

LIFE GROUP APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Zechariah Series

These questions are for the **January 7, 2023** message, "The Heavy Burden." Please read the sermon passage (Zechariah 12:1-5) together out loud.

Passage Outline

AS WE ANTICIPATE THE RETURN OF THE LORD, NOTE . . .

1. The burden to be explained. (1)
 - a. The word "oracle," is a "heavy burden." This is a heavy message for God's people.
 - b. The first oracle (Zech 9:1) describes Jesus' first coming. (Zech 9-11)
 - c. The second oracle (Zech 12:1) describes Jesus' Second Coming. (Zech 12-14)
 - d. Your starting point will shape your ending point. Zechariah starts with creation.
 - i. The LORD stretched out the heavens.
 - ii. The LORD founded the earth.
 - iii. The LORD formed the spirit of man within him.
2. The siege to be expected. (2)
 - a. God will bring about significant events for his own glory.
 - i. A war, centered near Jerusalem, should be expected.
 - ii. God will make Jerusalem "a cup" (bowl) of staggering (drunkenness/judgment).
 - b. We have seen "installments" throughout history, but the final war will be the greatest.
3. The inhabitants to be strengthened. (3-5)
 - a. Many nations will gather to oppose, but all who attack Jerusalem will "hurt themselves."
 - b. In that day, the LORD will supernaturally protect and defend ethnic Israel.
 - c. The world and the clans of Judah will see/realize that the LORD has intervened for them.

Life Group Discussion Questions

1. Based on #1 (and #3), above: Christians are not merely optimists, and we do not have a fatalistic "martyr syndrome." We know that great turmoil, with great suffering will come, and that the LORD will both protect and defend, and deliver his people through the affliction. Discuss this.
2. Based on #1, above: Our starting point to face a great war with widespread affliction is the LORD, who created all things. In what way is the God who "stretched out the heavens," "founded the earth" and "formed the spirit of man within him" comforting to you (even when you face suffering and death)?
3. Based on #2, above: We continue to see conflict in Jerusalem in our lifetime. We do not know when the final installment (this "siege") will occur, but we should think about it and prepare for it. Zechariah calls us not to look away and act like it not happening, but to "behold." How can we have appropriate expectations and be ready, without being discouraged or terrified?
4. Based on #3, above: We heard the story of Shackleton, whose men got ready to board the rescue ship every morning. What is required of you to be "ready" when the Lord returns? (Mark 13:5-13)