



## **SERIES PLAN**

**1 May:** God Disciplines Those He Loves (Zechariah 1 & 2)

**8 May:** God's Power to Restore (Zechariah 3 & 4)

**15 May:** War and Peace (Zechariah 5 & 6)

**22 May:** Listen Up! (Zechariah 7 & 8)

**29 May:** The Day of the Lord (Zechariah 12-14)

# **SERIES INTRODUCTION**

We live in a time when things don't seem to be going well for God's people. The church is in decline – at least in the Western world – and we can see that in large part this is a result of God's righteous judgement on the sins of his people. There has been too much moral failure, hypocrisy, disunity and toleration of sin in God's church, and we are now experiencing the consequences of it. Meanwhile we live in a society that, on the one hand, is being used by God to bring his church to account; but on the other hand is finding too much joy in seeing God's people subdued and diminished. As Christians, we look at the world around us with confusion, but we also look within the church in despair... where is the faith? where is the moral devotion? where is the passion for justice and revival amongst God's people? More than that, we remember the promises of Jesus and we ask, "why isn't God doing something about this? why is He leaving his church in such a sorry state? where is the church Jesus promised to build, that will prevail even against the gates of hell?"

Zechariah was a prophet sent by God to the people of Judah, Israel's southern kingdom, in 520BC. The people had returned less than 20 years ago from Babylon, where they had been exiled for almost 50 years because of the sins of their ancestors. They were back in their homes, in the city of Jerusalem, but they were still feeling the effects of God's righteous judgement on them. They were wearied by the opposition of the people around them. They despaired at the physical state of the temple and the spiritual state of God's people... many of whom had decided, based on God's seeming absence, to forget about their faith and get on with their lives. They wondered why God wasn't doing more to restore his people. They doubted whether God would be faithful to his promises, at least in their lifetime. They felt as though they were living in the days of small things, where nothing significant happened, where God was taking a back seat, and where their obedience didn't seem to make a difference to anything, for better or for worse.

The situation God sent Zechariah to speak into was a situation a lot like our own. And the questions God sent Zechariah to answer were similar to the questions we are asking today: what are we supposed to do as God's people living in this moment in history? why isn't God doing more to restore the fortunes of his people? when will God be faithful to the promises he made about his church? Meanwhile, the book of Zechariah asks questions of us too: will we learn from the sins of others or will we repeat them? will we continue the cycle of sin for God's people, or will we break it? will we commit ourselves to obeying God's word, or will we believe God to be absent and indifferent to our actions? and lastly, do we have faith to believe that God can move in power in our generation, to see his people restored, to see his church victorious, and to see his promises fulfilled?