



2019 YEAR OF SCRIPTURE
Monthly Devotions
September 2019

Author: Pastor Laura Strietelmeier

Prophecy: A Companion Bible Study for Ezekiel 9 – Zechariah 14

1. ASK the group....

What are some words or ideas that come to mind when you hear the word PROPHET? (Space below for answers and ideas)

LISTEN to this definition of prophet: "One who speaks on behalf of God."

Throughout the Bible, God had many things to say to the people of Israel, and often, God used prophets as people through whom to say those things. Prophets were not "fortune tellers" getting messages from beyond, nor were they magicians doing tricks. They were people who were listening for what God had to say. Sometimes, they weren't very excited about it. It's hard to stand out in the crowd and say things others may not want to hear. It was lonely being a prophet, and sometimes dangerous – if the king didn't like your words!

2. THINK about people who speak on behalf of others (examples...managers convey company plans, messages, etc. to employees that they receive from upper management; parents speak on behalf of infants before they can communicate with words; local representatives speak on our community's behalf when we send them to Congress, etc.)

3. ASK the group...Why is it important to have people who speak on behalf of others?

4. LISTEN to this information about prophets: Throughout the Bible, most prophets receive messages from God through visions and dreams. Sometimes they relay the messages through spoken or written words. One example of this is the prophet **Ezekiel**, who told people a vision he had about a valley of dry bones. In his vision, God used Ezekiel to call out to the bones, and they came together into human form, grew flesh and, with the winds of the world blown into their nostrils, began to breathe again. This story represented God's plan to revive the people of Israel, who had been defeated by another country and taken away from their homes. Sometimes prophets relay the messages through actions, called "sign acts." One example of this is the book of **Hosea** – in which Hosea marries a woman who has been a prostitute, symbolizing God's all-forgiving love for Israel. Sometimes prophets speak of the future (as Ezekiel does), and other times they speak about the present, pointing out what God wants people to do in the here and now. One example of this is Amos, who lived at a time when there was great wealth in Israel, but also great poverty, and the wealthy were taking



advantage of the poor. Amos warned that God's judgment for this behavior was coming.

5. READ the passages (divide into groups, each read one passage). For each passage, the small group will
 - A. Ezekiel 37:1-14.
 - B. Hosea 1:1-3 and 3:1-5
 - C. Amos 4:1-3 and 5:21-24.
6. SHARE what you read in the passages. What is the problem in the passage? What is God's solution or promise for the people?
7. ASK the group...who are our prophets today? Who speaks on behalf of God for our communities, our world? How can YOU be a prophet for those around you?
8. PRAY together...Thank you, God, for speaking to us in ancient times and today. Teach us to listen for your messages and to share them boldly in your world. Amen.

