



MONDAY 13 JUNE 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

Read: Zechariah 12:1-5 & John 16:31-33

Plug In...

We see here a battle. The nations of the earth attack Jerusalem. God describes the nation's future failure with this offensive. The nations rebound off the immovable Jerusalem – as if off a brick wall! They jerk back from Jerusalem shattered, disillusioned, disorientated, and fatally injured. They've crashed into the LORD Almighty Himself! Jerusalem stands strong because the LORD Almighty is there (v.5).

Chew It Over...

The image doesn't remove the rough-and-tumble experiences of a battle but it does guarantee its outcome. Jesus goes to the cross, even though it was a great battle, because he was confident of the outcome – he was strong because the LORD Almighty is his God (Matthew 26:39,42). Our lives regularly feel the throes of the battle – the battle can become harsher the more we identify as a Christian. But seeing the big battle has indeed resulted with the guaranteed outcome, demonstrated when God raised Jesus from the dead, gives us battle courage (John 16:33). Ultimately, the attempt to attack Jesus saw his enemies rebound shattered – as off a brick wall. The Lord's enemies are our enemies once we identify with the Lord. The same fate will be true for our enemies (Zechariah 12:5).

Prayer Suggestion

Pray today asking for courage. Admit to the Lord that you are weak on your own. If left alone, you would be scared, would betray Jesus, and join the enemy in an attempt to save yourself. Ask God to give you strong faith in Jesus, especially as you hit the frontline identifying with Jesus in Australia. Pray that you will live life courageously in the knowledge that Jesus has overcome the opposition of the world.



The Lakes

TUESDAY 14 JUNE 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

Read: Zechariah 12:6-9

Plug In...

The name of David is repeatedly mentioned in this section. The line/house of David has always been central to God's plans (2 Samuel 7). God promised David his line would always survive. In exile, when things clearly looked the opposite, the Jews put their faith in this promise. This word from the LORD to Zechariah puts in the foreground God's promise to David. The destruction of the nations who threaten Jerusalem is not because Jerusalem deserves to be saved, but because God promised to save David's line and those attached to it.

Chew It Over...

When we think of tolerance, we are encouraged to think it is the fairest behaviour to never say that another person's view is wrong. Christians inevitably say other "ways" to God or other religions are wrong because of the Bible truth: *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.* (Acts 4:12). Stating this can sound arrogant to others. We must remember as we explain this truth, to also help people understand that God (like in Zechariah) shows no one deserves to be saved. The Old Testament keeps showing that even God's unique special people prove they deserve nothing but

judgement. It is the wonderful love of God that He came to a people, while they were rebellious towards Him, and promised to give them a king that would save and protect them, despite who they are. Jesus is that king.

Prayer Suggestion

Pray that God will make you unable to not stop speaking of the *name* of Jesus and proclaiming the hope others can have in his name.



The Lakes

WEDNESDAY 15 JUNE 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

Read: Zechariah 12:10-14 & John 19:28-37

Plug In...

You have to re-read verse 10 and read it slowly. Chapter 12:1-9 shows a battle against Jerusalem. We pick up in verse 10 that as part of that battle the people of Jerusalem end up piercing one they end up mourning over. It is important to note that they haven't accidentally killed someone close (i.e., friendly-fire) but somehow in the mess have sided with the enemy and killed their own. It is only because God pours out His spirit of grace and supplication that they grieve what they've done and mourn.

Chew It Over...

John's Gospel quotes this part of Zechariah. John saw that the battle against Jerusalem and against the house of David happened when Jesus was crucified on the cross. This is the day when Jesus' own people killed him. When we recognise that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, we know that it was our own intentional sins that killed Jesus. To repent involves mourning our sins. Not just the consequences of any particular sinful action, but that it has necessitated the death of God's own Son on a cross.

Prayer Suggestion

Reflect then pray. Reflect how it was our sins that necessitated Christ on the cross. Reflect how we would not even turn in repentance and mourn this tragedy unless God poured out His Spirit upon us. God is merciful and gracious in every way. Pray for others to have God's Spirit turn them in repentance.



The Lakes

THURSDAY 16 JUNE 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

Read: Zechariah 13:1-6

Plug In...

So many things happen on 'that day'. We've seen that on that day God will destroy all the nations attacking Jerusalem (12:9); on that day people who formerly killed someone by piercing them, are enabled by God's spirit to see what they've done and repent (12:10-11); on that same day, amongst all these events, an amazing fountain is opened. The people of Jerusalem are cleansed from sin and impurity.

Chew It Over...

The Old Testament speaks of a day in the future where all the wonderful promises of God happen. The New Testament shows that 'day' occurs in two phases. Phase one, when Jesus died on the cross and then rose again. Phase two, when Jesus returns. From Zechariah we've seen that 'on that day' there will be a massive battle and the enemies of God will be destroyed. God has shown what that destruction will be like for people through the destruction of Jesus at the cross. However, as Jesus does not deserve it, his destruction can be a substitute for anyone wanting to escape God's future judgement. God's grace is shown in that He splits that 'day' into two phases. If that day came straight out, we would have nothing as a basis to stand on before God. This splitting of the day is what gives opportunity for the current enemies of God to turn and repent before they are destroyed.

Prayer Suggestion

Keep praying that such perspective shapes each next day you are given. Pray that dropping the kids at school, completing a project, ticking off commitments at work are not what consumes you, important as they are. Pray to live with God's cosmic vision of things.



The Lakes

FRIDAY 17 JUNE 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

Read: Zechariah 13:7-9

Plug In...

God commands a sword to strike a shepherd. Clearly a 'good' shepherd as he is described as close to the LORD (v.7). The result is judgement for many, but from a third of those judged there is a group refined so that they are God's people (v.9). The big theme we've seen throughout Zechariah is that God is going to destroy the enemies of Judah, and make a city that is faithful. Zechariah hasn't told us the 'how', but rather the 'what' (i.e., it will happen). These final chapters begin to show something of the 'how'. It involves someone pierced who didn't deserve to be pierced (12:10). It involves a good shepherd being deliberately struck by God with the result that there is judgement for one group, and salvation for another.

Chew It Over...

Imagine you found only a fragment of the Bible. The book of Zechariah and just chapter 26 of Matthew. You read Jesus quotes from Zechariah (Matthew 26:31) which triggers many associations from Zechariah chapters 12 & 13. How does what you know from Zechariah help you understand the next conversation between Jesus and Peter (Matthew 26:31-35) and the disciples abandoning Jesus (Matthew 26:36-75)? Again, if you only had Matthew 26, what could you point to in Zechariah 13 that shows there is more to the story to come (i.e., does it just end with Peter outside and tragically weeping bitterly)?

Prayer Suggestion

Acknowledge to Jesus you see him as the only one faithful to God. While all the sheep scattered, Jesus remained faithful, even to willingly being struck down for the forgiveness of sins. Praise God for the faithfulness of Jesus which now means when you call on God He will answer you. Call on God.



The Lakes

WEEKEND 18-19 JUNE 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

Read: Zechariah chapters 12 & 13 & 1 Peter 1:3-9

Plug In...

Take time this weekend to re-read chapters 12 and 13 as a block. The impression is a series of battle scenes. The scene gets messy because even the inhabitants of Jerusalem seem to kill one of their own (12:10-11). From another perspective, it seems like the one struck down is struck down because God decreed it (13:7). Amongst all this there are surprising results for some people, especially some people who did the piercing. God's spirit is poured out on them (12:10), the land is cleansed from sin (13:1), the people are refined (13:9).

Chew It Over...

Think over 1 Peter 1:3-9. All that Zechariah showed would happen, Peter (the infamous abandoner of Christ) proclaims has begun for those who trust in Jesus. We can look forward to an inheritance where sin and impurity has been removed from the land; where we will be God's people.

Prayer Suggestion

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ask that you will set your hope on the grace of Jesus Christ to be revealed at his second coming.