

# Harvest

Evangelical Free Church

SERIES: Confidence in a Broken World • Lesson 1  
For Adult Bible Fellowships and Small Groups Feb. 28-March 6, 2010

Join us in being on mission with God!

**OUR VISION**

To continually mature and grow as a united body of Jesus-imitators who live out God's greatest commandment to "Love" by exalting God and serving one another, and His greatest commission to "Go" by reaching into and shaping our local, regional, and global communities.

## “Going Forward by Going Backwards”

*Zechariah 1:1-6*

### Getting Started

*After an introductory time, discuss the following questions in your group or class.*

There are times in life when we so much want to move forward, but the natural way to start out may not be the best. A high school student who wants to perform well in football has to go through endless drills and weight training. All he wants to do is get on the field and play the game, but the first steps focus on the basics he'd rather ignore.

Some of us look forward to planting a garden this summer. But the key to a healthy garden starts not with the seed, but with preparing the soil. We realize we have to make sure that it is as free as possible from noxious weeds and other plants, and that it has a good mixture of nutrients to start with.

Spiritual life is a bit like that. Moving forwards often begins by doing things that don't feel like we're gaining a lot of traction. But they are important tasks we need to address if we are to enjoy growth and forward progress.

- Q: Name a skill or an achievement in your life that required some preparation before you could enjoy the fruit of your labor.

---



---

### A Time of Uncertainty

There is a feeling in America today that our best days may be behind us. The financial debt that hangs over our nation, the threat of third-world countries acquiring a nuclear arsenal, and the specter of terrorist attacks create an atmosphere of unease in the minds of many. We wonder if the lifestyle we enjoy will be sustainable for our children or grandchildren. What does the world have for us in the midst of all the uncertainties before us?

The book of Zechariah was written in a time much like our own. The nation of Israel had been conquered, and its leaders taken into exile. A remnant has returned to the land, but the situation is bleak. Everything is in ruins. They are surrounded by powerful hostile enemies. The political situation makes rebuilding the temple and the culture problematic. The prospect of regaining some of the glory of the past seems almost impossible.

God sends Zechariah to his people to remind them that God is not done with them yet. He still has more he wants them to experience if they are willing to trust him.

Part of the message of Zechariah is about the immediate future. Part of it speaks about the first coming of Jesus. Other parts of the prophecy relate to Christ's second coming. All of this combines to offer courage and hope to God's people. It's an invitation for us to trust him, despite our doubts and discouragements.

This prophet demonstrates how God brings confidence to us in our broken down world. He is not done with your life. He is not finished with what he plans to do in your church. He has more in store for those who will trust him and move forward!



## Zechariah 1:1-6

<sup>1</sup> In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berekiah, the son of Iddo: <sup>2</sup>“The LORD was very angry with your forefathers. <sup>3</sup> Therefore tell the people: This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Return to me,’ declares the LORD Almighty, ‘and I will return to you,’ says the LORD Almighty. <sup>4</sup> Do not be like your forefathers, to whom the earlier prophets proclaimed: This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Turn from your evil ways and your evil practices.’ But they would not listen or pay attention to me, declares the LORD. <sup>5</sup> Where are your forefathers now? And the prophets, do they live forever? <sup>6</sup> But did not my words and my decrees, which I commanded my servants the prophets, overtake your forefathers? “Then they repented and said, ‘The LORD Almighty has done to do.’”

Verse one dates the first prophecy of Zechariah to the year. The 8th month of Darius 2nd year is 520 B.C.

There are over 20 men in the Old Testament with the name of Zechariah. Iddo seems to be his grandfather's name. His grandfather returned from exile in 538 B.C. Some wonder if his father died as young man and he was raised by his grandfather, since he is linked to Iddo, not Berekiah, in Ezra 5:1.

1. If the prophet came back to Israel around 538 B.C. with his father and grandfather, how old do you think he might have been when he started his role as a prophet in 520 B.C.? How do you think growing up in the family of a well-known priest affected him personally?

---

---

2. What do you think the impact was of growing up in a foreign company and then seeing the desolation of his homeland first-hand?

---

---

3. In verse 2 Zechariah reminds his audience that God was “very angry” with their ancestors. From your understanding of God’s actions in the Bible, what kind of consequences come to a group of people when God becomes angry with them? List some of the results you see in the Bible.

---

---

---

4. God’s wrath does not always result in fire and brimstone. List some of the consequences God mentions in Deuteronomy 18:20-24.

---

---

---

---

Some people wonder if hurricane Katrina, the H1-N1 virus, or the earthquake in Haiti are signs of God’s judgment on a population. Since we have no prophets giving us new revelation, it is unwise to claim such an absolute connection between these things and God. But it is possible to speak of the kinds of things God *has* done when people have forsaken his truth.

5. How might you answer the question, “Is XYZ God’s judgment?” in light of his dealings with Israel in the Old Testament?

---

---

---

## Going Forward by Going Backwards

6. The first step for the people who are back from captivity and living in the ruins of their former glorious city is outlined in verse 3. What is the number 1 priority God puts on them?

---

---

---

7. Some of them were probably action-oriented folks who wanted to move stone and rebuild walls and get the pattern of worship established as fast as possible. What are some of the external things *we* tend to focus on when we are eager to get something done for Jesus?

---

---

---

8. What's the danger of doing lots of stuff other people see without working on issues of the heart?

---

---

---

9. How do you see God's grace reflected in the command in Zechariah 1:3?

---

---

---

10. In verse 4 God gives the people a warning. Who were they likely to mimic in following God? In what ways do you see yourself picking up patterns from your parents—even patterns that you promised yourself as a young adult you would do differently?

---

---

---

11. Why is it hard for us to break free from the stuff that our parents and those before us model to us?

---

---

---

12. Most of their parents probably never declared, "Watch us defy God!" They probably disobeyed in more subtle ways. What are some of the small compromises parents can make that reflect an independence toward God and his ways?

---

---



Reaching Up and Reaching Out

HARVEST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

524 River Hills Dr. P.O. Box 291

Phone: 515-733-5360
Web: www.harvestefree.org
E-mail: office@harvestefree.org



13. Why do you think God reminds Zechariah’s generation that neither their parents nor the prophets live forever? See verse 5. What principle is he trying to get across to them?

Three horizontal lines for writing the answer to question 13.

14. What do you think God means in verse 6 when he states that his words “overtake” the generation of Zechariah’s forefathers?

Three horizontal lines for writing the answer to question 14.

16. What are some of the principles of God’s truth that have “caught up” with you? Describe an issue where you knew what God’s approach was, but where you ignored it and relied on yourself instead, only to regret it later.

Three horizontal lines for writing the answer to question 16.

17. Zechariah notes that when the people had been exiled, they came to their senses and repented. What does repentance look like in their confession at the end of verse 6?

Three horizontal lines for writing the answer to question 17.

18. All of us experience grief, sorrow, and regret for some of the bad choices we’ve made and some of the rotten attitudes we can sometimes harbor. But that is not repentance. In your group, walk through a working definition of repentance and record it below.

Repentance is when a person \_\_\_\_\_

Eight horizontal lines for writing the definition of repentance.

Quotations are from THE HOLY BIBLE: NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.