



# MONDAY 02 MAY 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

Read: Zechariah 1:7-17

## **Plug In...**

When the Jews returned to the Land in 539<sub>B.C.</sub> – at which time Zechariah’s prophecies came (approx. 520<sub>B.C.</sub>) – their little plot of land was very small, cramped, and somewhat already occupied. They were but a dot on the map of the massive world empire of Persia (Darius was emperor).

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

What view of God’s abilities and position does this vision give? Compare that view with how you honestly find yourself feeling about Christianity’s place on the world stage? Ask personally what makes you nervous about identifying as Christianity in the big wide world? How should this vision help us understand Jesus’ words promise: “I am with you until the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20)?

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Acknowledge to God you are small and weak. Ask for His sovereign strength to protect you and to make more vivid that Jesus is truly with you throughout your life.



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TUESDAY 03 MAY 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

## Read: Zechariah 1:12-17

### Plug In...

The implication from the report that the whole earth is at rest (v.11) is that this fact somehow means Jerusalem/Judah is not at rest (v.12). This mirrors a reality in this world: the wicked are prospering and are at peace, but the righteous often get pushed under (*cf.* Psalm 73).

The Angel of the LORD asks “how long?” (v.12) and the LORD replies with comforting words (vv.13-17).

### Chew It Over...

For the people of Zechariah’s day, what evidences does the LORD point them towards to show that He’s with them? Look at the pattern that emerged – God says He has returned but has said He is yet to return (v.3) and that things in the future are yet to happen (v.16). How can you explain this same pattern emerges in the gospel story? While we wait for Jesus to return, what evidences in your life can you point to that show the Lord Jesus has turned up?

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Pray for Jesus' return – “come Lord Jesus, come!” Thank God for the Holy Spirit who is with us now; pray for perseverance until Jesus' returns.



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WEDNESDAY 04 MAY 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

## Read: Zechariah 1:16 & Nehemiah 9

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

The response God gives to the Angel of the LORD's question "how long?" taps into the wider biblical story so far. God blessed Israel in order that they be a blessing to the nations. However, if they broke the covenant they would experience curse – most prominently as exile (Deuteronomy 28-30). There now has been a return to the Land. Yet, the returnees seem to be wondering when the exile will be completely over (this becomes clearer in Zechariah 7:5). Alongside Zechariah, Nehemiah raises the same question too with his comment in Nehemiah 9:36.

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

Before we leave this vision, notice important gospel logic. There have been commands to return to the LORD and to rebuild the temple. What important detail emerges in v.16 that underpins all these calls to return to the LORD (v.3) and rebuild the temple (*cf.* Haggai 1)?

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Thank God for graciously returning to us while we were still sinners and enemies to announce good news. Thank Him for the good news that in Jesus, God has returned with hope and restoration on offer. Thank Him that He is the prime mover in building His people, building His church, His kingdom.



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THURSDAY 05 MAY 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

## Read: Zechariah 1:18-21

### Plug In...

In this vision, the 'horns' are directly involved in the scattering of Judah. The implication from vision one is that troubles for Judah/Jerusalem came from the nations (vv.12, 15). This seems to be made explicit in vision two. Three times it is mentioned that the horns are directly connected with the scattering. The repetition causes the hearer to think this may not have been just par-for-the-course in a history of empires clashing against empires. The tie-ins to the covenant blessings and curses clear from vision one set us up to be more sensitive to this repetition. The suggestion that this is not-by-chance history is confirmed later in 2:6. There was a deliberate scattering and now the LORD promises a deliberate reversal.

### Chew It Over...

We crave the reversal of many things in our lives. We've been promised that a great reversal is happening through Jesus' work, with a full new creation to come. Are there areas of life where you've engaged in short-circuiting trust in Jesus and God's plan that He's working it all out? Explore an area where you have persistent and habitual sin – think through how in this area you've begun to doubt that Jesus will come through with the goods; where you doubt God can actually turn things around. Return to Jesus, trusting him even in this precious area of your life.

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Acknowledge again to God that He is sovereign and rules all nations, rules and is behind all details; is behind all factors. Ask Him to enlarge your trust that reversal has taken place, and the completion of that will come through. Ask Jesus for what you need now; also ask for patience and trust should there be a time delay due to His sovereign wisdom.



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FRIDAY 06 MAY 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

## Read: Zechariah 2:1-9

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

Whatever trouble Israel experienced, it was not random but part of the LORD executing His plan. Notice the shift in perspective throughout the visions. First, nations seem to think they've made their own empire (1:11 – at ease) and held pretensions when it came to conquering Israel (1:15); secondly, the biblical context of the covenant curse of exile is what frames the execution of scattering the nations (2:18-21); lastly, God makes it unequivocal that He is the agent behind the scattering (2:6). No matter which way you cut it, knowing that the Good God who has His people as the apple of His eye means that if He says 'get up', 'try this', 'go here', you can have confidence of success for He is the one saying it, and opening up the pathway.

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

Think of time in life where if you knew the outcome in advance you would choose differently. Consider how God gives us the end-time result in advance in order to motivate our choices now. Significantly, through Jesus' work on the cross we have been told that the power of sin over our lives has been broken – and Satan will be dealt with. This dynamic is just like those Jews still living in Babylon – still living there even though the back of the power that locked them in there had been broken (2:6). In all our efforts not to sin, have

we forgotten that we actually can run from sin? Think about a sin that has been hard work stopping and how you've been approaching it.

A suggestion to go about refreshing your approach. 1. The power of sin has been broken by Jesus (obedience is not what gets you to God; nor does disobedience now separate you from God). 2. Know that God even sends His Holy Spirit to empower you, make you to be a *holy* one. 3. Recognise that all the commands, exhortations, urgings in Scripture to flee sin, stop sinning, are given to you by God only because He knows He has given you all the resources you need to actually stop – you now can be obedient.

### **Prayer Suggestion**

Refresh your approach to sin by praying, praising, and asking God with regard to the above.



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## WEEKEND 07-08 MAY 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

## Read: Zechariah 5-8

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

Again this weekend, aim to take time to read or listen to Zechariah in big blocks – this is an important way to engage and absorb the message of Zechariah. We've seen so far that the LORD has returned to the people in a way that enables them to get on with His purposes. He has promised He will be with them and that He will also return in the future. As you read the rest of the visions, think about in what aspect about God's purpose in this 'return' do they make vivid and impress upon the hearer.

### **Prayer Suggestion**

Thank God for the encouragement He gives us through the Scriptures. Thank Him for revealing the reality behind the realities. Ask that He may continue to cause you to persevere in this knowledge of the Lord Jesus' work for us, his continuance with us by his spirit, and his promise of return.