THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH

The King Who Rides a Donkey

Zechariah, Unfiltered

For teens who think they've heard it all

BILL McLEOD

Papa Bill Books

THE OLD TESTAMENT FOR TEENS

The King Who Rides a Donkey: The Book of Zechariah, Unfiltered

Part of The Old Testament for Teens series.

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In the author's own text, pronouns referring to God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are capitalized for reverence. Scripture quotations follow the WEB Protestant Edition exactly, including its capitalization.

AI Disclosure. This book was written by Bill McLeod with the assistance of artificial intelligence tools for drafting, research, and editing. All content was reviewed and approved by the author, who takes full responsibility for it. Readers are encouraged to open the Scriptures and study them for themselves.

A WORD TO THE READER

Before You Start

Imagine reading a book written five hundred years before you were born, and finding your own week described in it. Not vaguely, but in detail: how you'd arrive in town, what you'd ride, how much someone would be paid to betray you, what would happen to your friends, and what would happen to your body.

That's what reading Zechariah is like for anyone who knows the story of Jesus' last week. Zechariah lived about five hundred years before Jesus, yet his book contains more prophecies about the final days of Jesus' life than almost any other book of the Old Testament. A humble King riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. Thirty pieces of silver thrown to a potter. A shepherd struck down and sheep scattered. A pierced one, mourned like an only son. A fountain opened to wash away sin.

But Zechariah isn't only about the future. It's also full of strange night visions, flying scrolls, horses, lampstands, and a high priest in dirty clothes being accused by Satan. And it's full of hope for a small group of discouraged people trying to rebuild their lives after disaster. Zechariah's name means the LORD remembers. His message is that God hasn't forgotten His people, and He hasn't forgotten you.

Let's go.

How This Book Works

This book walks through Zechariah in six chapters: night visions and clean clothes (Zechariah 1-3), not by might, nor by power (4-6), fast days turned to feasts (7-8), the King on a donkey (9-10), thirty pieces of silver and the pierced one (11-13), and everyday life made holy (14).

Before chapter 1, a section called Setting the Scene explains who Zechariah was, when he lived, and how his book is organized. Read it first.

Each chapter ends with a Key Verse quoted word for word from the World English Bible (WEB), Protestant Edition, a public-domain modern translation used for every Scripture quotation in this book (Scripture is quoted exactly as the WEB prints it; in the rest of the book, pronouns for God are capitalized out of reverence); Real Talk questions to think through alone or talk over with someone you trust; and a Try This challenge.

On questions where sincere Christians disagree, such as how to understand the end-times visions in Zechariah 12-14, I'll try to be fair and leave the decision to you, your family, and your church. This book quotes Zechariah in places and explains it mostly in my own words, so keep a Bible open next to it. Don't take my word for it. Take His.

FOR THE ADULTS

A Note for Parents and Youth Leaders

Thank you for putting this book in a teenager's hands. It's the thirty-eighth book in The Old Testament for Teens, a companion to the New Testament for Teens series, written for readers who can smell a sermon coming a mile away. I've tried to write honestly, directly, and with real respect for what these readers can handle.

Zechariah, whose name means the LORD remembers, was a younger partner of Haggai who began prophesying in 520 BC to the Jews who had returned from exile. This book explains his night visions, his call to genuine justice and mercy, and his many prophecies that the New Testament connects with Jesus' final week: the King on a donkey (9:9), thirty pieces of silver (11:12-13), the pierced one (12:10), the cleansing fountain (13:1), and the struck shepherd (13:7).

It notes fairly that some scholars think chapters 9-14 come from a later time or author, while others hold that Zechariah wrote the whole book. On the end-times visions of chapter 14, it presents the main Christian views without pushing one timeline. It handles the harsh war imagery of chapters 12-14 honestly but without graphic detail.

Real Talk boxes address returning to God, guilt and accusation, small beginnings, relying on God's Spirit rather than our own strength, empty religion, safety for children and the elderly,

humility, hope, betrayal, grief, and seeing everyday life as holy. A brief safety box encourages teens dealing with betrayal or abuse to talk with a trusted adult and lists Childhelp (1-800-422-4453), 988, and 911.

The closing section, Where This Points, shows Zechariah as a blueprint of Passion Week, from Palm Sunday to Jesus' eternal reign. Wherever Scripture is quoted directly, the wording is from the World English Bible (WEB), Protestant Edition, a public-domain translation.

My prayer is that every reader will welcome the humble King who rides a donkey, and find in Him the fountain that washes away sin.

Grace and peace,

Bill McLeod

Papa Bill Books

BEFORE YOU OPEN THE BOOK

Setting the Scene

The LORD Remembers

Zechariah's name means the LORD remembers. It's a perfect name for his message. The people of Judah had been through disaster: their city destroyed, their temple burned, and their families carried off to Babylon for seventy years. Some wondered whether God had forgotten them. Zechariah's whole book answers that question. God remembered His promises, His people, and His plans.

A Priest and a Prophet

Zechariah was the son of Berechiah and the grandson of Iddo. Nehemiah lists Iddo as the head of a priestly family that returned from Babylon, so Zechariah was probably both a priest and a prophet. In one vision, an angel calls him a young man, so he may have been fairly young when he began. Ezra mentions him alongside Haggai as one of the two prophets who encouraged the people to rebuild the temple.

Haggai's Partner

Zechariah began prophesying in the eighth month of the second year of King Darius, around October or November 520 BC, just two months after Haggai's first message. Haggai was blunt and practical: get back to work. Zechariah was visionary and hopeful: here's what God is going to do. Together, they got the temple built. It was finished in 515 BC.

How the Book Is Organized

Zechariah has two main parts. Chapters 1-8 are dated to the time of Darius and include eight night visions and messages about the rebuilding. Chapters 9-14 are undated and look further ahead, to a coming King, a rejected Shepherd, and the final Day of the LORD. Because the two halves feel different, some scholars think chapters 9-14 were written later, possibly by another prophet. Others believe Zechariah wrote them later in his life. Either way, both halves are part of Scripture, and the New Testament quotes both.

A Passion Week Blueprint

The New Testament quotes or alludes to Zechariah dozens of times, especially in the Gospels' accounts of Jesus' last week and in the book of Revelation. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. Judas was paid thirty pieces of silver, which were used to buy a potter's field. Jesus quoted Zechariah on the night He was arrested. John saw Zechariah fulfilled when a soldier pierced Jesus' side. Few Old Testament books point to the cross so clearly.

The Map

Chapter 1 (Zechariah 1-3): Night visions and clean clothes.

Chapter 2 (Zechariah 4-6): Not by might, nor by power.

Chapter 3 (Zechariah 7-8): Fast days turned to feasts.

Chapter 4 (Zechariah 9-10): The King on a donkey.

Chapter 5 (Zechariah 11-13): Thirty pieces of silver and the pierced one.

Chapter 6 (Zechariah 14): Everyday life made holy.

Contents

Setting the Scene .....

1 Night Visions and Clean Clothes *1–3* .....

2 Not by Might, Nor by Power *4–6* .....

3 Fast Days Turned to Feasts *7–8* .....

4 The King on a Donkey *9–10* .....

5 Thirty Pieces of Silver and the Pierced One *11–13* .....

6 Everyday Life Made Holy *14* .....

Where This Points .....

CHAPTER 1

Night Visions and Clean Clothes

Zechariah 1–3

Zechariah's first message is short and simple. God reminded the people that He had been very displeased with their ancestors. Then He gave an invitation. "Return to me, says the LORD of Armies, and I will return to you, says the LORD of Armies."

Notice who moves first. God invites the people to return. And when they do, He promises to return to them.

> **REAL TALK** **Return to Me**
>
> Maybe you've drifted from God. You stopped praying, stopped reading the Bible, or started living in a way you know isn't right. Zechariah 1:3 is an open door. God doesn't say, Clean up your life first and then maybe I'll consider taking you back. He says, Return to Me, and I will return to you. Coming back to God can start with one honest prayer: God, I've drifted. I want to come back. He's already waiting.

God reminded them of their ancestors, who ignored the earlier prophets. "Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever?" Both the ancestors and the prophets were gone. But God's words were still true. They had come to pass, just as He said.

Three months later, Zechariah had a series of eight visions, all in one night. It was "the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month," around February 519 BC.

BACKGROUND CHECK **Eight Night Visions**

Zechariah's eight visions in chapters 1-6 are like scenes in a dream. Each one uses strange images: horses, horns, a measuring line, a lampstand, a flying scroll, and chariots. An angel explains each vision to Zechariah, often after he asks, What are these? Scholars notice that the visions seem arranged in a pattern, with the first and last both featuring horses, and the central visions focusing on the high priest and the governor. Together, they show that God was watching over the world, protecting Jerusalem, and preparing to dwell with His people again.

In the first vision, Zechariah saw a man riding a red horse, standing among myrtle trees in a ravine. Behind him were red, brown, and white horses. They were God's scouts, sent to patrol the earth. Their report: "We have walked back and forth through the earth, and behold, all the earth is at rest and in peace."

That sounds like good news. But it wasn't. The nations that had crushed Jerusalem were living comfortably, while God's people were still struggling in ruins. So the angel of the LORD prayed, "O LORD of Armies, how long will you not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah?"

And God answered "with kind and comforting words." He said, "I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy." He was angry with the nations who had gone too far in punishing His people. And He promised, "I have returned to Jerusalem with mercy. My house shall be built in it."

REAL TALK **Kind and Comforting Words**

When you're hurting, the words people say matter a lot. Zechariah 1:13 says God answered with kind and comforting words. That tells us something about God's heart. He isn't harsh with people who are struggling. He speaks gently to the brokenhearted. If you're in a hard season, read some of God's

comforting words, like Psalm 23, Isaiah 40, or Matthew 11:28-30. And think about who in your life needs kind and comforting words from you this week.

In the second vision, Zechariah saw four horns, representing the nations that had scattered Judah. Then he saw four craftsmen, who had come to throw down those horns. No matter how powerful the enemy nations seemed, God had people ready to break their power.

In the third vision, Zechariah saw a man with a measuring line, going to measure Jerusalem. But an angel stopped him with a message: Jerusalem would someday be so full of people that it would be like a city without walls. Then God made an amazing promise. "For I, says the LORD, will be to her a wall of fire around it, and I will be the glory in the middle of her."

BACKGROUND CHECK **A Wall of Fire**

In the ancient world, a city without walls was defenseless. Walls were the most important part of a city's security. When the exiles returned, Jerusalem's walls were still in ruins, and wouldn't be rebuilt until Nehemiah's time, about seventy-five years later. So God's promise was stunning. He Himself would be their wall, a wall of fire around them. And He would be the glory inside the city. God would protect them from the outside and fill them from the inside.

God also said that "he who touches you touches the apple of his eye." The apple of the eye is the pupil, the most sensitive and protected part of the eye. That's how precious God's people were to Him.

Then God promised that many nations would join themselves to Him and become His people. "Sing and rejoice, daughter of Zion! For behold, I come and I will dwell within you, says the LORD."

The fourth vision is one of the most powerful scenes in the Old Testament. "He showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the LORD's angel, and Satan standing at his right hand to be his adversary."

BACKGROUND CHECK **Satan the Accuser**

The name Satan means adversary or accuser. In the Old Testament, Satan appears as an accuser in the book of Job and here in Zechariah. He stands at Joshua's right hand, the place where an accuser stood in an ancient court, ready to point out every reason Joshua deserved to be condemned. Revelation calls Satan "the accuser of our brothers," who "accuses them before our God day and night." But in both Zechariah and Revelation, the accuser loses.

Joshua was standing there in filthy clothes. As high priest, he was supposed to wear pure, holy garments to represent the people before God. But his clothes were disgusting, a picture of his own sin and the sin of the whole nation. Satan had a strong case.

But before Satan could say a word, God spoke. "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! Yes, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Isn't this a burning stick plucked out of the fire?"

BACKGROUND CHECK **A Burning Stick**

A burning stick plucked from the fire is a log pulled out of a fire just before it burns up completely. It's scorched and blackened, but saved. That's how God saw Joshua and the people of Judah. They had been through the fire of exile. They were damaged and imperfect. But God had pulled them out because He had chosen them. The prophet Amos used a similar picture of a people rescued from burning.

Then God gave an order. "Take the filthy garments off him." And He said to Joshua, "Behold, I have caused your iniquity to pass from you, and I will clothe you with rich clothing." Zechariah couldn't

help himself. He spoke up: "Let them set a clean turban on his head." So they did.

Joshua didn't clean his own clothes. He didn't argue with Satan. He didn't promise to do better. God removed his sin and clothed him in clean, rich garments.

REAL TALK **When You Feel Accused**

Have you ever felt like a voice inside your head keeps reminding you of everything you've done wrong? You're not good enough. God could never love you after what you did. You'll never change. That's what the accuser does. Some of what he says might even be true. Joshua's clothes really were filthy. But the accuser doesn't get the last word. God does. Paul wrote, "Who could bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who justifies." If you belong to Jesus, God has taken your filthy clothes and given you clean ones. When the accuser speaks, you can answer with God's words.

Then God made a promise about the future. "For, behold, I will bring out my servant, the Branch." And He said, "I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day."

BACKGROUND CHECK **The Branch**

The Branch was a title for the Messiah. Isaiah and Jeremiah both used it to describe a coming King from David's family line, like a new shoot growing from a tree stump that had been cut down. David's royal family had been cut down by the exile. But God promised that a new Branch would grow from it. Many Christians notice that the promise to remove the iniquity of the land in one day points to the day Jesus died on the cross.

KEY VERSE

He answered and spoke to those who stood before him, saying, "Take the filthy garments off him." To him he said, "Behold, I have caused your iniquity to pass from you, and I will clothe you with rich clothing."

Zechariah 3:4 (WEB)

REAL TALK

1. What does Zechariah 1:3 teach about how God responds when we return to Him?
2. What does it mean that God would be a wall of fire around Jerusalem and the glory inside it?
3. How did Satan try to accuse Joshua? How did God respond?
4. What accusations do you hear in your own head? How could God's words answer them?

TRY THIS *Write down one accusation you often hear in your mind. Next to it, write a promise from God that answers it, like Romans 8:1 or Zechariah 3:4. Read it whenever the accusation comes back.*

CHAPTER 2

Not by Might, Nor by Power

Zechariah 4–6

In the fifth vision, an angel woke Zechariah "as a man who is wakened out of his sleep." Then the angel asked, "What do you see?"

Zechariah saw a golden lampstand with a bowl on top and seven lamps, each with pipes feeding it oil. Next to it were two olive trees, one on each side.

> **BACKGROUND CHECK** **The Lampstand**
>
> In the tabernacle and temple, there was a golden lampstand called a menorah, with seven branches. The priests kept it burning with olive oil day and night. It was a symbol of God's presence and light among His people. In Zechariah's vision, the lampstand didn't need priests to keep it filled. Oil flowed directly into it from the olive trees. The light would keep burning, not because of human effort, but because of God's endless supply.

Zechariah asked what it meant. And the angel gave one of the most famous answers in the Bible. "This is the LORD's word to Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of Armies."

Zerubbabel was the governor leading the rebuilding of the temple. He faced huge obstacles: opposition from enemies, a lack of money, and discouraged workers. God's message was clear. This project

wouldn't succeed through military strength or human power. It would succeed through God's Spirit.

> **REAL TALK** **Not by Might**
>
> We live in a world that tells you to rely on yourself. Work harder. Be stronger. Hustle. And effort is good. But some things in life are too big for you to handle alone: changing your own heart, breaking a bad habit, healing a broken relationship, or growing in faith. Zechariah 4:6 says the most important things happen by God's Spirit, not by your strength. That doesn't mean you do nothing. It means you depend on God while you work. Before you face something big, pray: God, I can't do this by my own might. Do it by Your Spirit.

Then God said, "Who are you, great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you are a plain." Whatever mountain of obstacles stood in the way would be flattened. And Zerubbabel would bring out the capstone, the final stone of the temple, with shouts of "Grace, grace, to it!"

God also promised, "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house. His hands shall also finish it." And then came another famous question. "Indeed, who despises the day of small things?"

> **REAL TALK** **The Day of Small Things**
>
> The new temple looked small and unimpressive compared to Solomon's. Some people looked down on it. But God said, Don't despise small beginnings. Big things often start small. A tiny seed becomes a tree. One conversation becomes a friendship. One prayer becomes a habit. One act of courage changes a school. Jesus compared God's kingdom to a mustard seed, one of the smallest seeds, which grows into a large plant. Don't be discouraged if your faith, your efforts, or your church seem small right now. God loves to work through small things.

Zechariah then asked about the two olive trees. The angel said, "These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the

whole earth." Most scholars believe they represent Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor, the two leaders God had chosen and anointed for this time.

In the sixth vision, Zechariah saw a flying scroll, about thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide, roughly the size of a billboard. It was a curse going out over the land against thieves and people who lied under oath. God's law would enter their homes and expose their sin.

> **BACKGROUND CHECK** **The Flying Scroll**
>
> The flying scroll in Zechariah 5 was twenty cubits long and ten cubits wide. A cubit was about eighteen inches, so it measured roughly thirty by fifteen feet. Interestingly, those are the same measurements as the porch of Solomon's temple. The scroll may represent God's law going out from His house. It names two sins in particular, stealing and swearing falsely, which may represent the two parts of the Ten Commandments: how we treat others and how we treat God's name.

In the seventh vision, Zechariah saw a woman sitting in a basket, the kind used to measure grain. The angel said, "This is Wickedness." He pushed her down into the basket and slammed a heavy lead lid on top. Then two women with wings like storks lifted the basket and carried it away to Shinar, another name for Babylon. God was removing wickedness from His people and sending it back where it belonged.

> **REAL TALK** **Getting Rid of Wickedness**
>
> In Zechariah's vision, wickedness had to be trapped and carried far away. Sometimes sin needs that kind of serious action. If there's something in your life that keeps pulling you away from God, like an app, a website, a relationship, or a habit, you might need to put a lid on it and get it out of your life. Jesus said that if something causes you to sin, get rid of it. Ask a trusted friend or adult to help you. You don't have to fight alone.

In the eighth and final vision, Zechariah saw four chariots coming out from between two bronze mountains, pulled by red, black, white, and dappled horses. They were the four winds of heaven, going out across the earth. God was in control of the whole world.

After the visions, God gave Zechariah a strange assignment. Some exiles had just arrived from Babylon with gifts of silver and gold. God told Zechariah to take that silver and gold, make a crown, and place it on the head of Joshua the high priest.

That was shocking. In Israel, priests and kings were separate. Priests came from the tribe of Levi. Kings came from the tribe of Judah. No priest was supposed to wear a royal crown.

But God explained. "Behold, the man whose name is the Branch! He will grow up out of his place; and he will build the LORD's temple." And then: "He will bear the glory, and will sit and rule on his throne. He will be a priest on his throne. The counsel of peace will be between them both."

> **BACKGROUND CHECK** **Priest and King**
>
> Crowning Joshua was a sign pointing to the future. Joshua himself would not become king. Instead, he represented the Branch, the coming Messiah, who would be both priest and king. The book of Hebrews explains that Jesus is our great high priest, like Melchizedek, who was both "king of Salem" and "priest of God Most High." Remarkably, the name Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua. A man named Joshua was crowned as a sign of a coming Priest-King, and five centuries later, a man named Joshua, Jesus, fulfilled that sign.

God also said that "those who are far off shall come and build in the LORD's temple." People from distant lands would help build God's house.

KEY VERSE

Then he answered and spoke to me, saying, "This is the LORD's word to Zerubbabel, saying, 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD of Armies.

Zechariah 4:6 (WEB)

REAL TALK

1. What does the lampstand fed directly by olive trees teach about God's Spirit?
2. Where are you tempted to rely on your own might instead of God's Spirit?
3. What small beginning in your life might God want to grow?
4. Why was crowning a priest so surprising? How does it point to Jesus?

TRY THIS *Write Zechariah 4:6 on a card. Before every big challenge this week, like a test, a game, or a hard conversation, read it and pray for God's Spirit to help you.*

CHAPTER 3

Fast Days Turned to Feasts

Zechariah 7–8

Almost two years after his night visions, around December 518 BC, Zechariah received a delegation with a question. People from the town of Bethel came to ask the priests and prophets, "Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years?"

> **BACKGROUND CHECK** **The Fasts**
>
> During the exile, the Jews began observing several fast days to mourn the destruction of Jerusalem. The fast of the fifth month remembered the burning of the temple. The fast of the seventh month remembered the murder of Gedaliah, the governor Babylon appointed after the fall of Jerusalem. Later, Zechariah also mentions fasts in the fourth month, when the city walls were breached, and the tenth month, when the siege began. Jewish communities still observe some of these days today, especially Tisha B'Av, the ninth day of the fifth month, which mourns the destruction of both temples.

It was a reasonable question. The temple was being rebuilt. Did they still need to mourn its destruction?

But God answered with a question of His own. "When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and in the seventh month for these seventy years, did you at all fast to me, really to me?"

In other words, Who were you really fasting for? Was it for Me, or for yourselves? Were your fasts about seeking God, or were they just rituals?

> **REAL TALK** **Going Through the Motions**
>
> It's possible to do all the right religious things for the wrong reasons. You can go to church because your parents make you, sing songs without thinking about the words, pray before meals out of habit, or serve so other people will notice. God isn't against religious practices. But He cares about your heart. Before you pray, worship, or serve, try asking yourself, Am I doing this for God, really for God? Even if your answer is honest and messy, bring that honesty to Him.

Then God reminded them what He had always wanted. "Execute true judgment, and show kindness and compassion every man to his brother. Don't oppress the widow, the fatherless, the foreigner, nor the poor; and let none of you devise evil against his brother in your heart."

That's what God cares about: justice, kindness, compassion, and protecting the vulnerable. Their ancestors had refused to listen to these words. They made their hearts as hard as flint. And that's why the exile happened.

> **REAL TALK** **Who's Vulnerable Around You?**
>
> God named four kinds of vulnerable people: widows, orphans, foreigners, and the poor. These were people without power or protection. Who are the vulnerable people around you? Maybe a kid in foster care, a classmate who just moved from another country, an elderly neighbor living alone, or a family struggling financially. God's people are called to notice them, protect them, and show them kindness. It can be as simple as a conversation, an invitation, or a helping hand.

Then, in chapter 8, God made ten beautiful promises, each starting with, This is what the LORD of Armies says. He was jealous for Zion with great love. He would return to Jerusalem and live there. The city would be called the City of Truth.

And then comes one of the sweetest pictures in the Bible. "Old men and old women will again dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, every man with his staff in his hand because of their old age. The streets of the city will be full of boys and girls playing in its streets."

BACKGROUND CHECK **Old and Young**

In war-torn cities, the elderly and children are often the most vulnerable. They can't fight or flee easily. A city where old people can sit safely in the streets and children can play freely is a city at peace. When the exiles returned, Jerusalem was mostly ruins with few people. Zechariah's picture would have seemed almost too good to be true. God even said, If it seems impossible to you, does that mean it's impossible for Me?

BACKGROUND CHECK **Safety: Everyone Deserves to Be Safe**

Zechariah's vision of children playing safely and old people resting without fear shows what God wants for His world. Every child deserves to be safe at home, at school, and online. If someone is hurting you, threatening you, or making you feel unsafe, it's not your fault, and you don't have to keep it secret. Talk to a trusted adult, like a parent, teacher, school counselor, or pastor. You can also call or text Childhelp at 1-800-422-4453 any time. If you're thinking about hurting yourself, call or text 988. If you're in immediate danger, call 911.

God promised to bring His people back from east and west. He said, "Don't be afraid. Let your hands be strong." Just as He had once planned disaster for their disobedient ancestors, He now planned to do good to them.

But He also reminded them how to live. "These are the things that you shall do: speak every man the truth with his neighbor. Execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates, and let none of you devise evil in your hearts against his neighbor, and love no false oath; for all these are things that I hate, says the LORD."

Then God answered the original question about fasting. "The fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months shall be for the house of Judah joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts. Therefore love truth and peace."

The days of mourning would become days of celebration. Grief would be turned into joy.

> **REAL TALK** **Mourning into Dancing**
>
> Everyone goes through seasons of grief: a death in the family, a breakup, a move, a loss. Zechariah promises that God can turn fast days into feast days. That doesn't mean pretending grief isn't real or rushing through it. Jesus Himself wept. But it does mean that grief isn't the end of the story for God's people. Psalm 30 says God can turn mourning into dancing. If you're grieving right now, it's okay to be sad. And it's okay to hope.

The chapter ends with a vision of the nations coming to God. People from many cities would say to each other, "Let's go speedily to entreat the favor of the LORD." And then: "In those days, ten men out of all the languages of the nations will take hold of the skirt of him who is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

> **BACKGROUND CHECK** **Grabbing a Robe**
>
> The word translated skirt refers to the edge or corner of a robe. Jewish men wore tassels on the corners of their garments, as the law commanded, to remind them of God's commandments. Grabbing someone's robe was a way of begging, Take me with you. Zechariah pictures people from every language

desperately wanting to know the God of Israel. In the Gospels, people grabbed the edge of Jesus' robe to be healed. Christians see Zechariah's vision coming true as people from every nation come to God through Jesus, a Jewish man.

KEY VERSE

The LORD of Armies says: "In those days, ten men out of all the languages of the nations will take hold of the skirt of him who is a Jew, saying, 'We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'"

Zechariah 8:23 (WEB)

REAL TALK

1. Why do you think God asked, Did you really fast for Me?
2. What four kinds of vulnerable people did God mention? Who are the vulnerable people around you?
3. What does the picture of old people and children in the streets tell you about what God wants for the world?
4. Would people want to grab your robe because they've heard God is with you? Why or why not?

TRY THIS *Choose one vulnerable person in your life, like an elderly neighbor, a new student, or a younger kid, and do something kind for them this week.*

CHAPTER 4

The King on a Donkey

Zechariah 9–10

Chapter 9 begins the second half of Zechariah. There are no more dates, and no more night visions. Instead, the prophet looks far into the future.

It opens with judgment on the nations around Israel: Hadrach, Damascus, Hamath, Tyre, Sidon, and the Philistine cities of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and Ashdod. Tyre in particular had built itself a stronghold and piled up silver like dust. But God would strike her power in the sea, and she would be devoured by fire.

> BACKGROUND CHECK **Alexander the Great**
>
> Many scholars notice that the route of judgment in Zechariah 9:1-8 closely matches the path of Alexander the Great's army in 332 BC. After defeating the Persians, Alexander marched south through Syria, past Damascus and Hamath, then besieged the island city of Tyre for seven months. He built a causeway through the sea to reach it and then destroyed it. Next, he conquered Gaza. Surprisingly, ancient historians report that Alexander did not destroy Jerusalem. Zechariah 9:8 promises that God would encamp around His house to protect it. Some scholars think this section was written after these events, while others see it as prophecy fulfilled.

Even in judgment, there was hope for the nations. God said that even the Philistines would one day become "a remnant for our God," like a clan in Judah.

And then comes one of the most famous prophecies in the Bible. "Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King comes to you! He is righteous, and having salvation; lowly, and riding on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

> **BACKGROUND CHECK** **Why a Donkey?**
>
> In the ancient world, conquering kings usually rode war horses or chariots into cities they had captured. A horse meant military power. But a donkey was different. Donkeys were humble work animals, used for carrying loads and for travel in peacetime. Still, donkeys had a royal history in Israel. When David made Solomon king, Solomon rode on David's own mule to his coronation. A king riding a donkey was coming in peace and humility, not in conquest.

This King would be righteous. He would bring salvation. And He would be lowly, or humble. Then Zechariah said, "I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem. The battle bow will be cut off; and he will speak peace to the nations. His dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth."

This King wouldn't need chariots, horses, or bows. He would bring peace, and His kingdom would stretch across the whole earth.

> **BACKGROUND CHECK** **Palm Sunday**
>
> About five hundred years after Zechariah, Jesus approached Jerusalem a few days before the Passover. He sent two disciples to bring Him a donkey and its colt. Then He rode into the city while crowds spread their cloaks and palm branches on the road and shouted, "Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" Matthew and John both quote Zechariah 9:9. John adds that the disciples didn't understand what was happening at first. Only later, after Jesus rose from the dead, did they

remember that these things had been written about Him. Christians celebrate this event on Palm Sunday, the start of Holy Week.

REAL TALK **A Humble King**

Most people imagine powerful leaders as loud, flashy, and intimidating. Jesus showed a different kind of power. He came humbly, riding a donkey. He washed His disciples' feet. He welcomed children. He touched people others avoided. Jesus said, "I am gentle and humble in heart." That doesn't mean He was weak. It means He used His power to serve and save. If you want to follow Him, humility is part of the package. Real strength looks like serving others, not showing off.

Then God spoke to His people who were still scattered. "As for you also, because of the blood of your covenant, I have set free your prisoners from the pit in which is no water."

An empty pit, or cistern, was sometimes used as a prison. Joseph was thrown into one by his brothers. Jeremiah was lowered into one. It was a place of hopelessness. But God promised to set His people free.

Then He called them by a beautiful name. "Turn to the stronghold, you prisoners of hope! Even today I declare that I will restore double to you."

REAL TALK **Prisoners of Hope**

Prisoners of hope is one of the most beautiful phrases in the Bible. A prisoner is stuck. But a prisoner of hope is someone who can't escape hope, no matter what. Maybe you feel stuck right now, in a bad situation at home, in anxiety or depression, in a habit you can't break, or in a season that seems endless. Zechariah calls you to turn to the stronghold, to God Himself. God promises to restore double, more than was lost. Hope isn't wishful thinking. It's trust in a God who keeps His promises. If you're struggling with hopelessness, please also talk to a trusted adult, or call or text 988.

The rest of chapter 9 describes God fighting for His people like a warrior, and then caring for them like a shepherd. "The LORD their God will save them in that day as the flock of his people; for they are like the jewels of a crown." Then Zechariah exclaims, "For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!"

In chapter 10, God tells His people to ask Him for rain, not to rely on idols or fortune-tellers. "For the teraphim have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie." The people were wandering like sheep "because there is no shepherd."

BACKGROUND CHECK **Teraphim and Diviners**

Teraphim were small household idols that people used to try to get guidance or blessing. Rachel stole her father's teraphim when she left home in Genesis 31. Diviners tried to predict the future by reading signs, like the patterns in animal livers or the movements of stars. God says all of it was empty. Today, people still seek guidance from horoscopes, tarot cards, and psychics. Zechariah's message is the same: those things can't truly guide you. God can.

God promised to punish the bad shepherds and to care for His flock Himself. From Judah would come "the cornerstone, from him the tent peg, from him the battle bow, from him every ruler together." Many Christians see these as pictures of the Messiah: the cornerstone that holds the building together, the tent peg that keeps everything secure, and the battle bow that wins the victory.

BACKGROUND CHECK **The Cornerstone**

The cornerstone was the first and most important stone laid in a building. It set the direction and alignment for everything else. Psalm 118 says, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." Jesus applied that verse to Himself, and Peter and Paul both called Jesus the cornerstone of God's people. Zechariah's promise that the cornerstone would come from Judah fits with Jesus, who was from the tribe of Judah.

Then God promised to gather His scattered people from everywhere. “I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph. I will bring them back, for I have mercy on them. They will be as though I had not cast them off.” He would whistle for them and gather them, so many that there wouldn’t be room enough for them all.

REAL TALK **As Though I Had Not Cast Them Off**

God promised to restore His people so completely that it would be as though He had never sent them away. That’s what God’s forgiveness is like. He doesn’t just tolerate us after we come back. He restores us fully. If you’ve made big mistakes, you might feel like you’ll always be a second-class Christian. But God doesn’t see you that way. When He forgives, He restores you completely, as though you had never been cast off.

KEY VERSE

Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King comes to you! He is righteous, and having salvation; lowly, and riding on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Zechariah 9:9 (WEB)

REAL TALK

1. Why do you think the King in Zechariah 9:9 rides a donkey instead of a war horse?
2. How did Jesus fulfill Zechariah 9:9 on Palm Sunday?
3. What does it mean to be a prisoner of hope?
4. Where do people look for guidance today instead of God?

TRY THIS *Read Matthew 21:1-11 and Zechariah 9:9-10 side by side. Write down every connection you notice. Then thank Jesus for coming as a humble King.*

CHAPTER 5

Thirty Pieces of Silver and the Pierced One

Zechariah 11–13

Chapter 11 is one of the most mysterious passages in Zechariah. God told the prophet to act out a drama, playing the part of a shepherd. "Feed the flock of slaughter."

The flock was God's people. They were being bought and sold by people who didn't care about them. Their own shepherds, their leaders, showed them no pity. Some even said, "Blessed be the LORD, for I am rich."

So Zechariah became their shepherd. He took two staffs. He called one "Favor" and the other "Union." He cared for the flock, especially the oppressed. He got rid of three bad shepherds in one month.

But the flock rejected him. They hated their shepherd. So he broke the staff called Favor, a sign that God's protection was being withdrawn.

Then came one of the most surprising moments in the Old Testament. Zechariah asked for his wages. "If you think it best, give me my wages; and if not, keep them. So they weighed for my wages thirty pieces of silver."

BACKGROUND CHECK **Thirty Pieces of Silver**

Thirty pieces of silver was not a lot of money. In the law of Moses, it was the amount paid when an ox gored a slave to death. It was the price of a slave. By paying the shepherd thirty pieces of silver, the people were saying he was worth no more than a slave. It was an insult. That's why God responded with sarcasm, calling it "the handsome price that I was valued at by them."

Notice that God took the insult personally. The people weren't just rejecting Zechariah. They were rejecting God.

Then God said, "Throw it to the potter." So Zechariah took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter in the LORD's house.

BACKGROUND CHECK **Judas and the Potter's Field**

Five centuries later, Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' twelve disciples, went to the chief priests and asked what they would give him to betray Jesus. "So they weighed out for him thirty pieces of silver." After Jesus was condemned, Judas was overwhelmed with remorse. He brought the money back and threw it down in the temple. The priests wouldn't put it in the treasury, because it was blood money. So they used it to buy a potter's field, a burial place for strangers. Matthew says this fulfilled prophecy, mentioning Jeremiah. Many scholars think Matthew combined Zechariah's thirty pieces of silver with Jeremiah's prophecies about a potter and buying a field, naming the more prominent prophet.

REAL TALK **Betrayal**

Jesus was betrayed by a close friend for a small amount of money. If you've ever been betrayed, Jesus knows exactly how that feels. Betrayal can make you feel angry, hurt, embarrassed, or afraid to trust anyone again. Those feelings are real. Jesus can comfort you because He's been there. And He can help you heal, in time. If someone you trusted has hurt or abused you, please tell a trusted adult. You can call or text Childhelp at 1-800-422-4453. If you are in danger, call 911.

Then Zechariah broke the second staff, Union, a sign that the unity between Judah and Israel was being broken. After that, God warned that He would allow a worthless shepherd to rule, one who wouldn't care for the sheep but would exploit them.

In chapter 12, the scene shifts to a great battle. All the nations would gather against Jerusalem. But God would make the city like a heavy stone that injured everyone who tried to lift it. He would defend His people and strengthen even the weakest among them.

And then comes a verse that has amazed readers for centuries. "I will pour on David's house and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication. They will look to me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for his only son, and will grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for his firstborn."

> **BACKGROUND CHECK** **Me Whom They Have Pierced**
>
> Notice who is speaking in Zechariah 12:10. It's God. And He says, They will look to Me whom they have pierced. How can God be pierced? Then the verse shifts from me to him: they shall mourn for him. Jewish interpreters have understood the passage in different ways, sometimes as referring to a righteous person who suffers or to a Messiah figure. Christians believe it points to Jesus, who is both God and a man. John saw it fulfilled at the cross, when "one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear." He wrote, "They will look on him whom they pierced." Revelation also says that when Jesus returns, "every eye will see him, including those who pierced him."

Zechariah says the mourning would be like the mourning for an only son or a firstborn, the deepest grief imaginable. He compared it to the mourning at Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo, which may refer to the national grief when good King Josiah was killed

there. Every family would mourn separately, each one feeling personally responsible.

> **REAL TALK** **Godly Grief**
>
> When people realize what their sin cost Jesus, it can bring deep sorrow. That's not a bad thing. Paul wrote that godly sorrow leads to repentance and salvation, without regret. Feeling sorry for your sin isn't meant to crush you. It's meant to bring you back to God, where you find forgiveness. Notice that in Zechariah 12:10, the mourning comes after God pours out a spirit of grace. Grace comes first. Then we see clearly. Then we mourn. Then we're washed clean.

And then comes the promise that follows the mourning. "In that day there will be a fountain opened to David's house and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness."

> **BACKGROUND CHECK** **A Fountain for Sin**
>
> In the Old Testament, people became clean through washings and sacrifices that had to be repeated over and over. Zechariah promises something new: a fountain that would keep flowing, opened for sin and uncleanness. Christians see this fulfilled in Jesus. When His side was pierced, blood and water flowed out. First John says, "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin." The old hymn There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood, written by William Cowper in the 1700s, was inspired by Zechariah 13:1.

God also promised to remove idols and false prophets from the land. Then came one more prophecy that Jesus quoted. "Awake, sword, against my shepherd, and against the man who is close to me, says the LORD of Armies. Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered."

> **BACKGROUND CHECK** **The Night Jesus Was Arrested**
>
> On the night before He died, after the Last Supper, Jesus walked with His disciples to the Mount of Olives. There He said, "All of you will be made to

stumble because of me tonight, for it is written, I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered." A few hours later, in the garden of Gethsemane, soldiers arrested Jesus, and His disciples ran away. Notice that in Zechariah, God calls this shepherd "the man who is close to me." The struck shepherd wasn't just any leader. He was God's own companion.

The chapter ends with God refining His people like silver and gold in a fire. "They will call on my name, and I will hear them. I will say, It is my people; and they will say, The LORD is my God."

KEY VERSE

I will pour on David's house and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication. They will look to me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for his only son, and will grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for his firstborn.

Zechariah 12:10 (WEB)

REAL TALK

1. Why do you think the people valued the shepherd at only thirty pieces of silver?
2. How was Zechariah 11:12-13 fulfilled in the story of Judas?
3. What is surprising about God saying They will look to Me whom they have pierced?
4. What does the fountain in Zechariah 13:1 mean for you personally?

TRY THIS *Read the Passion story in Matthew 26-27. Every time you find a connection to Zechariah 11-13, stop and thank Jesus for what He went through for you.*

CHAPTER 6

Everyday Life Made Holy

Zechariah 14

The final chapter of Zechariah is one of the most dramatic passages in the Bible. It describes a coming Day of the LORD, when all nations would gather against Jerusalem. The city would suffer terribly. But then, "the LORD will go out and fight against those nations."

> **BACKGROUND CHECK** **Reading Zechariah 14**
>
> Christians understand Zechariah 14 in different ways. Many believe it describes literal future events connected to Jesus' return, including a final battle in Jerusalem and Jesus' physical return to the Mount of Olives, followed by His reign on earth. Others believe it uses symbolic language to describe God's final victory over evil and the coming of the new creation, with fulfillment through the church and in the new heavens and new earth. Some see partial fulfillments in history, such as Rome's destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Sincere believers hold each of these views. All agree that Jesus will return, defeat evil, and reign forever.

"His feet will stand in that day on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, making a very great valley."

The Mount of Olives is a ridge just east of Jerusalem, across the Kidron Valley. It plays an important role in Jesus' story. He wept over Jerusalem from there. He taught His disciples about the end

times there. He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane at its foot. And He ascended to heaven from there.

BACKGROUND CHECK **The Mount of Olives**

After Jesus rose from the dead, He met with His disciples for forty days. Then He was taken up into heaven while they watched. Two angels appeared and said, "This Jesus, who was received up from you into the sky, will come back in the same way as you saw him going into the sky." Then the disciples "returned to Jerusalem from the mountain called Olivet." Many Christians connect the angels' words with Zechariah 14:4, that the LORD's feet will stand on the Mount of Olives. Today, the slopes of the Mount of Olives are covered with thousands of graves, because many people over the centuries wanted to be buried where they believed the Messiah would come.

Zechariah describes a unique day, neither day nor night, when "at evening time there will be light." And then, "It will happen in that day that living waters will go out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea. It will be so in summer and in winter."

BACKGROUND CHECK **Living Waters**

Living water meant fresh, flowing water from a spring, as opposed to stagnant water in a cistern. In a dry land, it was precious. Ezekiel saw a river flowing from the temple and bringing life wherever it went. Zechariah adds that it would flow both east, to the Dead Sea, and west, to the Mediterranean, all year long. Jesus said, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink!" Revelation describes "a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."

REAL TALK **Living Water**

Jesus offered living water to a Samaritan woman at a well. He said that whoever drinks the water He gives "will never thirst again." Everyone is thirsty for something: love, meaning, approval, peace. We try to satisfy that thirst with relationships, success, entertainment, or popularity. But those things are

like drinking salt water. They leave us thirstier. Only Jesus can truly satisfy. If you feel empty or restless, bring that thirst to Him.

Then comes the key verse of the chapter. "The LORD will be King over all the earth. In that day the LORD will be one, and his name one."

This echoes the Shema, Israel's great confession of faith from Deuteronomy 6: Hear, Israel, the LORD is our God, the LORD is one. In Zechariah's vision, the whole world would finally acknowledge what Israel had always confessed. There would be one God, one King, and one name above all others.

REAL TALK **King Over All**

Right now, it can feel like the world is ruled by money, power, politics, technology, or chaos. But Zechariah says that one day, the LORD will be King over all the earth. No more competing gods. No more corrupt rulers. No more injustice. That future can give you hope and perspective today. When the news is scary, when leaders fail, or when life feels out of control, remember who the real King is. Jesus taught us to pray, Let your Kingdom come. One day, that prayer will be completely answered.

Jerusalem would be lifted up and inhabited safely, and there would be "no more curse." The nations that had fought against Jerusalem would be judged. Zechariah describes that judgment in harsh terms, a plague and panic among God's enemies. This language is part of the prophets' way of showing God's final victory over evil, and Christians understand it as God's own justice, never as permission for people to harm anyone today.

Then, surprisingly, Zechariah says that survivors from the nations would come to Jerusalem every year to worship the King and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. Enemies would become worshipers.

BACKGROUND CHECK **The Feast of Booths**

The Feast of Booths, also called Tabernacles, celebrated the harvest and remembered God's care for Israel in the wilderness. During the feast, people lived in temporary shelters and prayed for rain for the coming year. Zechariah pictures all nations joining in. In John 7, it was on the last day of this feast that Jesus stood up and invited anyone who was thirsty to come to Him and drink. Many Christians see the feast as a picture of the final harvest, when people from every nation will be gathered to God.

And then the book ends with one of the most surprising images in the Bible. "In that day there will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, HOLY TO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD's house will be like the bowls before the altar. Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to the LORD of Armies."

BACKGROUND CHECK **Holy to the LORD**

In the law of Moses, the high priest wore a gold plate on his turban engraved with the words Holy to the LORD. It was the most sacred inscription in Israel. Only the high priest wore it, and only in God's presence. Zechariah says that one day, the same words would be written on horses' bells and ordinary cooking pots. The most common, everyday objects would be as holy as the high priest's crown. The line between sacred and ordinary would disappear.

Think about that. Horse bells were like the car keys of the ancient world. Cooking pots were everyday kitchen supplies. Zechariah says that in God's kingdom, even the most ordinary things would be holy. Every part of life would belong to God.

REAL TALK **Holy to the LORD on Your Backpack**

You don't have to wait for the end of time to start living this way. Paul wrote, "Whether therefore you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." That means your homework, your chores, your sports practice, your part-time job, your texts, your meals, and your friendships can all be holy to the LORD. Imagine writing those words on your backpack, your phone case, or

your bedroom door. It's a reminder that every part of your life matters to God, not just the hour you spend at church on Sunday.

KEY VERSE

The LORD will be King over all the earth. In that day the LORD will be one, and his name one.

Zechariah 14:9 (WEB)

REAL TALK

1. What are the main ways Christians understand Zechariah 14?
2. Why do you think the Mount of Olives is so important in Jesus' story?
3. What does it mean that the LORD will be King over all the earth?
4. What ordinary part of your life could you dedicate to God as holy?

TRY THIS *Write HOLY TO THE LORD on a sticky note and put it on something ordinary you use every day, like your phone, backpack, or mirror. Each time you see it, ask God to help you honor Him in that part of your life.*

THE END (AND THE BEGINNING)

Where This Points

Zechariah looked ahead to a King, a Shepherd, a Branch, and a pierced one. Jewish readers have long treasured his visions of God's coming kingdom and the gathering of the nations. Christians believe all of them meet in Jesus, and that Zechariah reads like a blueprint of Passion Week.

On Palm Sunday, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey's colt, and Matthew wrote, "All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet." A few days later, Judas agreed to betray Him, and the priests "weighed out for him thirty pieces of silver." When Judas threw the money back, the priests used it to buy "the potter's field." That same week, on the night He was arrested in Gethsemane, Jesus told His disciples, "All of you will be made to stumble because of me tonight, for it is written, I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered." And they did scatter. On the cross, "one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out." John added, "They will look on him whom they pierced." From the pierced side of Jesus flowed the cleansing Zechariah promised, a fountain "for sin and for uncleanness." Jesus is also the Branch, both Priest and King, who "will be a priest on his throne." In fact, the high priest crowned in Zechariah 6 was named Joshua, and Jesus is the Greek form of that same name. And one day, Zechariah's final vision will come true: "The LORD will be King over all the earth." Revelation says, "He will reign forever and ever!"

Here's what that means for you, as plainly as I can put it.

1 God made you, and He loves you.

God made you on purpose, and He loves you. The LORD remembers you.

> *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only born Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.* **John 3:16 (WEB)**

2 We've all sinned.

Like Joshua the high priest, all of us stand before God in filthy clothes. The Bible says all of us have sinned.

> *for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God;* **Romans 3:23 (WEB)**

3 Sin has a real cost.

God is holy, so He doesn't shrug off evil. The Bible says its result is death, separation from God forever.

> *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* **Romans 6:23 (WEB)**

4 Jesus was pierced for you.

Jesus, the humble King, was betrayed, struck, and pierced. He died for our sins and rose again, opening a fountain that washes us clean.

> *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness. You were healed by his wounds.* **1 Peter 2:24 (WEB)**

5 You can't earn it. You receive it.

Not by might, nor by power. Salvation isn't a reward for being good enough. It's a gift you receive by trusting Jesus.

> *for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, that no one would boast.*
> **Ephesians 2:8–9 (WEB)**

6 Welcome the King.

Turn from running your own life, and trust Jesus as your Savior and King. Then you can know, not just hope, that you have eternal life.

> *that if you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*
> **Romans 10:9 (WEB)**

So what do you do with that? Zechariah says, Return to Me, and I will return to you. You can return to God today. You don't need perfect words. You can talk to God right now, wherever you are. If it helps, you could pray something like this:

> *God, I've gone my own way. I stand before You in dirty clothes, and I can't make myself clean. Thank You that Jesus, the humble King, was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, struck like a shepherd, and pierced for my sins, and that He rose again. Wash me in the fountain You opened. Forgive me, and make me Yours. Help me live every ordinary day as holy to You. I trust Jesus as my Savior, and I want Him to be my King. In Jesus' name, amen.*

If You Just Said Yes

Tell someone. A parent, a youth leader, a pastor, or a Christian friend. Start there.

Read the real thing. Read Zechariah 9-13, then Matthew 21:1-11 and John 19:31-37.

Find your people. Get connected to a church where the Bible is taught and Jesus is honored. Ask about being baptized.

Make the ordinary holy. Choose one ordinary part of your day, like a meal or your walk to class, and dedicate it to God each day this week.

Not Sure Yet?

Not ready? That's honest, and honesty is a good place to start. Zechariah is full of strange visions and big claims. Keep asking. Keep reading. Just don't settle for "I already know all that."

Because if Zechariah is right, the LORD remembers you, and the humble King is coming to you.

The LORD will be King over all the earth. In that day the LORD will be one, and his name one.

Zechariah 14:9 (WEB)