

Zechariah

Lesson 2 - Chapters 1-2

Then I lifted up my eyes and looked . . .

Zechariah is a book overflowing with hope and encouragement, even when life feels like a storm. Discouragement may press in on every side, but those hardships can drive us into the arms of our loving Savior. In our longing for comfort and strength, we discover that the Lord Himself is our refuge. As we turn to Him, we remember His promise: He offers us a ‘future and a hope’ (Jeremiah 29:11).

DAY ONE

1. Remember to start every day of study with prayer.
2. Read through Zechariah 1:1-7 and mark every reference of Zechariah—his name, any pronouns that refer to him, and any synonyms. I underline mine with blue, but you can choose your own style of marking. Remember, there’s no right or wrong way to do this; what matters is that marking the text helps you slow down, notice details, and better understand what the passage is saying.
3. You should have noticed that there are two different time frames mentioned in this chapter—verse 1 and verse 7. Let’s take a closer look at those and see what was happening..
 - a. Record both the time references below.

1:1

1:7
 - b. What happened in the eighth month of the second year of Darius? Read Zechariah 1:1-6 and mark every reference to the Lord. I mark mine with a purple triangle to remind me of His royalty and the Trinity of the Godhead. You can choose your own symbol and color.
 - c. When you mark key words, take the time to go back and look at what you’ve seen by marking them. Ask the 5 Ws and H questions: who, what, where, when why, and how. From verses 1-6, record what you learn about the Lord.

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4. Let's look at what you have learned.
 - a. What is the message of Zechariah 1:1-6? In your own words, how would you summarize what God is saying in these verses?
 - b. Who is used as an illustration in these verses? How did God feel about them, and why?
 - c. According to Zechariah 1:6, what did God's Word 'do' to the people they were not to be like? What do you think this means?
 - d. What does this tell you about God's Word? Before you answer, read Amos 3:7 and Jeremiah 1:12.
5. Read through Zechariah 1:7-2:1 and watch for the phrases you marked in Lesson 1: "I saw at night" (1:8) and "I lifted up my eyes and looked" (1:8; 2:1). What do you learn from observing these repeated phrases?
6. Now let's observe Zechariah 1. Read through the entire chapter and mark the following key words. Last week, I suggested making a Key Word Marking Card so you can keep track of these words and their markings, and mark them the same way throughout the whole book.
 - a. *return* - the word *repented* in 1:6 is the same Hebrew word, so mark it in the same way.
 - b. *angry*
 - c. *nations*
 - d. *house (temple)* when it refers to the house of the Lord.
 - e. *Jerusalem*
 - f. *Judah*

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DAY TWO

1. When you study any book of the Bible, it is always important to see where it fits in the historical time period. What are the main events that surround it? Who are the important people of the time? We covered the events leading up to Zechariah's ministry last week in our introductory lesson. Now I want you to take a good, long look at the timeline titled 'Rulers and Prophets of Zechariah' located on OWS 39.
 - a. What was the year mentioned in Zechariah 1:1? What year would that be on the timeline?
 - b. What are the years of Zechariah's ministry?
 - c. Who was the other prophet that ministered at the same time?
2. Read the following verses from the book of Haggai and note the timing of each one. This will be valuable information as you continue to study Zechariah.
 - a. 1:1
 - b. 1:14-15
 - c. 2:1
 - d. 2:10
 - e. 2:20
3. On the timeline titled "Rulers and Prophets of Zechariah," draw a line showing where Zechariah 1:1-6 fits into Haggai. Then draw another line showing where Zechariah 1:7 fits into Haggai's timeline.
4. You recorded what you learned about the Lord when reading Zechariah 1:1-6. You observed that the Lord was angry with their fathers and called them to return to Him so that He might return to them. They needed to turn away from their evil ways and deeds. But they didn't listen or give heed to His word brought to them by the prophets. So what did God do? Read the following passages to find out.

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- a. Read II Chronicles 36:11-21 carefully and record what the Lord did. What happened to the people, the house of the Lord (Solomon's temple), and to the walls and buildings of Jerusalem?
- b. Now read II Chronicles 36:22-23 - After the 70 years of captivity had been completed (fulfilled) what did Cyrus do, and why?
- c. Look again at the timeline and find Cyrus. Then drop down to the four notations of the Temple just below and record the following dates:
 - 1) the building of the temple started
 - 2) the temple work stopped
 - 3) the temple work resumed and how that compares to the timeline of Zechariah's ministry
 - 4) the temple was finished
- d. As you may have noticed when looking at the timeline, Zechariah's ministry overlaps the events recorded in Ezra, which tells about the work on the temple (referred to as the *house* or the *house of God*) and the people involved in that building project. Some of those people are also mentioned in the book of Zechariah.
 - 1) Ezra 3:8-10 (note the two men mentioned in verse 8)
 - 2) Ezra 4:24; 5:1-2 (Jeshua in Ezra and Joshua in Haggai and Zechariah are the same person)
 - 3) Ezra 6:15-16

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5. Read Haggai 1:1-15. This will help you better understand God's call and promise in Zechariah 1:3.
 - a. What was the excuse given by the people for not building the Lord's house?
 - b. Whose house were the people building?
 - c. Describe what their life was like. What was happening, and why? Was their life easy or difficult? Be thorough in your answer.
 - d. According to Haggai 1:12-15
 - 1) How did the people respond to Haggai's message?
 - 2) What was God's response?
 - 3) When did they return to work on the house of the Lord?
 - e. When was Zechariah 1:1-6 written in relation to Haggai 1? You've already compared their timing—use your notes and the timeline to answer.
 - f. How does Haggai 1 help you understand Zechariah 1:3? What does this reveal about the people's hearts, even though they had started rebuilding the temple?

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6. One of the reasons we study Scripture is so we can apply it to our lives, allowing it to transform and renew our minds so that we can walk in a manner pleasing to our Lord and Master. Think through what you have learned today and answer the following questions.
 - a. How important is obedience to the Lord? By the way, what is the definition of sin?
 - b. Who is to be the priority in our lives?
 - c. How do you measure up right now?
 - d. Is there anything that needs to change in your life? If so, what is your plan of action to change it?

DAY THREE

1. You should have noticed as you read through Zechariah there is a series of visions. These are things the Lord showed Zechariah so that he could share them with the people. They are messages designed to shake them up and restore their true focus—reverence for and obedience to the one true God. In this study, we will look at these visions one at a time and seek to understand the message to the people of Zechariah's day, what future events they may point to, and how they were meant to affect their lives as well as ours today.

Since you want to understand these visions as clearly as possible, you may want to try sketching the vision. If that feels intimidating, you can make a chart, list what you learn, or do something else that helps you “see” the vision. This will help you focus on each one. There are pages in your Observation Worksheets where you can do this work; you'll find “The Visions of Zechariah” on OWS 41-44.

Take time now to draw out the first vision in Zechariah 1:7-17 (or use whatever method you've chosen—chart, list, sketch)

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2. One of the best ways to see if you understand something is to verbalize it—say it out loud or explain it to someone else. With that in mind, look at this first vision in Zechariah 1:7-17 and write down the main points of the vision. Then verbalize them as if you were explaining the vision to someone else.
3. Now it is time to move on to the second vision in Zechariah 1:18-21. Sketch or write it out on the “The Visions of Zechariah” worksheets. Then practice verbalizing it, just as you did in step two above.
4. Look over what you have done over the last three days. Briefly summarize the information in the first chapter of Zechariah. Look at your “Zechariah at a Glance” chart on OWS 37. Last week you may have written a chapter theme for the first chapter. Decide whether you are satisfied with that theme or whether, after some time and study, you would like to change it.

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5. Time for a bit of reflection and application. Zechariah 1:10-11 talks about those who have been sent out to patrol the earth. What does that mean to you personally? Would it affect the way you live or the confidence you have when you face difficult situations? Would it affect the decisions that you make? Prayerfully think through how this applies to your life today. Jot down your insights.

DAY FOUR

1. It is time to move on to Zechariah chapter 2. I don't want to spoil your opportunity to discover things for yourself, but it can be a bit overwhelming to wade into deep water and feel like you're in over your head. This vision of Zechariah 1 focused on defense. Chapter 2 shifts from defense against past empires to the future glory of a kingdom yet to be fully revealed. The vision in chapter 2 sets the stage for chapters 3-11, culminating in a detailed explanation of the Lord's coming. What does that mean for you now? It means that, although it may seem confusing and difficult to process, you will see how it all ties together if you carefully observe each chapter. Thorough observation and time to reflect what you've observed will lead to accurate interpretation. Meditate on what you read. Ask God to reveal His truth, to open your mind to His Word, and to let it transform the way you think and the way you act. Are you ready to begin? Hold on—this is about to get exciting.

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2. Read and observe the text of Zechariah 2
 - a. Mark the key words or phrases that are on your Key Word Marking Card.
 - b. Watch for other key words or phrases in this chapter. If you notice a key, repeated word decide how to mark it and then mark it that way throughout the chapter.
3. *Zion* has been used four times up to this point—1:14, 17; 2:7, 10. If you haven't marked this as a key word yet, do that now, and add it to your Key Word Marking Card as well. In the space below, list what you learn about Zion in the first two chapters of Zechariah. Ask the 5W's and H. For example: Who is God concerned about? Who is connected with Jerusalem? What are they going to do? When is this going to happen? What will God do?
4. Read Zechariah 2:8-11. Mark every use of the phrase *sent me* regardless of whether or not it is capitalized. Who do you think the "me" represents in each of these verses?

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5. You are going to repeat the steps you took with chapter 1.
 - a. Record the vision of this chapter on “The Visions of Zechariah” by sketching or writing
 - b. Verbalize it by writing down the main ideas below and then talking it through like you are explaining it to someone else.
 - c. Check your theme on your “Zechariah at a Glance” chart in the OWS. After further study, do you want to change it?
6. Now it's time for some thought and reflection on what you have learned. What does this chapter mean to a Jew? How does it give you hope as a Gentile? Does this change your views of Israel, Jerusalem, and the Jewish people? Is there anything you have learned that can help you share the gospel as you answer the call to disciple the nations?

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DAY FIVE

1. Once again, let me stress the importance of prayer before you begin your study. Ask the Lord to help you understand the first two chapters of Zechariah. Ask for clarity in those areas that may still be out of focus.
2. Read through Zechariah 1 and 2 in your Bible. You'll be coming at the text with fresh eyes by reading it in a different format. If you have no aversion to marking in your Bible, transfer your markings from your Observation Worksheets to your Bible. If you don't want to do that, that's fine.
3. Now look at your sketches or charts on the Observation Worksheets where you recorded the first three visions of Zechariah. How do these visions relate to the historical setting of Zechariah? Do they relate to each other in any way?
4. Look at your verbalization exercises and try speaking aloud all three visions as though you were explaining them to someone.
5. If you have access to commentaries, you may see what they have to say about Zechariah 1 and 2. Don't read beyond those chapters. You can write any pertinent notes in the space below.

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