

## Zechariah 1:7-21 – Gracious and Comforting Words

God's first message through Zechariah to the people of Judah was an exhortation to "return to me". The exhortation was followed by a promise. If the people returned to God then God would return to them. God, through the prophecy of Haggai and the work of the Spirit, had already got the people working on the temple again. After the initial exhortation to repent, God spoke encouraging words to the people through Zechariah. Things would get better.

### **Read Zechariah 1:7-17.**

This section of verses contains the first of eight visions. When did this vision occur? Note that the date is exactly 5 months from the day the people resumed work on the second temple. The month Shebat falls approximately between mid-January to mid-February. (1:7-8)

In verse 8, what did Zechariah see?. One commentator said that the three types of horses were all different types of chestnut horses. There is much discussion about the different colors of the horses. There are different approaches to interpreting a vision. Some people say that every detail is important. Others say that some details are given to set the scene or mood and do not directly affect the interpretation. If we look at verses 7-17, we find that no explanation is given for the colors. I agree with the commentators who believe it is not profitable to find specific meaning for each horse color. If you believe each color is important to the interpretation, what is the meaning of each of the colors? (1:8)

In verse 9, what was Zechariah's question in response to what he had just seen? (1:9)

In verses 9-10, what was the answer to Zechariah's question? One thing that is a bit confusing is whether or not the rider on the horse is also the man standing among the myrtle trees, who is also the angel who answers Zechariah, who is also called the angel of Yahweh. Some commentators understand all these references to be the same angel or person. Others distinguish between some or all of the references. Which do you think is the correct interpretation? (1:9-10)

The next question we are confronted with is whether or not there are implied riders on the other horses or whether or not the horses talk. Do you think there are implied riders on the horses or do you think that the horses talk? What was the report from those who patrolled the earth? (1:11)

Usually it is good when the world is at rest. How was this message received? Why did the angel of Yahweh think this was bad news? What is the reference to 70 years? See Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10. Sometimes in the Old Testament the “angel of Yahweh” is the pre-incarnate Christ. Do you think this person is the pre-incarnate Christ? Why or why not? (1:12)

God’s response to the angel of Yahweh was characterized as gracious and comforting words. What was Zechariah to declare concerning Jerusalem and Zion? What was Zechariah to declare about the nations at ease? (1:13-15)

In verse 16, what three things did God declare? In verse 17, the word “again” occurred 4 times. What three things were to happen “again”? (1:16-17)

### **Read Zechariah 1:18-21.**

This section of verses contains the second vision. In verse 18, what did Zechariah see? What kind of horns do you think these were? Were they musical horns, horns of the altar, animal horns, or a fighting implement (1 Kings 22:11)? (1:18)

Zechariah asked the question we probably all would ask, “what are these?” What did the angel say the horns represented? It is always very helpful when an explanation is provided for a prophecy. The angel did not give details on each individual horn but talked about them as a group. Is there a meaning for each separate horn? (1:19)

In verse 20, what did Yahweh show Zechariah? The ESV translation has the word “craftsmen”. Other translations have “carpenters”, “smiths” / “blacksmiths” / “metal workers”, “skilled workers”. (1:20)

In verse 21, the horns were further described. What additional information was provided about the four horns? What was the mission of the craftsmen? How would a craftsmen fit in with the situation of the people at this time? Some understand the craftsmen to be the Persians because they conquered Babylon. Others see the craftsmen as representing those working on rebuilding the temple. Once the temple is rebuilt, God will once again live among his people and judge the enemies of Judah. See Zechariah 2:5, 9, 11. (1:21)