

Study 2: God and sin will not share a roof

Zechariah 5 to 6:8

Icebreaker

What's the strangest dream you can remember?

Where are we headed?

Last week we read the first two of a series of 8 visions at night. These visions are arranged with neat bookends:

- (1) the horses judge the nations (Zech 1:7-17)
- (2) the horns are removed (Zech 1:18-21)
- (3) Jerusalem reconstructed (Zech 2:1-10)

- (4) Joshua the high priest is given new clothes (Zech 3:1-10)
- (5) two Messiahs (Zech 4:1-14)

- (6) the flying scroll enters houses (Zech 5:1-4)
- (7) woman in a basket removed to Babylon (Zech 5:5-11)
- (8) four chariots judge the nations (Zech 6:1-8)

The first three visions were about God returning to Jerusalem. We're going to skip to the last three visions now, which are about sin departing from Jerusalem (when God arrives, sin must leave!)

Prayer

Invite the group to pray with you for God's help as you read the passage together.

Observation and interpretation

Imagine your group has been contracted to create the new children's storybook bible. Take one night vision each and draw it (it doesn't have to be an artistic masterpiece), then use your drawing to explain to the whole group what the meaning of the vision is.

- The flying scroll (5:1-4)
- The woman in the basket (5:5-11)
- The chariots (6:1-8)

Implications

These are heavy images. Is it possible for a Christian to fall under God's judgment and be destroyed because of sin?

Read 2 Corinthians 6:16-18.

We know that when God enters our lives, sin must exit stage left. But what types of sin and impurity are the hardest to eliminate?

Prayer to close

It might be appropriate to pray in confession as a group.

Theological and pastoral notes for leaders:

- The image of the woman in the basket might seem sexist. Keep in mind that in Jewish literature most figurative characters were female – including wisdom (Prov 4:6)
- We are not saved because of our good behaviour, because “while we were still sinners Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8) but equally “No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him” (1 John 3:6). In the Christian life we must rest on God’s promise that we have been declared righteous in advance of judgment day, but not fall into the trap of sin. A good tree produces good fruit (Luke 6:43); those who have been saved by grace will produce fruit in keeping with repentance (Luke 3:8).
- Pastorally speaking, you need to be aware of what each person needs to hear. The person struggling with sin, particularly a sin of addiction such as pornography or materialism, may be tempted to despair. You need to encourage them to persevere. They are forgiven. The person who is simply lax and has given up the fight needs to be woken up to the reality (Heb 10:26).