

Study 8: Zechariah 14

Icebreaker

What's the best apocalyptic film of all time?

Where are we headed?

This is the last study in this series on Zechariah. We have seen the resolution of the problem of God's people's sin in the "pierced" shepherd. Now we get an apocalyptic vision to tie off the loose cords. It's startling imagery in parts, and not for the faint hearted, but it shows that God is still in control of history, and justice is coming for all the bad that is done in the world.

Prayer

Invite the group to pray with you and then read the passage together.

Observation and interpretation

Read Zech 14:1-15.

How does this kind of imagery of war then peace make you feel?

In chapter 14:1-15, how many times is "on that day" repeated? Is that day good news or bad news for Jerusalem?

Read Zech 14:16-21. What is the future for these other nations? Does God care about them?

Implications

Has this day already happened or is it still to come? Is it something to look forward to, or something to fear?

What makes someone an enemy of God's city?

How can you prepare for "that day"?

Recognising that this is apocalyptic imagery meant to strike us as severe, is it right for God to punish the nations of earth?

How can we love people who we know are opposed to God and therefore under his judgment?

Prayer to close

Pray for those who are still enemies of God in their hearts.

Theological and pastoral notes for leaders:

- The imagery in these passages is confronting – they are intended to shock us with an image of apocalyptic destruction for those opposed to God. We have moved beyond history into the “apocalyptic”, the end times when good will finally defeat evil, ushering in the Kingdom of God.
- In one sense, the things spoken of in “that day” have arrived Jesus, and in the destruction of Jerusalem (AD69). But the final “day” hasn’t happened yet (2Thes 2:2). We live now in an “in between time”, the “now” but “not yet”, the “last days” (Acts 2:17) before the ultimate “day of the Lord” (2Peter 3:10). The kingdom which was inaugurated (begun) by Jesus will finally be consummated (made complete) when Jesus returns.

Recommended Resources

* Barry Webb, *The Message of Zechariah (Bible Speaks Today series)* (Nottingham: IVP, 2003)

Other books consulted

George Athas, *Zechariah (Moore College OT4 Hebrew Elective Notes)*, 2012.

David Cook and Grant Thorp, *12 Books to Change your Life: Teaching the Minor Prophets* (SMBC, 2009)

Michael Stead, *Zechariah*, forthcoming.