



TALK IT OVER

A Vision of Hope (Zechariah 1:7-17)

How to use Talk It Over:

Talking through the message during the week helps you and your group turn what God is saying to you into action steps. Begin with the key questions, add any optional scriptures and questions if needed, and then wrap up by deciding on your next steps.

The Main Idea:

God restores those who return to Him.

Key Questions:

- Compare the date of Zechariah's vision (1:7) with the date of Haggai's prophecies (Haggai 1:1; 2:1; 2:10; 2:20). From what you know of our study of the book of Haggai, what do you think the Israelites were feeling or experiencing at the time Zechariah spoke? Try to imagine and explain what it would have been like to be an Israelite living in Jerusalem at this time.
- How would you summarize the message of Zechariah 1:7-17? Even if you don't understand all the symbolism, what is the overall message of this vision? In what ways is 1:16 a summation of this first vision?
- Read Zechariah 1:1-6. How does this speech from Zechariah set the stage for the vision of 1:7-17? How is 1:6 a prerequisite to 1:16?
- In what area of your life is God calling you to "Return to Him" (1:3)? What does Zechariah's vision in 1:7-17 tell you about how God responds when we return? What do you hope God will do in this area of your life as you return it to his direction and control?

Optional Questions: If needed, include one or more of these questions to extend your conversation.

- Why does Zechariah use visions or "apocalyptic" to convey his message? Why not speak plainly like Haggai? What is the power of the imagery and symbolism Zechariah uses?
- What effect would the vision of 1:7-17 have had on the people living in Jerusalem in 520-519 B.C.? Why did they need to hear this prophecy then?
- What does 1:10-11 teach us about the nature of God? How does this vision help us better understand God's sovereignty?

Next Steps:

- Haggai challenged us to put God at the center of our lives. Zechariah begins (1:1-6) by reminding us of the importance of returning to God. The vision of 1:7-17 tells us of the restoration God brings when we return. Name one area of your life that you need to "return to God." Ask God each day this week to stand at the center of that area. Watch for God's direction and restoration as a result.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Familiarize yourself with the book of Zechariah by reading the first six chapters. Note Zechariah's use of imagery and symbolism. Don't worry if the images and symbols don't make sense to you. Just get a flavor of Zechariah's literary style and his overall message.

Day 1 Zechariah 1:1-6 (NLT Life Application Study Bible p. 1502)

Day 2 Zechariah 1:7-20

Day 3 Zechariah 2:1-13

Day 4 Zechariah 3:1-10

Day 5 Zechariah 4:1-14

Day 6 Zechariah 5:1-11

Day 7 Zechariah 6:1-15

Bible Reading Background

The Book of Zechariah contains a unique style or type (genre) of literature called "apocalyptic." Apocalyptic literature was common in the ancient world, and was distinguished by its imagery and symbolism. Ancient authors used this imagery and symbolism to make their point in powerful ways, just like in our own day poets or song writers use images and symbols to communicate ideas and feelings that "plain words" cannot adequately describe. As you read Zechariah, don't get bogged down trying to figure out what all the images or symbols mean. Instead, try to sense the overall flow and feel of the book. Zechariah may have intended to "move us" as much as "inform us," just like a song about love can move us in ways that a textbook description of love cannot.