

Sing and Rejoice

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[0 : 00] Good morning everyone, we're going to look at Zechariah chapter 2 now. So grab your Bibles out, We're going to read that together and then consider God's Word for us this morning.

As you're finding it, let me just reorient us to where we're up to. So we looked at Zechariah chapter 1 in the couple of weeks before Mother's Day and so it starts off with God saying, you know, you return to me, I'll return to you and the people repent and they do actually return to God. And then Zechariah is given this series of visions and we looked at the first two weeks ago and so the big thing to know is God says that I'm exceedingly jealous for my people, I'm exceedingly angry with the nations and so God has promised to both judge the nations and restore his people and we're going to be looking at the third vision today which is in Zechariah chapter 2. So let's read that together now.

And I lifted my eyes and saw and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand. Then I said, where are you going? And he said to me, to measure Jerusalem, to see what is its width and what is its length? And behold, the angel who talked with me came forward and another angel came forward to meet him and said to him, run, say to that young man, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls because of the multitude of people and livestock in it. And I will be to her a wall of fire all around, declares the Lord, and I will be the glory in her midst. Up, up, flee from the land of the north, declares the Lord, for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heavens, declares the Lord. Up, escape to Zion, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon. For thus says the Lord of hosts, after his glory sent me to the nations who plundered you, for he who touches you touches the apple of his eye. Behold, I will shake my hand over them and they shall become plunder for those who serve them. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me. Sing and rejoice,

O daughter of Zion, for behold, I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares the Lord. And many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day and shall be my people. And I will dwell in your midst and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. And the Lord will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem. Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord, for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this word that we're looking at this morning. We thank you for this incredible promise that there is towards your holy people. And thank you that that includes people from all nations. And we pray that you will teach us and encourage us that we might sing and rejoice also. Amen. The question I've got is, how much do you think about life after death? How much do you rejoice and sing about your resurrection?

Does your future hope give you much present joy? Or does it all just seem a bit insubstantial, a bit nebulous, a bit hard to grab so you don't think about it too much? It's one of the things we're going to look at. And let me tell you about one of my kind of pet hates. This is one of the little things in life that annoys me. And that is sports news. Now, if you love sport news, that's fine.

[4 : 06] But let me tell you, if you're getting the news on the radio, I haven't watched TV for years, but I imagine it's the same on TV still, that you watch news and you've got all the world news and then they've got a sports section at the end. They give all the terrible news of the world.

There's been, you know, a triple murder in Toowoomba. There's been this horrific natural disaster overseas. There's thousands of injured and bereaved and suffering people. There's this terrible political scandal where officials have stolen billions in tax dollars. There's war, there's famine, there's upheaval. Let me tell you about these things in the world.

It's really bad and it's serious and weighty. And now turning to sport, the Broncos just won a footy game last night and let's hear the coach tell us about how proud he is of the boys. And it annoys me in a kind of pet peeve kind of a way because it's a, I think it's an example of just the hopelessness in

our society. In terms of the world is full of this bad news, let me tell you all about it and now what do we do with that? Well, let me just distract you with some inconsequential news. So you don't dwell in the hopelessness of it all too much. Let me give you a little good news story or, you know, talk about sport for a bit. It annoys me not because I hate sport but because I think that reporting on it as a distraction at the end of hearing all the bad news of the world is a terrible way to train an audience in processing world events. Communicates actually in the substance of things, in the way that real life works, there's no hope there. Let me give you a distraction instead so you don't get too depressed. That's where you find hope, just distracting yourself.

Find joy in the distractions and that's why we collectively as a society rejoice in these little things. So sing and rejoice at the footy because that's all we've got.

Now, I want to say distractions are fine, right? Yesterday, Sheena took me to go watch Monster Tracks and it was awesome, right? Go to the footy, sing and rejoice in the footy, that's fine, right? [6:16] But is it all we've really got, right? Is future really so bleak that actually there's no meaning of joy in the substance of life? We need to turn to the distractions to find joy because that's all there is. Well, for a society that doesn't know the Lord Jesus, well, yes. And it's even worse than that because there is a judgment day coming. But for us who have been raised up with Christ, who know that actually there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, we're looking forward to a resurrection, eternal life, incredible glory. Our future is so chock full of joy and glory and purpose.

Our future is so certain that it should affect our present reality with rejoicing and with singing. That's what chapter 2 of Zechariah is all about and it points us towards, right? It's the opposite of the sports news of things are so bad but let me give you a distraction to rejoice in. It's, look, things are really bad in Zechariah's day but let me actually give you the substance of life. This is actually the key thing about life that actually means you can rejoice, right? These are future promises from God himself. And there's three parts to this vision. First, we're going to look at this future Jerusalem and then we go look at the judgment of the nations and then we go back to looking at the future restored Jerusalem. And through this, we'll see that the weighty and substantial matters there are to sing and rejoice in. We're going to be looking to our own future hope as well.

So, I said before, chapter 1 of Zechariah, the prophets told the people, return to God, He will return to you. And then in this first vision that Zechariah has shown, God says in verse 14, cry out, thus says the Lord of hosts, I'm exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion.

In verse 15, I'm exceedingly angry with the nations that are at ease. So, two messages, comfort for Jerusalem, anger for the nations. And then in verse 16, Zechariah says, therefore, thus says the Lord, I have returned to Jerusalem with mercy. My house shall be built in it, declares the Lord of hosts, and the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem. So, then we get to chapter 2 and here we go, right? There is a young man with a measuring line, off to go stretch it out over Jerusalem.

In the previous vision, there's this message of hope, Jerusalem's going to be rebuilt, temple rebuilt, get that tape measure out, God's going to return and restore this place. Someone's off to do just that, but then one angel tells another angel to running after the young man with the tape measure and tell him, actually, don't bother with that, right? Verse 4, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls because of the multitude of people and livestock in it.

[9:06] And I will be to her a wall of fire all around, declares the Lord, and I will be the glory in her midst. Right? So, drawing out, busting out this tape measure, that's the first step for drawing up blueprints, getting rebuilt. But Zechariah's got this vision of angels running after the man who's getting on with the job and says, it's actually not going to work.

Why not? Three things he says here. Firstly, Jerusalem will overflow with prosperity. There's going to be so many people and livestock in Jerusalem that you're not going to be able to fit a wall around it. It's not put the tape measure away because we're not rebuilding, it's put it away because there's no point. This is going to be huge. You don't have a measuring rod big enough for this one. So, that is incredible because the exiles in Zechariah's day have made it back to Jerusalem and the place is a dump. Right? They've started building homes to live in and Haggai the prophet has said, you should build the temple first. The people have listened, they start building the temple. The temple looks so small, the old men that have seen the old one cry at how little it is. And they've stopped work because there's opposition. And it's the work, the foundation has been laid but the work's been sitting there untouched for about 16 years or so. And Zechariah, sent by God, is encouraging

them, get building again. And this vision of Jerusalem is incredible.

Right? In Zechariah's day, the place is the ruins of a backwater town in an insignificant sub-province in an unimportant province. The walls are smashed, the temple has been started then abandoned for years, the population's only a fraction of what it used to be, it's harried by opponents and the whole thing is pretty rough and pretty inglorious. And Zechariah is painting this picture of Jerusalem getting its glory back, bigger and better than it ever was in Solomon's day, bigger than walls can contain, a city so full of people and livestock, I take it livestock is about prosperity here, that you're just not going to be able to fit everyone in. It's a vision which is radically different from what could be seen with their own eyes. Jerusalem will overflow with prosperity. But that raises a question, right?

A city that's so big, it's got no walls, well that sounds very vulnerable, doesn't it? And so, number two, God will protect Jerusalem. God will be to Jerusalem, His wall of fire all around.

He is the one who handed Jerusalem over to King Nebuchadnezzar to be plundered and taken off to exile, but now He is promising to be the one who protects her as a wall of fire. God Himself will defend the city. He will be a mighty fortress for her. God will protect. And then third thing that says here is that God will be present. God will be the glory in her midst. And this is a big one, right? That Jerusalem was not like any other city, but it's the city that God chose to put His name, where God was the glory of the city. The people might know and honour and glorify Him. So, in Ezekiel, in chapters 10 and 11 of Ezekiel, there's this picture of the glory of God progressively leaving the temple until it goes up from the midst of the city entirely, right? Where God abandons His temple before handing it over to be sacked by the Babylonians. But now, that was kind of near the start of the exile, but now at the end of the exile, as people have come back, the promise is that God [12:50] Himself will come back and dwell with His people. God will again be their glory amongst them. Now, this is just what God promised. When they came out of Egypt, back in the Exodus, when they built its tabernacle, it was God's special tent where His glory dwelt. It was in the centre of the camp, everyone pitched their tents around it. And He says, Exodus 29, verse 45, He says, I will dwell among the people of Israel, and I will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord, their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them. I am the Lord, their God. So, this is God's promise, that He was going to live with His people.

And then, later on, in Solomon's day, in the temple, God's glory dwelt there, until it left because God rejected His people and His place, because of their sin, before that temple was destroyed. But now God, as He promised, is returning to His people, and He will again bring the covenant blessing of His presence, His protection, and His prosperity to His people. See how huge this promise is? It's massive. Far exceeds what the most creative mind could have seen in Zechariah's day. This is a glorious future for Jerusalem.

God will bring innumerable people to Himself, He will protect them, and He Himself will dwell among them. So, then we have a change in the vision, in verses 6 to 9. It speaks of the destruction of the nations, and then, verses 10 to 12, we come back to this picture of renewal of Jerusalem. But, these next bits, they're not unrelated, this glory of Jerusalem and this destruction of the nations. The restoration of Jerusalem only comes because of the judgment on the nations. Just as our salvation only happens because of judgment. The two always go together, judgment and salvation, they're inseparable. So, verse 6 and 7, Zechariah is told this, Up, up, flee from the land of the north, declares the Lord, for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of heaven, declares the Lord. Up, escape to Zion, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon.

So, I want to look at these four, there's four things here that I want to look at particularly to unpack these verses. So, firstly, people are fleeing, where from? They're fleeing from the land of the north, and because of the geography of that area, every country invades from the north, except Egypt. So, this is Assyria, Babylon, Media, Persia, right, they're all from the land of the north.

[15:49] So, flee from those lands. Why? You see, it says, for I spread you abroad as the four winds of heavens. It was God who scattered you. That's why you should flee. It wasn't because God was defeated by better nations. You were judged by God. So, now, why flee from those places back to Jerusalem? Why leave the places that perhaps you're in comfort, you've been taken, to head back to the land that your fathers used to live in, that's desolate, barely re-inhabited, oppressed on every side by opponents?

Return back, because God has returned. God is promising renewal. So, if you believe that your circumstances are due to God's work, right, that you were actually scattered by God, then also

believe that God has now returned. So, it's time to come back. Trust Him now. All right, where are they fleeing to? You see, it says, escape to Zion. Geographically speaking, Zion is the name of the mountain that Jerusalem was built on top of. It's the mount where the temple is going to be rebuilt, but in typical, biblical style, its meaning is much more than just a location. The whole mountain takes on the significance of being God's holy place. So, to go there is to go to God, all right, to belong to Him, is to come back to Him. And then, who is to go? So, escape to Zion, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon. And again, Babylon symbolizes much more than just a physical location, right? The Babylonian empire itself is already overthrown by the time of Zechariah and the Persians and the Medes are currently in charge. But Babylon, whilst they're containing many exiles who don't go home, is also this ongoing symbol of the enemies of God's people, right? So, it's this enduring symbol of wickedness in the Bible. And so, the people who are dwelling with the daughter of Babylon, being told to flee to Zion is not just a call for people to go from over here to over there, but it's a call for an allegiance change. It's a call for a heart change, right? No longer live in the comfort of that nation and their false gods. Don't have your heart with the strong nations because it seems like they won, that their gods are better than God. Flee from that connection and return to God, return to

His place, return to His presence, return to His protection and enjoy His promise of prosperity, which is coming. So, it's the call, return to the Lord, as we heard in chapter 1 verse 2.

And He will return to you as a wall of fire and glory in your midst. All right. Why? Now, have a look at verse 8 and 9.

For thus says the Lord of hosts, after His glory sent me to the nations who plundered you, for he who touches you touches the apple of his eye. Behold, I will shake my hand over them, they shall become plunder for those who serve them. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me. [19:08] All right. Whoever touches God's people touches the apple or the pupil of God's eye. All right. So, if I went up to you and stuck my finger in your eye, what are you going to do to me? I should probably expect a very sudden and very violent action from you, right? That's the picture. God feels very sensitive about His people. We saw in chapter 1 verse 14, He's exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion and those who touch His people. It's like they've touched God's eyeball, right? Expect a violent reaction. So, the nations who plundered God's people will in turn become plunder to those they plundered. And this will be a sign that Zechariah is a true prophet sent by God. And this goes back to God's promises to His people too, right? God promised Abraham that He would curse whoever curses His people.

And this is how God both protects and saves His own people, through the judgment and destruction of their enemies. And so, salvation of God's people comes through the destruction of God's enemies.

So then, there's a promise for God's presence, prosperity, protection of Jerusalem. There's a promise of plundering the plunderers. What should the Israelites do with this message, right? The one in Zechariah's day, what are they supposed to do with this? Verse 10, sing and rejoice, right? So, verse 10 to 12, go back to the vision of Jerusalem without this wall and gives us more information. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares the Lord. All right, so God's presence in verse 10, God's promise to be with His people will be picked up and will be brought about again and there's nothing better than God Himself in your midst. All right, that's something to rejoice over. The God who made the universe, the God who is the wellspring of goodness and joy, of righteousness, of justice, of love, that God will dwell in your midst. That God will overflow His goodness and His blessing among you.

He will extend His protection over you. He will reflect His glory upon you. That's not a bleak, hopeless future. That's something to rejoice in. Secondly, the prosperity of Jerusalem, it's going to have so many people that a wall can't contain them. Have a look at verse 11 for more information about that one. And many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day and shall be my people.

And I will dwell in your midst and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. Right, these aren't just the Jews fleeing back to Jerusalem, but there is a day coming when many nations will join themselves to God. Nations of people, Gentiles, previously unchosen by God, will become God's people. Joins of the Lord. Nations that are freed from trying to appease fickle gods and living in fear, freed from going their own way with only brute pragmatism, economics and might to determine what is right. Nations who establish their way in the Lord's righteousness. Nations who

join themselves to God and are determined to uphold His ways. Nations discarding their history of idols and altars and turning and joining the Lord. That's an incredible picture, isn't it? And this will happen.

[22 : 57] When will it happen? Verse 11. In that day. And that's a phrase that we're going to hear a lot towards the end of Zechariah. It comes up again and again and again. There is a day of the Lord coming and that day will be very different. And one of the things is there will be many nations who would not be oppressors of God's people, but joiners. People who join themselves to God and become God's people.

God will open His promise to have Gentiles as His people. God will dwell among them as His God and the Gentiles themselves who are unholy, who were separate from the Jews, will actually become holy and have the holy God dwell among them. And when that happens, that will be a sign that Zechariah has been sent by God with the word of His promise. And so then, verse 12. The Lord will inherit Judah as His portion in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem. The land of Judah has been made desolate because of God's people's unfaithfulness. God will restore it to be His. He will choose to put His name on Jerusalem again. His glory will be there again. It's this picture of God returning to His people, the land of His promise, to restore their fortunes, again be there to bless His people and His land, and again for the land to be holy because God is present there. So rejoice because God is going to turn your fortunes around. God is going to come to make His people His inheritance again. Sing and rejoice because there's this glorious future. But then we get to verse 13. Be silent, be silent, all flesh, before the Lord, for He has roused Himself from His holy dwelling. There's this shift to awe and wonder and anticipation.

If you were in Narnia and you were to hear, Aslan is on the move, it provokes a wonder of joy and anticipation. What does this mean? Here, God is on the move. He's roused Himself from His heavenly temple.

He's about to move to judge the nations with righteousness and the glory of His people. He will be the glory of His people in their midst in Jerusalem. God is acting. So watch and wonder, everyone. So what do we do with this? This is what it means for the people of Zechariah's day.

[25 : 35] It's this wonderful promise. Okay, let's trust God. Let's look forward to these promises being fulfilled. We know that the Old Testament is fulfilled in Jesus. So how? How is this passage fulfilled in Jesus?

What does it mean for us? Here we are thousands of years after Zechariah spoke this message from God, wrote it down and yet these words are for us to rejoice in too. So what I want to do is actually just walk backwards through the passage and see the significance for us and as we go through it, kind of walking backwards, I think it'll help us just paint that picture out for us. So in verse 13, God has roused Himself from His holy dwelling. So marvel and wonder at Him coming, right? Marvel and wonder at Him coming to dwell in our midst as a man. Come and kneel before His manger in wonder and awe and worship of God who roused Himself to come and dwell amongst His people. And in Jesus, it's all the fullness of the deity. Jesus is the new temple. He is where God's presence is. There's not now a holy land of God's presence but as Jesus said to the Samaritan woman in John chapter 4, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father but the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. And so considering Zechariah 2 verse 11 and 12 here, at Pentecost, the Spirit went out with God's Word, God was present with His people from many nations and God has come to dwell not just in our midst but in our hearts. God has made Himself known to many nations and lives in each of us who trust in the Lord Jesus by faith. But together we are God's temple, we are His dwelling place. And so 1 Corinthians 13 says, do you not know that you are God's temple and God's Spirit dwells in you? And so God Himself through the body of Jesus on the cross has broken down the dividing wall of hostility between Jews and Gentiles. Gentile nations can be one together with Jews, right? Joined together to the Lord and then united together in Him.

And so we've got this fulfilment in the New Testament that actually God is going to come and dwell amongst His people and He's done that in the Lord Jesus. All God's fullness reigns in the Lord Jesus.

He's done that in the Holy Spirit that God has come and dwelt amongst His people and so God lives in us and we are that temple, we are the place where God dwells. So then in verse 10 there's this call for us to rejoice in what God has done. Don't just rejoice in the little things and the distractions

while we see the bigger things of life just collapsing and hopeless around us. We're experiencing the fulfilment of Zechariah's promise right now.

[28 : 55] God is in our midst, dwelling with the glory of the one and only Son, living in us by His Spirit, protecting us from the evil one and more and more people are added to the Lord every day. And the call in verse 6 is likewise for us. The call to flee Babylon.

Revelation speaks of the destruction of Babylon and Babylon is pictured as a prostitute riding a dragon, drunk on the blood of God's people. And she represents luxury and decadent living and sexual morality and terrible filth of horrible sin. Doesn't that describe our society?

And just as in Zechariah's vision, we're called to flee. And it's not go from over here to over there physically, but it's to change allegiance, to have nothing to do with the sins associated with her. So flip over with me to Revelation chapter 18. We're going to spend a little bit of time in Revelation now. So Revelation chapter 18 verse 1.

And we're going to read about what the Apostle John says he saw in his vision.

[30 : 23] about Babylon, which represents this wickedness set up against God's people. So chapter 18 verse 1.

After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. And he called out with a mighty voice, Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the great. She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.

For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living.

Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues.

For her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins.

[31 : 34] Be separate from the sins of the evil nations that have set themselves up against God. Kings and merchants and sailors all cry, alas, at Babylon's destruction, because they got wealthy.

But we rejoice in God's judgment, having aligned ourselves with God who lives in us by his spirit. And when Babylon is cast down, all of God's people cry, Hallelujah, the destruction of the one who made many rich.

God is on the move. He's on the move to judge many nations, and yet save many nations. And there have been many nations in history that have joined themselves to the Lord, and if the Lord delays, I dare say nations will do it again as we make disciples of them.

And we have this picture in Revelation of a great multitude from every nation and tribe and people and language standing before the throne and the Lamb, crying in a loud voice, salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

And there's going to be people who come from every nation who have escaped Babylon and join themselves to the Lord, and they'll be his. And then, if we go to Revelation 21, just flip over a page or so, in the first few verses there, we see this glorious picture of a new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven.

[33 : 14] And this corresponds to the vision in Zechariah 2, verses 1 to 5. This new Jerusalem's dressed like a bride because it's new, it's glorious. And what's key about this vision?

The dwelling place of God is with man. So Revelation 21, verse 1. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more.

Neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away. And then as this new city comes down from heaven with God's presence and it's glorious and it's fulfilling the promise from Zechariah, there's a man with a measuring stick and he measures this new Jerusalem.

[34 : 31] So have a look down at verse 15 with me. The one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. The city lies four square, its length the same as its width and he measured the city with its rod, 12,000 stadia.

Its length and width and height are equal. He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurements which is also an angel's measurement.

Just if you were wondering about human and angel measurements. Now, but hang on, right, uh-oh, we've got a problem here, right, because in Zechariah said, I thought it couldn't be measured but now it's being measured.

Is heaven smaller than what Zechariah's vision was? Never fear, it's picture language, right, it's not literal. It's the picture, 12,000 being, 12 being number of God's people and 1,000 being lots and lots and lots, right, it's huge and if you want to, literally, how big this kind of description is, it's half the width of Australia, right, and then it's cubed, so it's also that wide and it's also that high out into space, right, this is an enormous city that's being pictured here and it's not literal but just, there's going to be room for all of God's people in this new, glorious Jerusalem.

And, importantly, it's a cube. Why is that important? Because that was the dimensions of the Holy of Holies. The innermost bit of the temple was a cube.

[36 : 08] This is where God dwelt. This is where man could not come except the high priest only once a year and only with lots of blood and only by the mercy of God. But now, this Holy of Holies, the place where God himself dwells in all of his glory, is coming down from heaven to dwell with man.

God will be present with us fully and finally. In verse 22, just go down another couple of verses, I saw no temple in the city for its temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb and the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it for the glory of God gives it light and its lamp is the Lamb.

It's a wonderful picture. We're not going to be separated by sin from the glory of God anymore. Just as the temple in the curtain has been torn and we have access to God now and God lives in us by his Holy Spirit, there is a day coming where fully and finally and physically we will be with the Lord forever.

And God himself will wipe every tear from our eyes. It's a picture of real intimacy and glory, isn't it? It's wonderful. And then jump down to verse 24.

The nations who join themselves to the Lord will be there too. By its light will the nations walk and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it and its gates will never be shut by day and there will be no night there.

[37 : 36] They will bring into it the glory and honour of the nations but nothing unclean will ever enter into it nor anyone who does what is detestable or false but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

It's a wonderful future glorious hope, isn't it? That we have. What do we have to rejoice about? We can see so much more clearly than the people in Zechariah's day.

God has roused himself. He has come and dwelt among us by his Son who died for us and rose again. He has come to dwell in us by his Spirit who lives in us now and he has promised the day when we will be in God's presence forever gathered with all nations that have joined themselves to the Lord living under his protection forever living in true prosperity having fled from Babylon which is going to be judged and destroyed.

Don't just rejoice in the distractions of this life and don't cling to the sins of Babylon. Don't despair for the fate of this world.

God has roused himself and is on the move. He's rousing himself from his holy dwelling. He is acting. He's promised us a rich, glorious future and his promises make it sure and steadfast.

[39 : 03] He's given us his presence and his protection now but he will hold us fast all the way to the end and this glorious promise of future. So sing and rejoice and be glad in the substance of life.

God is on his throne. He's acting. He's working to bring about this picture of glorious future and we can trust him and his promise that we will be there with him on that last day.

So let's keep singing and rejoicing now because of the future hope that God has given us. Let's pray and then we'll keep singing and rejoicing. Father, we thank you for the vision of Zechariah, a vision which is so at odds with the reality that they could see around them at the time and the promise which sometimes seems so fantastic and a little bit unreal because it's so different to what we can see around us.

We thank you that your promises are sure, that we know the Lord Jesus has come in all the fullness of your deity. He has dwelt among us. We thank you that he's died, he's risen, we have new life. We thank you that the Holy Spirit has come and dwells amongst us, that we are your temple where you dwell. And we thank you for this promise of eternal life and eternal glory that there is a city where you live that will come and be amongst us, that we will live with you, with all peoples that are joined to you.

[40 : 40] We might praise you forever and enjoy your prosperity and your protection and your presence forever. Amen.