

Good News in Zechariah 8

Verses	What does the Lord say?	Why is that good news?
1-2	<i>The Lord is jealous for Zion</i>	<i>He will protect them, provide for them</i>
3	<i>The Lord will live in Jerusalem</i>	<i>They will have His presence; Jerusalem will be a place of truth and holiness</i>
4-5	<i>Old people will feel safe outdoors; children will play in the streets</i>	<i>It will be a place of safety and security</i>
6	<i>What appears marvelous to people is easy for God to do</i>	<i>Our God can do anything</i>
7-8	<i>The Lord will save His people from enemy countries</i>	<i>The people can return safely to Jerusalem without fear of attack</i>
9-13	<i>The seed will grow, the vine will yield, the ground will produce, the heavens will drop dew</i>	<i>It will be a time of prosperity</i>
14-17	<i>Now the Lord has determined to do good to Jerusalem and Judah</i>	<i>The captivity was God's discipline upon them; now that the Lord has decided to bless them they no longer have to fear something like that happening</i>
18-19	<i>The fasts will become joyful festivals</i>	<i>What had been a time for mourning will now be a time for rejoicing</i>
20-22	<i>Many people and nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord</i>	<i>The city will be a vibrant place and a destination for travelers from all around the world</i>
23	<i>Gentiles will want to be with Jews because they have heard that God is with them</i>	<i>The Jewish people would become popular and well-respected because of their relationship to the Lord</i>



Faith at Home

What are some of the best things about knowing the Lord? How does that relationship impact your family's day-to-day life?

Teacher's Toolbox

*Getting your class into God's Word
and God's Word into your class*

ExcitingBibleStudy.com

Bible Series

Zechariah 8-9

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HOW TO USE TEACHER'S TOOLBOX: Make a four-page folded teacher's leaflet from the first two sheets by printing two-sided (or by putting the blank sides together). The other two sheets are for duplicating, displaying, distributing, or otherwise using as called for in the lesson plan.



Faith at Home – A specific application of today's Bible passage to family life, to be used for individual reflection, family discussion, or class activity.



Getting Started

Prophet signs

- Before class, use large block letters to make two signs:
THE END IS NEAR
and
HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN
- When we think of prophets, we often think of doomsday declarations of God's wrath being poured out upon mankind's wickedness. Cartoons often depict such prophets of doom holding a sign like this one (hold up the sign that says THE END IS NEAR).
- But prophets of God also gave people hope for the future. In today's study we are going to focus on some hopeful words from the prophet Zechariah. If he were a cartoon prophet, the sign he held might say something like this (hold up the sign that says HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN).

● **Zechariah was born in Babylon during the Israelites' captivity there. He was among those who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel. When the rebuilding of the temple came to a standstill, Zechariah and another prophet, Haggai, encouraged the people to get back to work. Why should they work so hard to rebuild the temple when all around them were enemy nations threatening to overtake them again? Zechariah answers that question in today's study. It's as though he was saying, "It's a new day in Jerusalem. Things are going to be different now. You've had a tough 70 years in Babylon, but you are back home now and the Lord is planning to bless you and protect you and use you. Get busy and finish that temple because happy days are here again."**

Exploring God's Word

Finding the pattern in the book

- Have learners find and read aloud Zechariah 1:1.
- **Zechariah's name means "Yahweh Remembers." The people might feel as though Yahweh had forgotten them, but Zechariah, through his name and through his message, assured them that Yahweh remembered them and had great plans for them.**
- **The word of the Lord came to Zechariah. We find that statement or something like it repeated frequently in the book. These are not Zechariah's words, his thoughts, his imaginings. These are the words of God communicated through God's prophet.**
- **In chapter 8 we see Zechariah begin to talk about the word of the Lord Almighty, his favorite**

title for God, used about 50 times in his book. In Zechariah 8:1, he says, "the word of the Lord Almighty came to me. This is what the Lord Almighty says." Throughout this chapter we will see Zechariah telling us "what the Lord (Almighty) says." Skim the chapter and see how many times you see that phrase. (Wait while learners look.)

Finding what the Lord says

- Give each person a pencil and a copy of the chart on page 4, but without the information in italics (duplicate Item 1).
- Have them work in groups of two or three to fill in the chart.
- Allow ten minutes. Then lead the class to pool their observations.

Comparing Old Testament and New Testament passages

- **Good times are coming, Zechariah says, but then he hints at**

something even better that will happen at some future point of history. In Zechariah 9:9-12 he talks about the coming of Zion's King, the Messiah. When that happens, there will be peace for all nations.

- Have someone read the passage aloud.
- **Zechariah is prophesying the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem just before He was crucified.**
- Have someone read aloud Matthew 21:1-11.
- Ask the class to compare and contrast the passages.
- **Zechariah's prophecy had a partial fulfillment when Jesus entered Jerusalem on that day. But the total fulfillment of His prophecy awaits the return of Christ someday. That's when there will be peace for all nations.**

Making It Personal

What difference does it make?

- Give each person a pencil and a copy of the following (duplicate Item 2).

Wrapping It Up

- **God is just and must judge sin. But He gets no pleasure from pouring out His wrath upon people. What He wants to do is bless us. And that is what He does whenever we allow Him to.**
- Call on someone to lead the class in prayer.

What Difference Does It Make?

Through Zechariah, God told His people some specific ways He was going to bless them. Those blessings, Zechariah suggested, ought to make a difference in how the people lived their lives.

The same is true of God's blessings upon us. How do each of these blessings, inferred from Zechariah 8, affect the way you live your life?

8:1 God passionately loves me
8:2 God is present with me
8:4-5 God keeps me safe
8:6 God can do anything
8:7-8 God protects me from those who want to hurt me
8:9-13 God provides for me
8:14-16 God does good to me
8:18-19 God turns my sadness into joy
8:20-23 The God I serve is the God that everybody needs

- Allow three minutes. Then let volunteers share insights from the activity.

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