

Zechariah 1:7–17

Read Zechariah 1:7–11.

1. What does Zechariah see, and how is he helped to understand it?

Leader prompt: He sees a man on a red horse among myrtle trees in a ravine, with other horses behind him. Zechariah doesn't understand and asks. The interpreting angel helps, and the rider explains — this is a patrol sent through the earth. Note - we need revelation to understand God's work.

2. The patrol reports that “the whole world is at rest and in peace” (v11). Why would this be troubling news for God's people at that time?

Leader prompt: God's people are still struggling after exile — Jerusalem is in ruins, the temple not yet rebuilt. Meanwhile, the nations who oppressed them are comfortable and secure. The “peace” is morally wrong — justice has not been done.

3. Where is the man on the horse standing, and why might that detail matter (v8)?

Leader prompt: He is “among the myrtle trees in a ravine” — a low place. Myrtle can symbolise hope/blessing, but here it's in a hollow. The picture may be of God's people in a low, humbled, fragile state — and the figure is with them there.

4. Read Zechariah 1:12. What does the Angel of the LORD say, and what is surprising about who asks this question?

Leader prompt: “How long...?” — the cry of lament. What's striking is that it comes from the Angel of the LORD, not the people. The mediator voices the pain of the people before God.

5. What does this show us about the role of the Angel of the LORD in this passage?

Leader prompt: He stands among the people (in the ravine) and speaks to God on their behalf. He is both with them and representing them — a mediating figure. This anticipates the fuller revelation of a mediator in the NT.

6. How does this connect to what we are told about Jesus Christ in passages like Hebrews 7:23–27?

Leader prompt: Jesus is our great high priest who always lives to intercede for us. Like this figure, he stands with his people and speaks for them — but perfectly and permanently. He takes our “How long?” and brings it to the Father.

7. Read Zechariah 1:13. How does God respond to the intercession? What is emphasised about his words?

Leader prompt: God speaks “kind and comforting words.” This is deeply personal language — not distant or cold. It shows that God hears and responds with grace to the mediator's plea.

8. Read Zechariah 1:14–15. What does God say about his attitude toward Jerusalem and toward the nations?

Leader prompt: He is “very jealous” for Jerusalem — covenant love, not insecurity. He is angry with the nations who feel secure — they went too far. Their peace is not approval; judgment is still coming.

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9. Why is God's "jealousy" good news for his people?

Leader prompt: It means he is not indifferent. He is committed, protective, and will act. His love is active and exclusive — he will not abandon his people or allow injustice to stand forever.

10. Read Zechariah 1:16–17. What specific promises does God make, and how are they partially and ultimately fulfilled?

Leader prompt: He promises to return with mercy, rebuild the temple, restore prosperity. Partly fulfilled in the rebuilding of the temple (515 BC). Ultimately fulfilled in Christ (true temple) and finally in the new creation — complete restoration still to come.

Application

11. Where do you feel the tension of "the world at rest" while God's people struggle today? How does this passage help you respond?

Leader prompt: Draw out real-life parallels (injustice, unbelief seeming to prosper, personal suffering). The passage doesn't deny this — it reframes it: God sees, a mediator intercedes, and God will act. ALSO, try not to completely divorce the suffering in this life from our own sin - remember here the context is that Israel are struggling because they rebelled against God and were exiled. They are first called to repentance (1v6), before they are called to hope.

12. How should knowing that Christ intercedes for us shape the way we handle waiting and unanswered questions?

Leader prompt: We are not alone in the waiting. Our prayers are taken up and perfected by Christ. We can lament honestly, knowing we are heard.

13. What would it look like this week to live in light of God's jealous love and certain promises, rather than the apparent "peace" of the world?

Leader prompt: Trust over envy, perseverance in faith, commitment to Christ even when costly, hope anchored in God's future rather than present appearances.

Pray - Thank Jesus for his incarnation (entering our lowly place), his death and resurrection, and his present intercession for us His people.