

God's discipline, unlike His love, has a time limit.

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[0 : 00] Okay, let's see. Today, we are in Zechariah.

We're going to be looking at chapters 2 and chapter 5. This is the third set of visions that we're going to be looking at. And in two weeks, we'll be taking a look at chapter 3 and 4.

Next week, I have no idea what you're doing. I don't care. I'm not going to be here. I'm going to be gone. I actually don't know what I'm going to be doing next week at this time because it's all so confusing, but I'm not going to be here.

Thank you for not standing up and going, Yay! Praise the Lord! That really makes me feel good. So today, I want to start off by talking about stupid people. Wait, wait, wait. That could be offensive. So I've changed it from stupid people to those who are unwise. Truly stupid, yeah. When my children were small, as their father, my job was to guard them.

[1 : 17] And I'm going to share a couple of stories about me guarding my children. When my daughter was in kindergarten, she came home from school and started talking about drugs.

Drugs. At which point in time, I spoke to the principal. And, yeah, that didn't go over too well with her.

But you know what? My daughter never had to sit through another one of those stupid classes because that's my job to train them, to teach them right and wrong. And that led us to not allowing our kids to go to pre-K and elementary in the public school system.

We trained them up as best we could and we sent them off to high school where they could dialogue and we could talk. And the second story I want to share with you happened when my daughter was in high school and she came home and she was talking about this volunteer that was helping with the play and was causing all sorts of ruckus.

So I went to the principal very kindly, said, hey, this is what my daughter's doing. She's never played on sports teams. She doesn't know. Maybe, you know, it's just some, a gruff personality, but, you know, do you mind if I sit and watch play practice?

[2 : 35] And he was like, yeah, sure, go ahead. So before play practice, I went up into the woods and I cut a cord of wood. And you know how you look when you get done with cutting a cord of wood? You got sawdust all over you.

You got a little bit of grease here. You know, I got my boots on, my raggedy clothes, but I'm going to be teaching calculus-based physics the next day. So I go to the back of the room to watch and I look like a knuckle-dragging Neanderthal, but I'm going through calc-based physics, right?

And this person that was causing her trouble comes rolling up on, he literally got on his knuckles and leaned over on me, like trying to intimidate me.

I'm six foot. I outweigh him by 100 pounds. I would crush him. And there are just stupid people in the world that don't have a clue what they're messing with.

It ended up with him being held in front of a lot of people being chastised for being an idiot. You know, I didn't bend him into a pretzel like I wanted to, but, you know, I protected my children.

[3 : 47] And if you came after my kids, I, first question was, did they deserve it? Because if they deserved it, then the second question is, is it appropriate?

And if it's appropriate, then I'm standing back going, yeah, that's what I'd have done. But if it's not deserved and it's not appropriate, we have words. I share that with you because it's appropriate. Zechariah chapter two. Go ahead and open your Bible to Zechariah chapter two. This is the picture, this is the face of anti-Semitism in the world today.

This is a very popular individual who has gotten, well, not really, but has, is really leading anti-Semitism in the world today. But I'd like you to take a look at Zechariah chapter two.

And I believe it's verse, it's either six or eight. I'll figure out in just a second. Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Matthew's too far, Joel, Malachi, Zechariah.

[4 : 55] chapter two. Yeah, verse eight. Thus, says the Lord of hosts, after his glory sent me to the nations who plundered you, for he who touches you touches the apple of his eye.

those people who go after Israel, those people who attack God's chosen people are stupid with a capital stupid.

There's a reason why we in this church support the nation of Israel, why we are not anti-Semitic. there is a reason why we care about the Jewish people.

There is a reason why we pray for the nation of Israel. Because those who attack them attack the apple of God's eye.

Now, let me, why do you think we're in a war with Iran? Because those people in Iran were seeking a nuclear bomb that they could use on the nation of Israel. And we are defending Israel as a nation, which is a great idea.

[6 : 21] I know, I know. It's, it's, it's not political, it's spiritual. Zechariah chapter 2, verse 8. God says that the nation of Israel, his people, are the apple of his eye.

And just like with my children, if you came after my kid, guess who was going to be there? Hi. Guess who it's going to be bad for? Not me. You go after God's children, guess who's going to be there?

Oh, you don't have to guess. Genesis chapter 12, verses 1 through 3. Genesis chapter 12, verses 1 through 3.

I'm going to tie this into Memorial Day in just a second. It'll, it'll all work. I hope. You ready? Genesis chapter 12, beginning in verse 1.

Now the Lord said to Abram, go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. So far, so good.

[7 : 30] God sees Abram, says, get up and get. And, oh, there's more. I will make of you a great nation.

Cool for Abram, right? But read on. And I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and him who dishonors you.

I will curse. And in you, all the families of the world will be blessed. Get up and go.

I'm going to make you into a great nation. In fact, I'm going to bless you. And, if anybody raises a hand against you, I, declares the Lord, will make them a curse.

Nazi Germany, anybody? How'd it work out for them when they tried to kill all the Jews? You can go back through history and see what happens to people who raised their hand against the children of Israel.

[8 : 42] Stupid people do that. We don't want to be stupid people. The fact that we're fighting a war with Iran, I got a son in the military.

Okay. But I would much rather protect the nation of Israel as a policy for this nation than to stand against Jehovah.

Sorry. Veterans, if you're a veteran, raise your hand. Really? Here, just a second.

I took an oath to defend this nation against all enemies, both foreign and domestic.

Anybody know when that oath runs out? Never. When does God's oath run out? Never.

[9 : 42] True, Israel has been set aside for a time so that we can have free access under the dispensation of grace that all men, all women, all people have access directly to God.

But they are still God's chosen people and He has a plan to restore them and to make their nation great again. That will come up later in the sermon. But I just wanted to start off with that because as I'm reading this, and I know that there's people that have real problems.

There's, I mean, morons. If you've got to take a side in a fight, I would choose to stand on the side with the Lord.

And He says, those who touch Israel touch the apple of His eye. He says, those who come after you, I will make them a curse. I'm not volunteering for that.

Okay. That was just a little side rant that I wanted to throw out there because it was timely. Let's go to Zechariah chapter 2 in Genesis.

[10 : 48] Now that's wrong. Zechariah. Back in Matthew. Malachi. Zechariah chapter 2.

Let's read this. I lifted my eyes and saw and behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand. Then I said, where are you going?

And he said to me, to measure Jerusalem, to see what is its width and what is its length. And behold, the angel who talked with me came forward and another angel came forward to meet him and said to him, run, say to that young man, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls because of the multitude of people and the livestock in it.

And I will be to her a wall of fire all around, declares the Lord, and I will be the glory in her midst.

Up, up, flee from the land of the north, declares the Lord.

For I have spread you abroad as the four winds of heavens, declares the Lord. Up, escape to Zion, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon. For thus says the Lord of hosts, after his glory sent me to the nations who plundered you.

[12:04] For he who touches you touches the apple of his eye. Behold, I will shake my hand over them and they shall become plunder for those who serve them.

Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares the Lord.

And many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day and shall be my people. And I will dwell in your midst and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you.

And the Lord will inherit Judah as his portion in the Holy Land and will again choose Jerusalem. Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord, for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.

Okay, okay, okay. So as we go through chapter two, there's a couple of things I want to point out to you real quick before we get into this. They're going out to measure, to figure out how many people can fit in there and there's going to be so many people that want to live in Jerusalem that they can't build walls around it.

[13:13] Now, quite frankly, we don't have walls around our towns anymore. But back then, that was a big deal. Having a wall around your city was security. It gave you a peace of mind.

You didn't have to worry about invaders. Big deal. God says, don't worry about it. I'm going to be your wall and it will be as a fire, a wall of fire around you.

Does that remind you of anything? God leading the nation of Israel out of Egypt, right? Okay. But then it goes on and it says, up, look at verse 6, up, up, flee from the land of the north.

In our culture, we head down to Oregon, we head up to Canada, right? If you're going to Mexico, which way are you going? Down, right?

Because down is south and if you're going to Alaska, you're going. And if you're going to Washington, D.C., it's just the wrong way. backwards. Yeah, nice.

[14:18] Okay. Okay. But for the Jews, because they walked everywhere they went and because Jerusalem was on top of a hill, anybody who went to Jerusalem, guess which way they were going?

Up. It doesn't matter if they're coming from the north, the south, the east, or the west. You go up to Jerusalem. So when he says here in verse 6, up, up, he's talking about returning to Jerusalem.

Flee from the land of the north. I have spread you abroad as the four winds of heavens. Up, escape to Zion. So that's the idea is that he's calling all the people and they're going up to Jerusalem.

And then, yeah. Verse 11, many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day.

this is one of those passages that has a near and a long-term fulfillment.

[15:23] Okay? There is a near fulfillment, but then there's going to be the greater, more complete, long-term fulfillment. Okay, so that's chapter 2.

Take a look in verse 5, or chapter 5, the first four verses, because there's something interesting here. Again, I lifted my eyes and saw, and remember, they're paired visions, right?

Vision 1, 2, 3, 4, goes with vision 5. They're paired, and this is the third set. Again, again, I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, a flying scroll.

And he said to me, what do you see? I answered, I see a flying scroll. Its length is 20 cubits, and its width, 10 cubits.

I'm sorry, I see Aladdin and Jasmine, a brave new world, whatever the song was they sang as they flew in the movie Aladdin. Don't laugh at me. How many of you thought flying carpet?

[16:25] Thank you. I appreciate that. The rest of you all, get with the program. But anyways, it's a scroll. What's a scroll? Something that's written on it.

It's what we would call a book, but it's in a different format. It's a book. All right. And he said to me, what do you see? I answered, I see a flying scroll. Its length is 20 cubits, and its width is 10 cubits.

Then he said to me, this is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole land. For everyone who steals shall be cleaned out according to what is on one side, and everyone who swears falsely

shall be cleaned out according to what is on the other side.

I will send it out, declares the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter the house of the thief and the house of him who swears falsely by my name, and it shall remain in his house and consume it, both timber and stones.

Okay. If you will remember, as we've been going through this series, I've been talking about prophetic language and what is, what's, this is prophetic language.

[17 : 44] It's not always easy to understand. Brief definition, brief explanation. The word of God is going to be effective, and it's going to take care of everybody in the land who's a thief and a liar.

And they will be judged, and they will be punished according to the word of God. God is going to purify Jerusalem according to his word. So we've got this, we've got this prophecy of God calling the nation back from their captivity, from being scattered around the world.

And anybody know why they were scattered? Well, let's see what happens. Let's go on. They were scattered because God was disciplining them.

And we need to understand this. God, his discipline, unlike his love, has a time limit. God's love is. And God extends his love to all who will accept him.

But when he disciplines people, even though it feels like forever, it's not forever. Okay? When God's training up his children, it may feel like it takes a long time to get through, but at least it has a limit.

[19 : 06] All right? And so, we're looking at God's discipline. And first of all, it has a purpose. God sent Israel into captivity because of their idol worship.

When God sent them into the Babylonian captivity, when the northern ten tribes had been taken captive, it was a direct result of their idol worship.

And what's amazing is if you go through the rest of Scripture, I don't see them practicing idol worship ever again. Now, that doesn't mean that they're always holy and doing the right thing and living for the Lord as they should, but never again do we see them offering their children up to Baal. Never again do we see them having the asherahs and those icons and them worshipping false idols.

Okay? So, the Babylonian captivity and all that surrounds it seems to have cured them from that.

And just as God used discipline on Israel, God uses discipline on us today. we're going to spend, we're going to be in Hebrews 12 back and forth, so if you just want to mark Hebrews 12 today, that'd be a good thing.

[20 : 30] Hebrews 12, verse 10 says this, verse 9, besides this, we had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them.

Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good that we may share in His holiness.

God cares about us that we live for Him, that we live holy. and He allows trouble into our lives. He allows hardship that we may learn to not only trust Him, but follow Him in hard times.

It's a rather poignant lesson for my wife and I today because we're facing a pretty nasty situation right now. and separately and slightly different in time, we both have the exact same response.

God is not surprised by these circumstances and it is an opportunity for us to walk by faith in them. I said that on the phone on the golf course.

[22 : 01] She said that on the phone on the evil side of our state. Okay? So, and we were talking to our son Bryce. When we face harsh times, when things don't go the way we expect them to, when we are challenged, it is an opportunity for us to trust God.

That's called being disciplined. Discipline isn't pulling out our paddle and applying pressure to the learning center. I mean, that has an element at times, but discipline is any training that allows us to develop the muscles we're supposed to have.

The muscle of faith, the muscle of trust, the muscle of relying upon God and not ourselves. That's God disciplining us. Sometimes, it's insufficient funds.

Isn't that always a fun time? You know, you go, right? Sometimes, sometimes it's how do I get 12 hours of work and four hours of daylight?

Sometimes, it's how do I hold on to my temper? Okay? A lot of, these are training situations where God allows us to grow the muscles of faith and trust.

[23 : 19] Why? It says here in verse 10 that we may share His holiness. All right.

In allowing us to be disciplined or in disciplining us, God is actually showing us His love. because all are born with a sin nature, all need discipline.

Romans 5, 12, by one man, sin entered, thus sin goes to everybody. In Romans 3, all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Did you, I mean, if you've ever worked in a church nursery or any nursery, you ever had kids, you know you don't have to teach them to be mean, right? Children just by nature walk by and walk away, right? You know? Or they'll walk over to Timmy and take his toy. I want it. You don't have to teach them to be selfish and greedy. We all are born with a sin problem. We all need discipline because of that. God's discipline reveals His love for us.

[24 : 39] In fact, if He failed to discipline us, according to His word, that means He's treating us with hate. Proverbs 13. Is it 13 or 12?

Proverbs 13, 24. We'll be back in Hebrews, so don't lose that. Proverbs 13. verse 12. That can't be the right. 24. Man, I'm doing great. Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.

Again, not all discipline is applying pressure to the learning area, though there are times that's appropriate. Can I get an amen? That was weak.

I'm worried about all of y'all. You don't believe that that's the learning end, right? Pressure applied right to the... Where do you keep your wallet? Where's pressure applied when you're speeding?

[25 : 51] When you do something wrong? Fines? Yeah. Learning area. For children, same thing. Anyways. We live in a society that has not only forgotten this, but they've listened to the evil people who say that discipline is wrong.

That anybody who disciplines their child is just vicious and violent. I tell you, if you don't discipline your children, if you don't discipline yourself, you are not acting in love.

I have to discipline myself to go to bed because Netflix runs 24 hours a day and I can sit there watching The Rifleman. If you haven't watched The Rifleman, great show, really loving it.

But go to bed. Otherwise, I'm worthless the next day. I have to discipline myself not to go to the Golden Corral every day for lunch and close the store.

I have to discipline myself. Otherwise, I would eat everything. I have to discipline my children even now. That's not to punish but to train them.

[27 : 06] Dude. Righty-tighty, lefty-loosey. Dude. Try it. This morning, working with Morgan, disciplined Morgan.

Not punished, trained. This is how you do this. This is how you do that. Did the same thing with Jim and Frank. These are the things that we do. That's discipline, teaching, showing them the better way.

That's the way we go through life. That's the way God teaches us. That is the way of love. It is hateful to hold it to yourself. Moving on.

Oh yeah, Hebrews chapter 12, verse 6. The Lord disciplines the one He loves and chastise every son whom He receives. Yeah.

Once again, I'm going to say it again. Discipline is not punishment. Punishment is not discipline. Discipline is training. Sometimes training hurts. Sometimes training is easy.

[28 : 15] But it's still training. So we had the fact that God, God's discipline has a purpose. For Israel, that purpose was to fix, or for them to stop their idolatry.

We understand now that God's discipline reveals His love. He cares about us. He wants us to grow. He wants us to be the men and women He has called us to be. And that is only accomplished through discipline because naturally we're sinners hell-bent.

But God's discipline has limits. And I'm not saying this in a negative way. I'm saying this in a positive way. In a way that should bring a hope.

Israel's time in captivity had limits and has limits. Zechariah chapter 2, verse 6. Zechariah, Haggai, Zechariah.

Chapter 2, verse 6. It says, Up, up, flee from the land of the north, declares the Lord. For I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heavens declares the Lord.

[29 : 31] Up, escape to Zion, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon. God had sent them out for discipline. But there was a time where that discipline came to an end.

All discipline has a purpose. And part of that purpose is to stop. If you've ever taught anybody anything, you explain it to them, you show them how it's done, you let them practice it a few times, and then what do you do?

You step back and you let them try it on their own. Right? If you're teaching somebody how to do something, you explain it to them, you show it to them, you practice with them a couple times, and then you let them try it on their own.

Do you know that God disciplines us in the same way? And when He calls Israel back, He's stepping back and letting them return and try it on their own.

Apparently, this one stuck. Because like I said, I don't see anywhere in the rest of Scripture where the nation of Israel has got Asherah and idols and they're being condemned by God. And that's the point of discipline is to train us, to teach us so that we grow.

[30 : 44] And that means that there comes a time where the training comes to an end and it's like, have fun. You know? Try it.

We grow up. But if you noticed, anybody notice anything weird about that sentence? Go ahead, Diane.

What's weird about that sentence? You're absolutely correct. And it's not that my secretary made a mistake.

This is intentional. Remember what we said earlier that Israel has been set aside for a time but they will be returned? Watch, everybody.

The pastor's going to shoot his foot. I don't believe the return of Jewish people to Palestine back in the 40s is the fulfillment of God's promise to the nation of Israel.

[31 : 53] It may be a precursor. It may be laying a foundation for it but I don't personally believe that it is the fulfillment of prophecy. There is a day coming when God is going to whistle up all the Jews from around the world and they are going to come to Palestine in ways that will just make you it will boggle your mind.

Zechariah chapter 2 verse 8 Thus says the Lord of hosts after his glory sent me to the nations who plundered you for he who touches you touches the apple of my eye behold I will shake my hand over them you with me in verse 9 they shall become plunder for those who serve them then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me sing and rejoice oh daughter of Zion for behold I come I will dwell in your midst verse 11 and many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day and shall be my people there was a time when the nation of Israel was released from the Babylonian captivity and they returned to Jerusalem and they had a time of blessing they were it was good but that was the near the incomplete fulfillment there is coming a day and I believe it's not far off when God is going to take the nation of Israel off the shelf and he's going to put them front and center he's going to whistle them up from the four corners of the earth they will migrate back to Palestine and it will be beyond our understanding because it will be a miraculous work of God and it says here that many nations will come clamoring to be part of that you can read elsewhere in the scriptures how Egypt's going to come how the various nations around are going to come and claim God as theirs and he says they will be my people is Egypt

God's people right now no they're part of the problem aren't they Iran Iraq Gaza are they are they clamoring to be part of God's people no but the day is coming where they will that's the far fulfillment of this okay so it had a time limit when God called them all back they ended up but there is a time coming when God is going to call them all again all right brings us to this Hebrews chapter 12 10 through 11 our fathers disciplined us for a short time as they as seem best to them but he that is God our father disciplines us for our good that we may share his holiness for the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it there's a there's a whole series of t-shirts that are out now about embracing the pain of weight lifting or training or you know embrace embrace the misery they use more colloquial terms

I'm certain you're familiar with what I'm saying but the idea is to accept the cost to get the reward I ran across recently a Asian saying it says taste bitter or eat bitter taste sweet and it's the idea of you do the hard stuff the push ups the sit ups the running the discipline on what you eat and you get the sweet stuff that is you become strong and healthy you do the hard stuff you read your bible you spend time in prayer you seek to serve the lord with your whole heart you do the hard stuff and what do you get as the reward the fruit of righteousness in your life embrace the discipline alright this leaves us with a choice you and I can either accept God in his ways or not we can either embrace the discipline or not we live in an interesting time where God allows us to make choices will you accept the discipline of the lord will you accept the difficult stuff the first question is will you accept

Jesus Christ which that's a no brainer but even for those of us that are saved and been Christians for a long time will we accept the discipline of the lord have you ever tried to train a rebellious child once saw a parent trying to spank a kid and trying to catch up to the kid to give him a swat right I had no problem with that here you go swing away they didn't think that was funny I thought you wanted to spank them now you can't question is will we embrace the training and discipline of the lord not for me to say it's for you I mean it's not for me to say for you I have to say it for myself it's a challenge for me too but I like the idea of the fruit of righteousness

[38 : 11] I like the idea of sharing in the holiness of God not really so certain about eating bitter but I like tasting sweet and remember this the discipline and training is short it may take our whole life but our whole life compared to eternity is nothing let us taste the bitter let us eat the bitter so that we can taste the sweet later let's pray let us