



# MONDAY 25 APRIL 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

**Read: Zechariah 1:1-2 & Ezra 4:1 – 5:1**

## **Plug In...**

V.1 plugs us into the background scene for Zechariah. Israel has completed their exile in Babylon. The current Persians rulers have allowed Israel to go back to the region of Jerusalem to rebuild temple and city. Ezra shows the trigger for Zechariah to speak was when the Jews put their tools down (Ezra 4:1 – 5:1).

[NB: At The Lakes, we've opted to slow the pace for the first week of Zechariah to really absorb the setup the book itself provides in the first six verses. After that, we'll strike a faster pace. A suggestion coming in our weekend email is to try to read/listen to slabs of the book to gain an overall feel. The book is colourful, vivid, and a little bizarre. However, the writing is such to capture your imagination and give your powerful impressions. Reading bigger chunks will really help catch this.]

## **Chew It Over...**

Place yourself in the shoes of those Jews in Jerusalem. What anxieties would appear in your heart? What kind of questions would emerge? Given this background, what does the phrase “The word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah” (Zech. 1:1) say about God?

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Thank God that He is never silent. Thank God that He kindly keeps coming to us to give direction and answers when we're in turbulence, asking questions, are lost.



The Lakes

TUESDAY 26 APRIL 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

Read: Zechariah 1:1-2 & Haggai 1 – 2:3

### **Plug In...**

This quick look at Zechariah's contemporary, the prophet Haggai, gives us a window into how the people are feeling when Zechariah came to them with God's message. Observing the dates closely we see that Zechariah shares his word from the LORD shortly after Haggai.

### **Chew It Over...**

In addition to the anxiety of outside threat (Ezra 4), what else was going on for the people back in Jerusalem? Do you find a similar correlation: outside pressures flow through to change up your internal thinking about God and your responses? Identify where this may be happening in your life.

### **Prayer Suggestion**

Ask for God's blessing as we set out to study His word from Zechariah; that we might take to heart His words of comfort when disheartened or discouraged; that we will hear His words addressed to us when He kindly corrects our path from sin.





The Lakes

WEDNESDAY 27 APRIL 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

Read: Zechariah 1:1-6 & Luke 19:1-9

### **Plug In...**

With a quick skim through Zechariah, we will see lots of bizarre visions, imagery, and symbols. It can easily become lots of details to be lost in. Nevertheless, these first six verses frame up and give us the lens by which to view everything in Zechariah through.

### **Chew It Over...**

What is that lens? What from these six verses is clear that God will be doing through all the messages that will follow?

### **Prayer Suggestion**

Praise God that His word to us is 'good news'. Thank God for the good news that salvation and safety can be found in repenting and coming back to God. Thank Jesus for taking the initiative to come find us and call us to repentance.



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THURSDAY 28 APRIL 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

Read: Zechariah 1:1-6 & Joshua 5:13 – 6:5

### **Plug In...**

Here, God is referred to as the 'LORD Almighty' five times. Literally, which some English translations provide, it is the "LORD of hosts". The word 'hosts' in Hebrew thought means armies. It can refer to God's army of angels or His army through Israel. Either way, with it belonging to the LORD there is a connection between the heavenly army and Israel's army which is made clear by Joshua 5:13 – 6:5.

### **Chew It Over...**

What vivid significance would be held by the people in Zechariah's day hearing God describe Himself in this way? Think about world contexts where Christians find comfort in this name of God?

### **Prayer Suggestion**

Acknowledge God for who He has revealed Himself to be. God has given this name to Jesus, bow and confess that to him.



The Lakes

FRIDAY 29 APRIL 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

Read: Zechariah 1:4-6 & Romans 5:1-5

### **Plug In...**

V.5 – “Where are your ancestors now? And the prophets, do they live forever?” Such a powerful rhetorical question. The audience hearing this have just come back from exile and seem to be in jeopardy of being sent off again. People who have been given a fresh start, with the recent memory of the pain, theoretically should not have to be warned any further.

### **Chew It Over...**

What is it about human nature that we have to learn the same lessons over and over? Observing this cyclical pattern within Israel should make recognise something about who we are – what is that?

### **Prayer Suggestion**

Thank God, for although He reasons with us, gives us all the facts, provides motivating experiences, and is persuasive through His love, that He goes even deeper with the New Covenant. Praise Him for complete forgiveness and that His Spirit resides in our hearts; thank Him for going deep in reconstructing our hearts so that they hold fast to God and will not turn away from Him.



The Lakes

# WEEKEND 30 APRIL to 01 MAY 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

## Read: Zechariah 1-4

### **Plug In...**

The opening warning in Zechariah is to a people fresh back from exile: 'you've got a fresh start, now don't stuff it up!' They are reminded of their ancestor's outcome in the past. This is a stark warning that these people are poised to break the covenant with God again. The New Testament teaches us that the new thing Jesus did was to provide a new covenant. A covenant where if Jesus dwells with us it is impossible to break. All conditions and obedience are already fulfilled by Jesus.

At the very start of Zechariah we have been pointed to humanity's need for such a new covenant. Given that reality, it is significant that in the 'Passion Narratives' (sections of the Gospels narrating Jesus' last supper, trial, execution and death) Zechariah is quoted many times (e.g., Matthew 26:31; John 12:12-15; John 19:37). Zechariah was aware of the need for a new covenant, and the Gospel writers are seeing this 'needed' new covenant appear with the Lord Jesus' death and resurrection (e.g., Luke 19:20). Anthony Petterson says, "it seems Zechariah was the script Jesus followed as he went to Jerusalem".

This is a striking connection the New Testament Gospel writers make with Zechariah, for as we will see Zechariah contains some strange and vivid visions. This kind of writing style in Zechariah is designed to give you impressions that draw you in. The best way to

read it initially is to not drill down on details, but read large chunks (preferable in one sitting) to gain an overall impression; picking up themes as they naturally jump out. Set aside time this weekend to aim to read the first four chapters in one sitting.

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Thank you Jesus that you have fulfilled all the obligations of the covenant God has with humanity. Please teach us more deeply through Zechariah about who you are, what is wrong with us, and how you have fixed it for us through the new covenant.