



Study Guide: Zechariah – Chapter 5

Study Guide: Zechariah – Chapter 5

This study guide provides an educational overview of Zechariah Chapter 5 using a verse-by-verse structure, theological context, and application-oriented insights grounded in Scripture.

Introduction

Zechariah Chapter 5 presents two vivid visions that continue the prophetic message of judgment and restoration found throughout the book. This chapter contributes a striking portrayal of sin's consequences and God's active role in purging iniquity from the land. Readers should watch for symbolic imagery that reveals spiritual realities, particularly the themes of divine judgment against theft, falsehood, and wickedness. The chapter's visions emphasize God's commitment to holiness and the removal of sin from the community, setting the stage for future restoration.

Context

Zechariah's prophecies come during the post-exilic period when the Jewish people were rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple after their return from Babylonian captivity. The immediate literary context includes a series of night visions given to Zechariah that reveal God's plans for Jerusalem's purification and restoration. The covenant framework recalls God's promises to Israel and the necessity of covenant faithfulness. Zechariah, as the prophet, serves as God's messenger, interpreting these visions to encourage the people toward holiness and warn against sin. The visions in chapter 5 follow earlier ones depicting God's judgment and protection, reinforcing the theme of divine intervention in the community's spiritual condition.

Outline

The chapter can be divided into two main sections based on the two visions presented. The first section, verses 1–4, describes a vision of a flying scroll that symbolizes the curse against theft and falsehood. This vision highlights the legal and moral standards God demands. The second section, verses 5–11, presents a vision of a woman in a basket, representing wickedness being removed from the land. This section emphasizes the purging of sin and the restoration of holiness. Together, these visions form a coherent



message about God's judgment on sin and His desire to cleanse His people.

Verse-by-Verse Study

Verses 1-3: Zechariah sees a flying scroll measuring twenty cubits by ten cubits, which is a large and imposing object. This scroll represents the curse of the law, specifically targeting those who steal and swear falsely. The size and flight of the scroll symbolize the inescapable reach of God's judgment against these sins.

Verse 4: The angel explains that the scroll's curse will enter the houses of thieves and liars, consuming them along with their possessions. This shows the comprehensive nature of divine judgment, affecting not only the sinner but also the fruits of their wrongdoing.

Verses 5-7: The second vision introduces a basket, or ephah, with a lead cover, which Zechariah is asked to observe. Inside is a woman symbolizing wickedness. The lead cover suggests containment and judgment, preventing the spread of evil.

Verses 8-11: Two women with wings like storks lift the basket and carry the woman away to the land of Shinar, a place associated with exile and judgment. This act symbolizes the removal of wickedness from the land of Israel, highlighting God's cleansing work. The chapter closes with the basket being set down in Shinar, indicating that sin is being taken away from God's people.

Key Themes

One key theme is the inevitability and thoroughness of divine judgment against sin. The flying scroll and the removal of wickedness demonstrate that God's law is not merely advisory but enforces consequences for disobedience. Another theme is the symbolic representation of sin as a woman, emphasizing the personal and pervasive nature of iniquity that must be removed for restoration. Additionally, the chapter highlights God's sovereignty in purging evil and His desire to restore holiness among His people. The visions also suggest that judgment is both immediate and ongoing, with sin being actively removed rather than passively ignored.

Cross-References

The flying scroll in Zechariah 5:1-4 echoes the curses pronounced in Deuteronomy 27-28, where disobedience to the law brings specific consequences. This connection clarifies the



scroll's role as a symbol of covenantal judgment. The vision of the woman in the basket parallels the removal of wickedness found in Jeremiah 51, where Babylon (associated with Shinar) is a place of exile and judgment, reinforcing the theme of sin's removal. Additionally, Revelation 18's depiction of Babylon's fall resonates with the idea of wickedness being carried away and judged. These cross-references help illuminate the chapter's emphasis on God's justice and the purging of evil from His people.

Application

Modern disciples can learn from Zechariah 5 the seriousness with which God views sin, especially dishonesty and theft, and the certainty of divine judgment. This calls believers to examine their own lives for hidden or overt sin and to pursue integrity and truthfulness. The vision of wickedness being removed encourages the church to foster holiness by confronting sin and supporting restoration. It reminds Christians that God is actively working to cleanse His people, inviting participation in His redemptive mission. Rather than living in complacency, believers are urged to embrace God's standards and trust His sovereign judgment as a means of spiritual renewal.

Summary

Zechariah Chapter 5 presents two powerful visions that underscore God's judgment against sin and His commitment to purify His people. The flying scroll symbolizes the curse against theft and falsehood, while the woman in the basket represents the removal of wickedness from the land. Together, these visions reveal a God who is actively engaged in enforcing His covenant standards and cleansing the community for restoration. This chapter challenges believers to recognize the seriousness of sin and to embrace God's purifying work in their lives and communities.