



I have hope and a greater sense of anticipation about what God is doing in the earth and the opportunities before us than at any time in my life. Now, that's being met by more expressions of evil and darkness than I have ever seen before. But I intend to be a prisoner of hope. So, how do we understand the landscape around us? Our world is changing rapidly and dramatically—what exactly are our greatest challenges? Where are we really looking for solutions? What is the foundation of any optimism you may be holding? God is our only solution, and if His people will turn to Him *in desperation*, humility, and repentance, we will experience His power and the catalyst for the change we need.

*Return to your fortress, **O prisoners of hope**; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you.*
Zechariah 9:12 (NIV84*)

I. THE WORD OF THE PROPHETS: PRODIGAL TO PROSPERITY

Zechariah 1:1–6¹ *In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berekiah, the son of Iddo:*² *“The LORD was very angry with your forefathers.”*³ *Therefore tell the people: This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘**Return to me, declares the LORD Almighty, and I will return to you,**’ says the LORD Almighty.*⁴ *Do not be like your forefathers, to whom the earlier prophets proclaimed: This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Turn from your evil ways and your evil practices.’ But they would not listen or pay attention to me, declares the LORD.*⁵ *Where are your forefathers now? And the prophets, do they live forever?*⁶ *But did not my words and my decrees, which I commanded my servants the prophets, overtake your forefathers? ‘**Then they repented** and said, ‘The LORD Almighty has done to us what our ways and practices deserve, just as he determined to do.’ ”*

Zechariah 1:17 *“Proclaim further: This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘My towns will again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem.’ ”*

Zechariah 8:15–17¹⁵ *“so now I have determined to do good again to Jerusalem and Judah. Do not be afraid.”*¹⁶ *These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts; ¹⁷ do not plot evil against your neighbor, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this,” declares the LORD.*

Malachi 3:6–7⁶ *“I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.”*⁷ *Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. **Return to me, and I will return to you,**” says the LORD Almighty.*

1. In what ways did you see God move in your life, community, and nation in the past year?
2. Where do you struggle with letting go of the past and trusting the Lord for your future?
3. What are some new and intentional ways you can follow the Lord this year?

II. ACCEPTING THE VISION

Proverbs 29:18 *Where there is no vision/revelation, the people are unrestrained (perish), But happy is he who keeps the law.*

Habakkuk 2:1–3¹ *I will stand on my guard post And station myself on the rampart; And I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me, And how I may reply when I am reproved.*² *Then the LORD answered me and said, “**Record the vision And inscribe it on tablets, That the one who reads it may run.**”*³ *“For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay.*

Abram’s Vision

Genesis 12:1–5¹ *The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.”*² *I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and*

you will be a blessing.³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”⁴ So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran.⁵ He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

John 8:56–59⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; **he saw it and was glad.**⁵⁷ “You are not yet fifty years old,” the Jews said to him, “and you have seen Abraham!”⁵⁸ “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”⁵⁹ At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

Galatians 3:8 (NASB95*) The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, **preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham**, saying, “ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU.”

III. WHAT CAN WE DO? — RETURN

Acts 2:36–39³⁶ “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, **“Brothers, what shall we do?”**

³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

4. How does your spiritual awareness affect your ability to respond to the challenges you face?
5. When was a time in your life that you made a conscious decision to turn away from something (i.e. thinking, behavior) you knew was wrong and go in a different direction?
6. How has trusting the Lord led to greater revelation in your life?

PRAYERS

Proclamation

Psalm 141:8–10⁸ But my eyes are fixed on you, O Sovereign LORD; in you I take refuge—do not give me over to death.

⁹ Keep me from the snares they have laid for me, from the traps set by evildoers.

¹⁰ Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I pass by in safety.

Guide To Refreshing

Psalm 143:5–6⁵ I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done.

⁶ I spread out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.

Prayer For Families

Psalm 144:12–15 (NASB95*)¹² Let our sons in their youth be as grown-up plants, And our daughters as corner pillars fashioned as for a palace;¹³ Let our garners be full, furnishing every kind of produce, And our flocks bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our fields;¹⁴ Let our cattle bear Without mishap and without loss, Let there be no outcry in our streets!¹⁵ How blessed are the people who are so situated; How blessed are the people whose God is the LORD!

Reminder RE: Our Point Of Trust

Psalm 146:3–10³ **Do not put your trust in princes**, in mortal men, who cannot save.

⁴ When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing.

⁵ **Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God,**

⁶ the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them— the LORD, who remains faithful forever.

⁷ He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free,

⁸ the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous.

⁹ The LORD watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

¹⁰ The LORD reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the LORD.