

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.

"Taking the Fun Out of Being Bad"

Zechariah Chapter 5:1-6:8

Getting Started

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

Consider the following:

- The office of congressional ethics maintains that congressmen and congresswomen are held to the highest ethical standard. However, in the three years since "sweeping ethical rules" have been enacted, not one congressman has faced serious consequences. This is in spite of the fact that serious charges of sexual misconduct and financial impropriety have been leveled against many in office.
- Trent Pobar received a verdict of not guilty on the charge he raped his friend's partner after drinking at his friend's house. He claimed that his intoxication produced a state of amnesia where he did not know what he was doing.
- Arizona Senator John Huppenthal was acquitted of stealing a campaign sign that he physically wrested from a 78 year old precinct committee person in front of an apartment complex in 2008. Senator's Huppenthal's argument that the sign might be owned by a political party and not the senior citizen who had it somehow convinced the judge to let him off.

Q: How do you such stories about people who do wrong and apparently suffer few or no consequences make you feel?

Q: In what ways does it make it more difficult for you to do the right thing all the time?

For the Jews in Zechariah's day, it seemed like *justice* was a forgotten word. The godless Babylonians seemed to rule the world. God's own people were struggling for survival on the ruins of the former capital city. Few felt "blessed" in their relationship with God. How could they find hope in a world that seemed so morally upside-down?

Finding hope when evil is widespread

The vision in Zechariah 5:1-4 is the 6th vision the prophet sees on the same night.

1. Visualize the size of the flying scroll Zechariah sees. Plot out how large it would be if placed on the floor of this room. How large do you think it was compared to the typical scroll?



Zechariah 5:1-11

¹ I looked again-- and there before me was a flying scroll!
² He asked me, "What do you see?" I answered, "I see a flying scroll, thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide." ³ And he said to me, "This is the curse that is going out over the whole land; for according to what it says on one side, every thief will be banished, and according to what it says on the other, everyone who swears falsely will be banished. ⁴ The LORD Almighty declares, 'I will send it out, and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of him who swears falsely by my name. It will remain in his house and destroy it, both its timbers and its stones.'" ⁵ Then the angel who was speaking to me came forward and said to me, "Look up and see what this is that is appearing." ⁶ I asked, "What is it?" He replied, "It is a measuring basket." And he added, "This is the iniquity of the people throughout the land." ⁷ Then the cover of lead was raised, and there in the basket sat a woman! ⁸ He said, "This is wickedness," and he pushed her back into the basket and pushed the lead cover down over its mouth. ⁹ Then I looked up-- and there before me were two women, with the wind in their wings! They had wings like those of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between heaven and earth. ¹⁰ "Where are they taking the basket?" I asked the angel who was speaking to me. ¹¹ He replied, "To the country of Babylonia } to build a house for it. When it is ready, the basket will be set there in its place."

2. What do you think the size of the scroll is supposed to represent?

 3. Read verses 3-5. Why is the scroll airborne? Why is it flying and not posted in some sacred spot?

 4. The scroll has a message for two kinds of people. Who are they? What is the message?

 5. All of us have seen pieces of paper tossed by the wind. They don't frighten us unless they are driven by a tornado. In what way is this document different? What can it do according to verse 4?

 6. Summarize the teaching of this vision in one sentence:

- The seventh vision is revealed in verses 5-11.
7. What does the basket Zechariah sees in verses 5-6 contain?

 8. How is this wickedness personified in verses 7-8? What is she trying to do and how does the angel respond?

 9. Where is the basket going to be placed? What do you think this destination symbolized for the Jews who heard the message?

 10. Summarize the teaching of this vision in one sentence:

Zechariah describes his last vision in Zechariah 6:1-8. This vision is somewhat parallel with the first vision in Zechariah 1:7-11. Unlike the first vision, these horses are driving chariots. The riders start out going in three directions in verse 6. They travel throughout the world in verse 7.

Note that the prophecy does not allegorize the details. There is no meaning assigned to the

Taking the Fun Out of Being Bad

Zechariah 6:1-8

¹ I looked up again-- and there before me were four chariots coming out from between two mountains-- mountains of bronze! ² The first chariot had red horses, the second black, ³ the third white, and the fourth dappled-- all of them powerful. ⁴ I asked the angel who was speaking to me, "What are these, my lord?" ⁵ The angel answered me, "These are the four spirits {5 Or winds} of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world. ⁶ The one with the black horses is going toward the north country, the one with the white horses toward the west, {6 Or horses after them} and the one with the dappled horses toward the south." ⁷ When the powerful horses went out, they were straining to go throughout the earth. And he said, "Go throughout the earth!" So they went throughout the earth. ⁸ Then he called to me, "Look, those going toward the north country have given my Spirit {8 Or spirit} rest in the land of the north."

color of the horses or the bronze composition of the mountains. Since the Bible does not assign significance to the details, we should be careful not to allegorically assign arbitrary meaning to the specifics of the colorful vision.

The revelation focuses on the activity of God—represented by the four spirits—in being active in all parts of the world he made. God is shaping the events of every nation on earth.

11. Why do you believe the vision ends with a focus on the chariot headed to the north? How might this be of special interest to the Jews in Zechariah's audience?

If the destructive forces of human pride and greed that caused so much damage to the Jewish nation were in God's control, the builders had reason to move forward.

12. What does the aggressiveness of the horses in verse 7 imply about God's attention to the actions and behavior of powerful nations at any time in history?

13. When you look at the complimentary messages from the last three visions, you see a common theme. Mark the statements below that you think might reflect the overall message God is giving Zechariah and his people through these visions.

- God judges everyone who does evil according to his law.
- Those who practice evil without repentance will face personal destruction.
- When God's people persist in doing evil, he will remove them from his presence.
- God always distinguishes between the righteous and the unrighteous.
- Just as God prepares a place for the righteous, he also prepares a place for the unrighteous.
- God knows what is happening in every corner of the earth, and is engaged with people wherever he finds them.
- We can obey God in uncertain or evil times because he exercises his sovereign authority over everyone in every place.

14. How do these visions encourage you to persevere when it seems as though the "good" people are losing?

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