

Study 5: Zechariah 8

Icebreaker

If you had to leave Sydney for good, what city would you settle in (assume no visa or cost limitations)?

Where are we headed?

As progress on rebuilding the temple gets underway, people had asked Zechariah whether they should keep fasting. His answer to their question continues in chapter 8. Not only are they to build a temple fit for the Lord, they are to become a people fit for the Lord to dwell amongst.

Prayer

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

Observation and interpretation

Read Zechariah 8. What questions, comments or thoughts strike you?

What are God's promises to the inhabitants of Jerusalem?

What obligations are on the people of Jerusalem? Is it enough just to build the temple, or does God require more of them?

Why does God seem to favour this one tiny city over the whole world?
Doesn't God care about anyone else?

Implications

Read Luke 19:41-44. What has happened to these promises? Has God given up on Jerusalem?

As Christians, should we support the Jewish inhabitants of Israel in their bid to secure Jerusalem against surrounding nations?

Read Hebrews 12:22-24. The New Testament claims to have found the fulfilment of the entire Old Testament in the Messiah Jesus. What does it mean for us to be citizens of this heavenly Jerusalem? What are the equivalents of temple building (v9) and truth and peace loving (v19) for us?

Prayer to close

Pray for the inhabitants of current day Jerusalem, that they might embrace their Messiah Jesus.

Pray that we can live out our calling as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Theological and pastoral notes for leaders:

- Hebrews 12:22-24 makes clear that the increasingly huge promises about Jerusalem are fulfilled in a heavenly Jerusalem of which we are now citizens.
- From 18:18-23 on we start to hear about “those days” – an undefined future time in which amazing promises will come to fruition. Human sin keeps getting in the way (it seems) of the promised blessings unfolding in normal history, meaning that nothing short of divine intervention in history can bring the kingdom about. The stage is set for Jesus.