verse 1) and reveals His changed attitude toward them since the destruction of Jerusalem (verse 2). The Jews had provoked His jealousy by sinning and rebelling against Him. Now, after the deportation, His attitude is one of “strong jealousy,” indicating that He cannot bear the estrangement between them or their oppression by their enemies. He will now do whatever is required to restore them as a people and their relationship to Him. His initial actions on their behalf (verse 3) will be to resume His presence with His people in Jerusalem and bestow a new status upon the city. His presence again will inaugurate a new era for Jerusalem, characterized by three names: “the city of truth,” “the mountain of the Lord,” and “the holy mountain.” Because God will be in the midst of the city, truth in word and deed will characterize its inhabitants. The Gentile nations assigned mountain residences to their gods and now the mountain on which Jerusalem sat would be where the God of Israel dwells. The holiness of God will infuse the city and all who dwell there will be holy or set apart for His glory. The new day in Israel’s future will be one of peace and security (verses 4-5). All generations, the old and the young, will prosper and live together in peace without fear of invading armies and any forms of oppression. Zechariah’s audience may have thought these promises were too incredible or impossible at this time, but God is not limited. Nothing is too hard for Him to do (verse 6). As Yahweh, the Lord of hosts, all power is in His hands. Things that appear too marvelous in our eyes are routine in His hands. God also promised to do something unexpected. He was going to regather His dispersed people from among the entire world to Jerusalem and there they would be identified as His possession in a unique

relationship with Him (verses 7-8). Specifically, the promises are for the nation of Israel and their fulfillment is future, but can be applied to those who belong to God by spiritual birth. There is a new day coming for the redeemed in which peace and justice will reign in the spiritual Jerusalem in His presence eternally.



DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book’s related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question:**

In what ways do you visibly reflect your status in Christ?

- **Young Adult Question:**

We attend church to worship God and learn His Word, which helps us increase our trust and faith in Him. But outside the church walls, how can we increase our trust in God’s faithfulness toward us?

Commentary on Zechariah 8:11-13

KJV

11 But now I will not be unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith the LORD of hosts.

12 For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things.

13 And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a *blessing*: fear not, but let your hands be strong.

NIV

11 “But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as I did in the past,” declares the LORD Almighty.

12 “The seed will grow well, the vine will yield its fruit, the ground will produce its crops, and the heavens will drop their dew. I will give all

these things as an inheritance to the remnant of this people.

13 “Just as you, Judah and Israel, have been a curse among the nations, so I will save you, and you will be a *blessing*. Do not be afraid, but let your hands be strong.”

We have experienced multiple media commercials seeking to convince consumers to purchase a product by using a “before and after” comparison technique. Zechariah’s second message in the printed text (verses 9-13) is similar to this advertisement strategy. He begins by exhorting the remnant to take courage and heed Haggai’s and his teaching regarding completing the work that had been started but was now abandoned on the Temple (verse 9). Their presence among them and their continuous words of encouragement would be available to the builders when work commenced on this project. Often, the knowledge that others are among us as encouragers bolsters our resolve to persevere and faithfully complete ministry tasks. Zechariah next contrasts their prior condition with the promises involved in a reversal of those conditions. Three challenging conditions characterized the days prior to rebuilding the Temple: economic distress, insecurity caused by enemy threats, and internal strife among themselves (verse 10). By contrast, better conditions or better days lie ahead (verses 11-12). God promised a renewed relationship with His people based on their repentance (verse 11). Additionally, economic distress would be a thing of the past because their harvests would be safe, secure, and abundant, and would receive adequate amounts of seasonal moisture (verse 12a). Their inheritance or enjoyment of all these things is secured by God’s personal covenant (verse 12b). Finally, attitudes toward the people as a nation will also be reversed when God changes their circumstances (verse 13). The condition of the land and post-exilic community was an “eyesore” to the nations around them. All this would change when God reversed their circumstances. Instead of a curse, the nation will be a blessing. By application, believers are the result of a reversal of fortunes of their past condition by the

sacrificial and substitutionary death of Jesus Christ. As they obediently abide in Him, they are able to produce “much fruit” and bless the lives of others by living righteously among them.



DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book’s related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question:**

When have you experienced a divinely orchestrated reversal of a circumstance or situation in your life or in your local congregation?

- **Young Adult Question:**

Take a moment to reflect on a bad situation God turned around and worked out for your good. Now testify.

Commentary on Zechariah 8:14-17

KJV

14 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the LORD of hosts, and I repented not:

15 So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not.

16 These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates:

17 And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD.

NIV

14 This is what the LORD Almighty says: “Just as I had determined to bring disaster on you and showed no pity when your ancestors angered me,” says the LORD Almighty,

15 “so now I have determined to do good again to Jerusalem and Judah. Do not be afraid.

16 “These are the things you are to do: Speak the

truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts;

17 “do not plot evil against each other, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this,” declares the LORD.

The fall of Jerusalem and the exile of the Jews in Babylon was not by accident. It was the direct result of their sins against God and their failure to repent. God did not relent concerning His intended judgment and allowed it to be carried out. Just as He had planned their punishment, God was now planning to do them good and would not relent (verses 14-15). God’s purposes and will for His people are not without personal responsibility on their part. The promises He had made were conditional and were accompanied by specific expectations (verses 16-17). God expected them to practice honesty in their speech and in their dealings with each other. Their lives were to be characterized by personal integrity. They were also expected to ensure that justice was equitably handled for all. The spirit of the Law and not the letter of the Law was to be the norm guiding their judicial decisions. Further, God expected the remnant to avoid plotting evil in their hearts against others and desiring to take false oaths against them (verse 17a). Finally, whatever God hated, they were expected to hate (verse 17b). The coming of a new day then, for the remnant and in the future for the nation, was not without the requirements to meet God’s expectations. All believers are guaranteed that they will enjoy the new day that will come at His set time, but not without divine expectations on their part. The hymnologist John Newton’s rarely sung third stanza of “Amazing Grace” goes, “*The Lord has promised good to me, His word my hope secures; He will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.*” These are beautiful, assuring, and comforting lyrics confirmed by His Word, but they are likewise accompanied by God’s expectation of His people to live godly, obedient lives before Him and others.



DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book’s related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question:**

In what ways would participation in ministry opportunities change if what God expects of those who have experienced the blessings of salvation was the primary focus?

- **Young Adult Question:**

What are some ways in which pastors/leaders of the church create an environment where nonbelievers feel welcomed and free to engage with the Good News of Jesus?

LIFE APPLICATION

- **Refer to Adult Book**

(See student lesson’s “Your Life” section.)

— Your accepting Christ as Savior gave you a new status and reversed your life condition, resulting in blessings now and in the future. An appropriate response is a personal commitment to live out His expectations of godly living, characterized by truthfulness, integrity, justice, and honesty.

(See student lesson’s “Your World!” section.)

— It is reassuring to know that God has divinely planned a new day for those who have become part of the community of faith. The conditions that characterize this present world may appear unstoppable, but we can balance our uncertainty about them with the certainty of God’s Word that justice and peace will become realities.

- **Refer to Young Adult Book**

(See student lesson’s “Your Life” section.)

— In our lives, we all desire peace and prosperity; however, we know there will be times of disappointments and setbacks. Our goal is to keep trusting God’s faithfulness to help us reach our mark.

(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)

— In our world today, there is so much evil present on a daily basis. As believers, we must continue to pray without ceasing and encourage one another that God will bring justice to this dying land.

NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

The lesson topic for Sunday, May 17, 2020, is "Just Rewards." The Devotional Reading is Psalm 86:1-13, the Background Scripture is Jeremiah 21, and the Printed Text is Jeremiah 21:8-14.



Closing Prayer

Dear God, as we prepare ourselves for the new day You have promised, we commit, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to live out Your expectations for righteous living before You and others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

MONDAY , May 11	"Seeking Divine Help in Troubled Times"	(Psalm 86:1-13)
TUESDAY , May 12	"Land Now Belongs to Babylon"	(Jeremiah 27:1-11)
WEDNESDAY , May 13	"Choose to Love and Obey the Lord"	(Deuteronomy 30:15-20)
THURSDAY , May 14	"Surrender and the People Will Live"	(Jeremiah 38:14-18)
FRIDAY , May 15	"Jerusalem Will Fall"	(Jeremiah 21:1-7)
SATURDAY , May 16	"Jerusalem Is Defeated and Zedekiah Is Exiled"	(2 Kings 24:20b-25:7)
SUNDAY , May 17	"Choose the Life of Justice"	(Jeremiah 21:8-14)

INTERACTIVE LEARNING APPROACH

YOUNG ADULT FOCUS

This lesson plan is designed to provide a more interactive approach to the teaching of today's lesson. The focus is on student-teacher involvement. It can be formulated to use with the *Bible Studies for Young Adults* quarterly.

Materials needed:

- The movie *It's a Wonderful Life*
- Computers/Speakers
- Wi-Fi

Interaction—Introducing the Lesson (10-15 minutes)

- Introduce today's topic: "A New Day Is Coming!"
- Have someone read the "Life Happens" section on page **59** aloud and then, as a class, discuss the corresponding questions.
- Share the Unifying Principle: "Sometimes people respond to evil conditions in the world with a sense of hopelessness, regret, and doom. Where can they find motivation for continuing? The prophet Zechariah delivers God's promise of a new world of peace and prosperity for God's people."

Exploring the Word (25-30 minutes)

- Show the clip "Answer to Prayer" from the movie *It's a Wonderful Life*, directed by Frank Capra. This can be found at www.wingclips.com. Share this: "At the end of his rope, George is considering suicide until Clarence, an angel sent from heaven, intervenes by jumping into the icy river first." Though this clip is about a hopeless man caught in a cycle of unjust actions, discuss stories of hopeless men and women who gain support from a community that breaks cycles of hopelessness.

- Give a brief overview of the book of Zechariah.
- Have someone read Zechariah 8:1-8.
- Follow what Zechariah records God saying. Discuss how these verses do point to a new day as God's people.
- Share how you would feel after experiencing God's judgment to now being promised restoration. What thoughts would be going through your mind?
- Imagine what current events can look like given God's promise of peace and justice for all people.
- Have someone read Zechariah 8:11-13.
- This picture of restoration is beautiful, yet even after God's paints this picture, He again tells His people not to be afraid. Discuss why they would be fearful.
- Have someone read Zechariah 8:14-17.
- Count the number of things in today's text that God promises to do, and the number of things God asks of His people. Discuss why God hates when His people plot evil against each other and swear falsely. How are these two things significantly opposed to God's character?

Life Application (10 minutes)

- Read aloud the "Your Life" section on page **64**.
- Name ways you see God present in the world and in your community. How do you respond to God's presence, making it known to others?

Life Response (5 minutes)

- Read aloud the "Your World!" section on page **64**.
- Close in prayer and remind the students to prepare for next week's lesson.