



LOCKINGCASTLECHURCH

Life Group Notes – 3rd October 2021

Coming back to the heart: Coming back to blessing. Zechariah 1:1-6,16-17

Please visit the LCC website to listen to the talk or read the transcript if available.

Zechariah 1:1-6, 16-17 – A call to return to the Lord

1 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:

2 'The LORD was very angry with your ancestors. 3 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. 4 Do not be like your ancestors, 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. 5 Where are your ancestors now? And the prophets, do they live for ever? 6 But did not my words and my decrees, which I commanded my servants the prophets, overtake your ancestors?

'Then they repented and said, "The LORD Almighty has done to us what our ways and practices deserve, just as he determined to do."

...

[Vision of four horsemen sent to survey the state of the nations]

...

16 'Therefore this is what the LORD says: "I will return to Jerusalem with mercy, and there my house will be rebuilt. And the measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem," declares the LORD Almighty.

17 'Proclaim further: this is what the LORD Almighty says: "My towns will again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem."

Note this is the NIV2011 version of the text. It would be helpful to compare it with other translations.

Comment:

Zechariah worked alongside the prophet Haggai to encourage the people to turn back to God after their long exile and rather half-hearted efforts to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. The first 6 chapters of the book describe 7 prophetic visions that Zechariah dreamt one night in the 2nd year of King Darius' reign. The visions themselves are quite hard to understand but thankfully Zechariah provides divine commentary with each one. Chapter 1 starts off with a warning to pay attention to the Lord's words and decrees and then v7-15 describe the first vision of 4 horsemen sent to survey the state of the nation. Their leader reports that the whole world is at rest and peace. So the question is asked – is this the time for God's favour to once again rest on Jerusalem? And the answer comes: Yes! God will return to Jerusalem with mercy and it will prosper... as long as the people remember the opening challenge of the chapter: 'Return to me' declares the Lord Almighty, 'and I will return to you.' The Lord wants our hearts, not just our hands. Building the Kingdom is a partnership between God and his people who humbly seek him, turn to him for help and are willing to faithfully obey his instructions.

Questions:

- 1) Can you think of a time you were challenged by someone that resulted in a change in your thinking or direction? What made the difference?
- 2) What does true repentance look like and what is the result?
- 3) Verse 2 describes God's anger resulting in 70 long years of exile. In what ways do you think we experience God's anger at different levels today? Was Jesus ever angry?
- 4) Look up v7-15. What is the mood of this vision? What strikes you about the dialogue?
- 5) In light of this passage what sort of church is the Lord wanting us to become over the next year?