

Study Hints for Thinking Further
International Bible Lessons

Zechariah 4:1-14

Sunday, June 22, 2014

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Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be the answers to the discussion questions. These indeed are “hints” a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class.

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. How did Haggai and Zechariah receive their revelations from the LORD? How do most Christians receive their revelations from the LORD today?

The Bible does not tell us how Haggai received his revelation from the LORD. God is not mechanical, but personal, and God works with people in a variety of ways. We know that God sent an angel to speak to Zechariah. Most Christians receive their revelations from the LORD from reading the Bible with the Holy Spirit helping them understand and apply what the Bible teaches. As the Word of God written, the Bible is the absolute objective standard by which we can evaluate whether or not a revelation is from the LORD or not.

2. When did the angel tell Zechariah the meaning of the candlestick and the two olive trees? What might we learn from his perfect timing?

After Zechariah asked him for their meaning and after the angel had told him what the LORD had sent him to tell Zechariah, the angel began to answer Zechariah’s questions. The angel spoke to Zechariah according to God’s priorities. Learning God’s Word is more important than the interpretation of dreams and visions. Obedience to God’s Word is more important than mere intellectual interests. If we truly want to learn more truths from God, we may need to wait until we have learned other truths first; then, we can learn new truths in the order in which God knows is best. Some truths can only be understood after we have learned other truths first. For example, most people learn addition in mathematics before they learn multiplication tables and how to do division.

3. If God wants us to do something in obedience to Him and we know that we do not have the resources to do what He wants us to do, what verse from Zechariah can encourage us to begin obeying God with what we have?

Zechariah 4:6 – “He said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.”

4. Compare God's word to Zerubbabel through Zechariah in Zechariah 4:7 and Jesus' word to His disciples in Matthew 17:20. What did God do to Zerubbabel and Jesus do to His disciples mean by a mountain? How does Zerubbabel's success in moving the mountain help you understand the meaning of what Jesus told His disciples?

Sometimes a mountain is physical, as a pile of rubble from a destroyed temple. Sometimes a mountain is a huge problem. Sometimes a mountain is the work of an enemy; such as a demon or other opponents of God. Sometimes a mountain is our burden of unconfessed and unforgiven sins or slavery to bad habits. It took Zerubbabel almost 5 years to clear away the mountain of rubble, smooth the building site, and rebuild the temple. Some mountains will take longer than we would like to move. Some mountains cannot be moved by our power or might alone, but God's Spirit will help us and Jesus has said that some things can only be done after prayer and fasting.

5. How would the people know that God had sent Zechariah to Zerubbabel to tell him to rebuild the temple?

When the temple was completed by God's Spirit working through them in spite of the fact that they were a small remnant of poor, weak people.

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