

Sermon - Zechariah 14. Rev. Bruce Stanley

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WHO LEADS YOU?

Last week I asked the question: “Are you trustworthy?” “Are you obedient to God?” Today I want to begin by asking “**Who** do you trust?” Who do you trust with your life? And who do you trust to LEAD you in life? Let’s start by thinking about the people we trust each day:

* **III** – For example,

- The train driver – we’ve never met them before, but we trust them with our lives when we get on the train.
- Our politicians – they make decisions that affect most of our lives. We vote for them, but we’ve usually never personally met them.
- The shopping centre – thousands of tonnes of concrete put together by architects and engineers we’ve never met. But we trust them enough to walk in there and assume it won’t collapse.
- The hospital. When our life is in danger, we put our lives in the hands of people who we’ve possibly never even met.

Why do we trust these people when we hardly know them?

* **Qualifications!**

We assume the bus driver is a qualified bus driver. That the doctor in emergency has trained as a doctor. That the engineer knows how to build.

Every day we trust complete strangers because we assume they’re qualified, and that they know what they’re doing. We let people we barely know lead our lives and make decisions on our behalf every day. We trust their leadership in our lives.

But

* **Are we satisfied with God’s leadership?**

* **And do we trust him with our future?**

* Zechariah 14 begins with these words:

“A day of the Lord is coming when your plunder will be divided among you. I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it...”

* This chapter is about God’s day. The final day. Judgement day. And on that day the world will be like a garden that hasn’t been weeded for a very, very long time. Beautiful plants. But full of weeds. And there are even weeds that **look** like plants. But God knows the difference. And on God’s day, God will weed the garden.

This is a warning to Israel, God’s people, at the time of Zechariah. There are many among them who don’t follow God. They SAY they follow God. They LOOK LIKE they follow God. They know his laws. They follow the rules the best they can. They think God is a good guy. But they actually follow other gods as well. The gods of the other nations around them. They’re covering their bases. God alone is not enough for them. And God’s warning for them is that he knows. He knows the people who aren’t satisfied with his leadership.

III – I remember a man I met 10 years ago who sat in church every Sunday of his life for 70 years. He was on the church council and very involved in everything. And sadly, one day, he was diagnosed with cancer. Given 3 months to live. And I remember standing in the foyer of the church when he told me the news. But in the very next breath he said that it was **the best thing that ever happened to him!** Because, he said, it woke him up, and for the first time in his life, he turned to God. After years of sitting in church, years of

controlling so many of the affairs of the church, he was finally confronted with his own life and death, and his eternity. And he realised he had not handed over the leadership of his life to God. The gods around him – the god of money and power and self satisfaction, dominated his life. So he handed it all over to God. And he was a changed man. It was unbelievable to see the change in him. And he wasn't even healed of the cancer. He died about 6 months later, absolutely secure in Jesus. He was a weed that looked like a plant. But he changed and handed God the leadership of his life.

If God is not the leader of your life right now, then let me encourage you to take this very seriously. To listen to God himself. To read his word and to hear the truth. If you are not under the leadership of God, the future Zechariah paints is unmistakably the future of hell.

BUT, when you commit your life to God's leadership, God promises to rescue you. And the rest of this chapter is devoted to explaining the lengths of the love of God towards those who follow him. You see, that's the sort of leadership that God offers – a leadership of love. Listen to what verses 3-16 say:

*** PPT x 6**

V3 – God fights for his people.

V4 – An image of God splitting mountains in two to set his people free.

V9 – a day when God will be King over all the earth.

V11 – a day when God's people will never again be attacked.

V12 – a day when God's enemies will be struck down and destroyed.

V16 – a day when God's people will worship him forever, and celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.

And that's where I want us focus now – the Feast of Tabernacles. Because this is the key to understanding this chapter and it's the key to understanding the sort of leadership God promises.

*** The Feast of Tabernacles (also known as the Feast of Booths")**

...was a celebration in autumn which went for 7 days after all the crops had been gathered in. It was a time when God's people remembered the days when they lived in the desert for 40 years after being set free from slavery in Egypt. They didn't have regular crops to depend upon. They didn't have houses. They were always on the move. So they HAD to depend on God. They had no choice. And God provided EVERYTHING for them. For 40 years in the desert. The Feast of Tabernacles was a **celebration** of living under God's leadership. Trusting him for all things. Depending on him for everything. God's leadership meant that he provided all they needed. They could depend on him and he would lead them all the way to the Promised Land.

And that's the promise he makes to us. He will provide all we need and will lead us to the Promised Land. For us, our desert is this earth. And our Promised Land, our destination, is heaven.

*** PPT – Have a look again at verse 16:**

The **survivors** from the nations will go up to worship the King.

Will you be a survivor on the last day?

This world, this society that we are in, takes many, many casualties – casualties of people who want MORE than God's leadership. The more we see, the more we want. The more we're offered, the more we take. The more we can have, the more we reach for, because we are never satisfied! But as we accumulate more and more in this life, we've got to ask... What's the point? What's the point of all we have? Where is it leading us? Who are we being lead by?

Microsoft had an ad some years ago that went like this:

* ***“Where do you want to go today?”*** And I think we’re very good at asking that question: *“Where do I want to go today?”* It’s nice to lead ourselves. But where **do** you want to go? Where **are** you going? And **why**?

* The question Zechariah wants us to ask is this: ***“Where does GOD want me to go today?”***

I am CONVINCED that God has the best qualifications to lead my life. I am convinced by his Word, the Bible, because he always keeps his promises.

I’m also convinced by the way he’s worked in my life. When I look back over my life, the wrong turns I’ve taken have always been when God was not leading me. When I haven’t listened to him. God may have given me difficult paths to take, painful directions, made me make costly decisions, but not ONCE has he given me the **wrong** directions. Difficult decisions. Difficult choices. But never WRONG directions. Where is that verse in the Bible where God says: “Follow me and life will be easy.”? It’s not there! Going the **best** way is not always the **easy** way. But it is the way that leads to eternal life with God.

I’m convinced by his Word, I’m convinced by his work in my life.

But I’m convinced most of all by Jesus.

The verse our kids learnt this week at HAWK is a good one to walk away with today.

* *“Jesus obeyed God our Father and gave himself as a sacrifice for our sins, to rescue us from this evil world.”* (Galatians 1:4)

That’s the leadership of God – Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice for our sins – a leadership of love and sacrifice. A leadership that says: “I will lay down my life for you”.

III – knowing the future

A lot of people these days ring up Psychics to hear their future. Sad to see how much people spend on that. But let me ask you – what if you actually DID know the future of your life? And what if you found out that following God’s leadership and direction for your life meant a really difficult road ahead? Would that make a difference to you following God’s leadership? Because God doesn’t say “Follow me as long as you’re comfortable” or “follow me as long as it makes you happy”. God says “follow me”. And the one promise he makes is where you’ll end up at the **end** of the journey. He doesn’t iron out every bump in the road. He doesn’t take away every challenge. But he is qualified. He does know what he’s doing. And he will lead us to the Promised Land.

Who’s leading your life? – your decisions, your direction, your purpose. Because there’s one certainty about whoever you follow. **You always end up where they end up.**

I choose to follow Jesus. Because I want to end up where he ended up! What about you?