



# CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

OCTOBER 10 2020

## I want you back!

**Scripture Story:** Zechariah 1:1–3:5.

**Commentary:** *Prophets and Kings*, chapter 47.

**Key Text:** Zechariah 1:3.

### PREPARING TO TEACH

#### I. SYNOPSIS

The book of Zechariah is a series of visions given to the prophet by God for the encouragement of the remnant of Judah, fast at work rebuilding the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. Zechariah’s message, like that of Haggai, is one of hope.

Satan worked feverishly to discourage the returning exiles in any way possible, reminding them of their recent exile and their poor condition. But God through Zechariah offered the maligned remnant a new lease on life. “‘Return to me,’ declares the Lord Almighty, ‘and I will return to you’” (Zechariah 1:3, NIV).

God continued His entreaties to Judah by promising to once again bathe His people in their former prosperity (verse 17). Jerusalem would overflow its borders so much that they could not be measured. God would be its walls, and His presence its glory (Zechariah 2).

In spite of this grand imagery, the most poignant moment occurs in Zechariah 3 when God through the Holy Spirit removes the iniquity of Joshua the high priest and clothes him in new garments. This message is at the core of this week’s lesson. Highlight the fact that God is the “author” and “finisher” of our faith. God accepted Joshua’s supplications on behalf of the people, just as He accepts Christ’s supplications on our behalf.

In this message of redemption and restoration God foreshadowed the day when Jesus would redeem fallen humanity from sin. Also, make the point that when we

accept Jesus’ sacrifice, Satan’s accusations lose their power. We are complete in Jesus (Colossians 2:10).

#### II. TARGET

The students will:

- Discover that God offers us a bright future with Him in heaven. (*Know*)
- Experience the assurance that God is willing to forgive and restore all who repent of sin. (*Feel*)
- Accept God’s offer of cleansing and renewal. (*Respond*)

#### III. EXPLORE

**The Great Controversy**, Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs, no. 8: “All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict originated in heaven when a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God’s adversary, and led into rebellion a portion of the angels. He introduced the spirit of rebellion into this world when he led Adam and Eve into sin. . . . Observed by the whole creation, this world became the arena of the universal conflict, out of which the God of love will ultimately be vindicated. To assist His people in this controversy, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and the loyal angels to guide, protect, and sustain them in the way of salvation.” (Genesis 3; 6-8; Job 1:6-12; Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:12-18; Romans 1:19-32; 3:4; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; 1 Corinthians 4:9; Hebrews 1:14; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Peter 3:6; Revelation 12:4-9.)

# TEACHING

## I. GETTING STARTED

### Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Divide the class into groups of two or three and ask the teens to share their rankings with the group. After a few minutes, ask one student from each group to share their top three most difficult challenges to overcome. (Note: There is a good chance that one or more of the students in your class have experienced, or are experiencing, similar setbacks. If the opportunity presents itself, use this moment to pray for kids who may need it.)

The purpose of this activity is to get kids thinking about the challenges faced by Judah as they tried to rebuild their lives following 70 years of slavery and subjection in another country. As if this were not enough, they faced the added burden that their own behavior had caused them to lose all.

### Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

An elegant woman shared her heartbreaking story at a banquet in Seattle. "She told how John H. had murdered her brother during a robbery, served 18 years at [a prison] in Walla Walla, [Washington, and] then settled into life on a dairy farm, where she had met him in 1983, 20 years after his crime. Compelled by Christ's command to forgive, Ruth Youngsman had gone to her enemy and pronounced forgiveness. Then she had taken him to her father's deathbed, prompting reconciliation.

"Some wouldn't call this a success story: John didn't dedicate his life to Christ. But at [the] banquet last fall, his voice cracked as he said, 'Christians are the only people I know that you can kill their son, and they'll make you a part of their family. I don't know the Man Upstairs, but He sure is hounding me.'

"John's story is unfinished; he hasn't yet accepted Christ. But just as Christ died for us regardless of our actions or acceptance, so Ruth forgave him without qualification. Even more so, she became his friend" (Albert H. Quie, [www.higherpraise.com/illustrations/forgiveness.htm](http://www.higherpraise.com/illustrations/forgiveness.htm)).

## II. TEACHING THE STORY

### Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Forgiveness is a grace that few people extend to others in our cold and calculating world. Yet if forgiveness is rare, restoration of the perpetrator of the wrong to the status of friendship is no doubt an act of God.

In this week's lesson God doesn't just want the minute remnant of Judah to know that He forgives them; God goes even further. He restores them to fellowship with Himself through promises that echo down to our time and situation. While our world may seem out of control, God is at work in it, reconciling lost humanity.

### Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- God often offers us "carrots" before "sticks"—carrots of course being blessings and sticks representing punishments. What "carrots" did God offer the returning exiles from Babylon?
- What could be the reason God mentioned the past crimes of Judah when the people of Israel were vulnerable and desperate for a new life, free of Babylonian oppression?
- What special challenges might Zechariah have faced in delivering this message?
- What does Judah's response in Zechariah 1:6 tell us about the role of confession in forgiveness? Was this confession a signal of their repentance?
- In what way is the high priest Joshua a "type" of Christ? How is he different from Jesus?
- In Zechariah's vision, Satan stands to the right of Joshua, hurling accusations to God about him. Were Satan's accusations against Joshua and Judah unfounded?
- The removal of Joshua's sin preceded his being provided clean garments. What act of Jesus removed our sins? What is the "robe" that we now wear? (Isaiah 61:10).

Notice in this story that confession leads to repentance, which leads to forgiveness, and finally, restoration through Christ's righteousness alone.

Use the following as more teachable passages that



relate to today's story: Exodus 28; Isaiah 53; Matthew 27; Hebrews 4:14–5:10.

### Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

1. **The Parent Trap.** The parents of the returning exiles of Judah had died in captivity. Some fled to Egypt instead of heeding Jeremiah's message not to resist the Babylonian captivity, and they perished there.

To a large extent, it was the parents of Judah's remnant that brought God's judgment down on the entire nation. God knew that unless they understood the wrong that their parents had done and saw the justice in God's punishment, they would be doomed to repeat the same mistakes.

Through Zechariah, God was giving Judah a chance to seize the future, but before doing so they had to come to terms with the past.

2. **Without a Mediator.** In "Joshua and the Angel," chapter 47 of *Prophets and Kings*, Ellen White notes that "Zechariah's vision of Joshua and the Angel applies with peculiar force to the experience of God's people in the closing scenes of the great day of atonement. The remnant church will then be brought into great trial and distress" (p. 587).

In the vision Joshua stands before a holy,

### Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

#### Great Expectations

All learners come to a learning environment with certain expectations. During some downtime, consider asking your students what they expect when they come to Sabbath School. Ask them what they'd like to see happen. Would they like to help with a portion of the lesson, for instance? Often teens will connect more with other teens than they would with their teacher.

Once you know what your teens are expecting, you can then tailor the class to expand the range of experiences that they get. Today's media-saturated, technology-savvy teens can overwhelm a teacher with their desire for an entertainment-driven Sabbath School. Resist the urge to be entertainment-driven. Make the learning interesting through the use of media, for instance, but try to not to overdo this.

sinless God, pleading his case. As he pleads for mercy on behalf of himself and the nation of Judah, Satan is accusing him. Satan's taunts are deeply distressing to Joshua. This will also be the case for God's remnant church as it approaches the second coming of Jesus.

Today is the day to let Jesus reproduce His perfect character in us to fit us for that day.

### Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**

Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.

- **Flashlight**

Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book *Prophets and Kings*. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from *Out of the Story*.

- **Punch Lines**

Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.

- **Further Insight**

Ask them how the quotes in *Further Insight* convey the point of the story in this lesson.

3. **Other Voices.** Zechariah’s message of hope was part of a theme. Isaiah prophesied that God would one day comfort His exiled people: “Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins” (Isaiah 40:1, 2, NIV).

After the captivity, God had a plan to prosper Judah and not to harm them (Jeremiah 29:11). Jesus looked down through the eons of time to our day with the knowledge that like Judah, we too would face uncertain days. To His disciples then and now, He said: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?” (John 14:1, 2, NIV). Amen!

### III. CLOSING

#### **Activity**

*Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.*

Ask students to form pairs. Ask each student to think of an area in their life that needs to be totally and completely given over to God. The students are *not* to

share this with their prayer partners.

When students have had a chance to think of their area of need, ask each student to pray for the other person in their pair and vice versa. Have the kids focus their prayers, asking God to give their prayer partner the strength to turn over their challenge to Him. Close with a prayer of thanksgiving.

#### **Summary**

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

The human need for God’s forgiveness and restoration is incessant and unquenchable. Lee Strobel, an American Christian apologetic author, wrote: “If you’re a follower of Jesus but you feel distant from Him during this era of your life, if you’re having difficulty resting easy in His forgiveness, could it be because you’re blatantly refusing to let go of your animosity toward another person?”

God promised Judah that He would return to them if they would return to Him. The promise was conditional, but He who had promised was faithful. He would keep His word, though theirs would no doubt fail.

Through Zechariah, God gave Judah a reason to hope. Though buffeted and slandered by the enemy, He would not only help them rebuild their broken lives; He would remove their sin and dress them again in clean clothes. He would rebuke Satan!

God is speaking to you and me today, daring us to take hold of His wondrous offer of love.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Prophets and Kings (or Royalty and Ruin)*,\* chapter 47.

\*A special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings* has been created by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at [www.cornerstoneconnections.net](http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net).