

# The Triumphal Trilogy Part One: The Church

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[ 0 : 00 ] But if we could, this evening with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, the book of the prophet Zechariah, Zechariah chapter 12.

We're going to look at the whole chapter, but if we just read again at verse 10. Zechariah chapter 12 at verse 10.

And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and weep bitterly over him as one weeps over a firstborn. On that day, the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-Rimon in the plain. Of Megiddo. And so on.

You know, it's often said that good things come in threes. Good things come in threes. It was Bob DeRoe who sang that song, that well-known song, that three is the magic number.

[ 1 : 14 ] And there's also what's often called the rule of three, which is a writing principle that suggests that a trio is more effective than any other number.

That's why we have children's fairy tales, like three blind mice, or three little pigs, or the three musketeers. We also have public announcements that come in threes.

Stop, look and listen. Stop, drop and roll. Stay at home. Protect the NHS. Save lives. With first aid, we often talk about ABC, airwaves, breathing, circulation.

It's threes. With time, we have a three, past, present, and future. In sport, in the Olympics that have just finished this evening, we have gold, silver, and bronze.

Even in preaching, you as a congregation, you often have a three-point sermon. But, you know, when we say that good things come in threes, we should look no further than God himself.

[ 2 : 14 ] Because God, as you know, he is three in one. He's a trinity. He's a triune God of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In fact, the number three, it represents divine wholeness and completeness and perfection.

There's an old Latin phrase, *omni trium perfectum*. Everything that is three is perfect. *Omni trium perfectum*.

Everything that is three is perfect. And as you know, a series of three films, it's called a trilogy. It's a three-part drama. And there are many trilogies.

One trilogy that I loved watching as a child was the trilogy of *Back to the Future*. There was also the original *Star Wars*, which Finley will love. It was a trilogy. There's also *Toy Story*, which was originally a trilogy until they added *Toy Story 4*.

And one of the most famous trilogies, which was, I think it was about seven books, but made into three films, it was *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien. Now, I say all this because as we resume our study of the prophet Zechariah this evening, I want us to see that these last three chapters in this book, they form a trilogy.

[ 3 : 31 ] Zechariah chapters 12, 13, and 14, they all have this same futuristic focus. And you might have noticed that they all, or when you read through them, they all repeat the phrase, on that day.

On that day. On that day. In fact, the phrase, on that day, it's repeated 16 times in Zechariah's, what we'll call Zechariah's trilogy.

Because the futuristic focus is one of triumph. It's, you could call, it's a triumphal trilogy. It's a triumphal trilogy. And so as we come to the conclusion of our study in Zechariah, I'd like us to see that it's chapters 12, 13, and 14.

And they're a three-part drama. It's a triumphal trilogy. And part one this evening in chapter 12 is the triumphal trilogy. And this part is the church.

Part one is the church. And that's the chapter we're looking at this evening. And you'll never guess how many headings I have. We have three headings. And just so you're not disappointed, they all begin with the same letter.

[ 4 : 37 ] Proclamation, promise, and Pentecost. So three headings. Proclamation, promise, and Pentecost.

So first of all, proclamation. Proclamation. Look at verse 1 of chapter 12. It says, You know, from our study of the book of Zechariah, we have learned over the past number of months that Zechariah was a man who was called and commissioned and commanded in 520 BC.

He was called to comfort and challenge God's people with God's word as they began living and looking beyond lockdown. The Israelites had spent 70 years living in Babylon due to their rebellion and rejection of the Lord as their shepherd.

But by God's grace, this return remnant, they came back to the promised land of Israel. And they came back to restore and rebuild and renew and rededicate the temple to the Lord.

And as we saw in chapters 1 to 6, the Lord spoke to this return remnant using these eight night visions. They were to remind and reassure the Lord's people.

[ 6 : 08 ] Even though they were unsettled and unsure and uncertain about their future, it was to remind them and reassure them that the Lord was still with them. And then in chapters 7 and 8, this return remnant, they received a lesson about covenant commitment.

The Lord wanted to remind the return remnant about His covenant commitment towards them.

Then chapter 9, it marked the beginning of the second half of the book of Zechariah, which was written about 15 to 20 years after the temple had been completed.

So we're around the year 500 BC now. And by this point in history, the return remnant, they've been back in the promised land for about 35 years. But even though the temple had been rebuilt and rededicated to the Lord, things weren't back to normal yet.

Things weren't back to the way they were before lockdown. Because, as you know, the glory of the Lord never returned to the temple. The walls of the city of Jerusalem, at this point, they were still in ruins.

And the people, as a result, they were all becoming restless. And so as we saw in chapters 9 to 11, Zechariah, he exhorted and he encouraged the return remnant not to resist or to reject the rule and reign of the Lord, but to look and to listen and to love the coming of the shepherd king, Jesus Christ.

[ 7 : 34 ] Which, as you know, is the message that we're also being given as we continue looking and living beyond lockdown. You know, according to our government, many of our restrictions are being lifted tomorrow.

But whether these restrictions are in place or not, as the Lord's people, as Christians witnessing and working in our community, as sheep and also under shepherds, we're not to become restless or resentful or even reject the Lord.

Because the message of God's Word is to continue looking and listening and loving and living for the good shepherd, Jesus Christ. And you know, that was the burden Zechariah had as he began preaching and proclaiming this triumphal trilogy in chapters 13 and 14.

Chapters 12, 13 and 14. It was a triumphal trilogy preached and proclaimed to the people of his day. And Zechariah's burden, the oracle is there at the beginning of verse 1, or the burden that he had, the burden of the Word of the Lord.

Zechariah's burden was that the people wouldn't become focused and fixated on themselves in their present circumstances, but that they would focus and fixate themselves on the future.

[ 8 : 56 ] That they would have this futuristic focus. That they would plan and prepare for the people of the future. That they would think not about themselves, but they would also think about the next generation.

Those coming after them. Those who are following after them. And you know, my friend, Zechariah's burden was that the Lord's people would look and live beyond lockdown by looking and living for the Lord.

That was Zechariah's burden. His burden was that the Lord's people would look and live beyond lockdown by looking and living for the Lord. But you know, what we have to understand is that this triumphal trilogy, these last three chapters, this is Zechariah's second burden.

Zechariah's first burden was in chapters 9 to 11. Where as we said, Zechariah, he exhorted and he encouraged the Lord's people to look and listen and love the coming of the shepherd king, Jesus

Christ.

That was his first burden. But you know, despite his efforts of exhortation and encouragement, we see a second burden. And there's a second burden because this returned remnant, they still aren't living and looking and listening or loving the shepherd king as they should.

[ 10 : 15 ] They're still not living consistent, committed, Christ-like lives for the Lord. They're still lax and lazy and lethargic in their life and witness for the Lord.

The sheep, he's saying, they're still wandering. The under-shepherds are still wayward. The elders in the congregation are still misplacing their pastoral priorities and their principles.

They're still misleading the people by their exhortations and even their example. And you know, as you'd expect, this is something that really bothers and burdens Zechariah as the Lord's prophet.

Because Zechariah, he has been called to this people. He has been commissioned and commanded by the Lord to preach and pastor this people. And because they seem lax and lazy and lethargic in their commitment to the Lord, Zechariah is bothered by the people.

And he's burdened for the people. Zechariah is bothered by the people. And he's burdened for the people. And he's bothered and burdened for their souls and their spiritual well-being.

[ 11 : 23 ] And you know, as someone who has been called, commissioned, and commanded by the Lord to preach and pastor to you as a congregation, you know, in a measure, I can understand what Zechariah is saying here.

Although, if I'm completely honest with you for a moment, I feel inadequate as a preacher and insufficient as a pastor. And you know what often happens to me when I go on holiday, and Alison will tell you, that I stop and think about what I actually do.

You don't think about it from day to day as you're a minister. But when you stop and think about what you really do, I often think, I can't carry on. I'm not cut out to be a minister.

I'm not fit to preach and pastor a congregation. And yet, you know, the only thing that brings me home again, although I love coming home, the only thing that brings me back here and stops me walking away and going back on the tools, the thing that keeps me here is my call.

Because the souls of the people in this community, like Zechariah, they bother me and they burden me. They bother me and they burden me.

[ 12 : 39 ] And you know, my Christian friend, your spiritual well-being, it bothers me. You know, I have a care and a concern that you grow in grace, that you love the Lord more deeply, that you walk with the Lord more closely, that you serve the Lord more faithfully, that you possess and practice a Christian character, conduct, and conversation.

And yes, you do already. And we need to keep encouraging one another in that and loving one another in that. My Christian friend, your spiritual well-being always bothers me.

That's the concern I have. But you know, as you know, already my unconverted friend, who is not here in Persia this evening, so I hope you're at home. Your soul not only bothers me, it burdens me. Because the fact that tonight, after all that you've seen and heard over the past 18 months and all of your life, you're still lost.

You're still out of Christ. You're still graceless. You're still godless. You're still walking in darkness. You're still on the broad road to destruction. And that might not bother you or burden you.

[ 13 : 48 ] But I tell you, it bothers me. And it burdens me. And I know, I know, I know that David is going to say to me that salvation is of the Lord. I know that the Lord is sovereign. I know that He's mighty to save.

I know that the Spirit is one that moves and works in people's lives. That's why I'm reminded here that there's nowhere else to bring our burdens. The burdens that bother us except to the Lord. Because, you know, as Zechariah says in these opening verses, the Lord is the one who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and formed the spirit of man within Him.

He is the Lord. He's the one we must bring our burdens and the things that bother us. We must bring them to Him. And, you know, but, you know, it's with that burden that Zechariah, we see, he began preaching.

He began preaching and proclaiming this triumphal trilogy to the people of his day. And what Zechariah preached and proclaimed was a promise.

[ 14 : 49 ] That's our second heading. Promise. Proclamation and then a promise. Promise. And we'll read again in verse 1. The oracle or the burden of the word of the Lord concerning Israel.

Thus declares the Lord who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and formed the spirit of man within him. Behold, I'm about to make Jerusalem a cup of staggering to all the surrounding peoples.

The siege of Jerusalem will also be against Judah. On that day, I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples. All who lift it will surely hurt themselves.

And all the nations of the earth will gather against it. So when this return remnant, when they rebuilt and restored and renewed and rededicated the temple to the Lord, they all assumed.

They all assumed that their actions would see the glory cloud return to the temple. They assumed that their actions would usher in this messianic age.

[ 15 : 55 ] They assumed that their actions would result in the coming of the Christ. They assumed that their actions would bring the salvation of this shepherd king. But instead, what these people experienced was silence.

And the silence caused them to stray. Because it was in the silence that the people stopped. They stopped living and looking and listening and loving their shepherd king.

But what we see in this triumphal trilogy is that it was into the silence that Zechariah preached and proclaimed the Lord's promise of a coming day.

Verse 3. On that day, I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples. And as we said, the phrase on that day, it's repeated 16 times throughout this triumphal trilogy of chapters.

But the phrase, it doesn't specifically refer to the day of the Lord, which is often associated with the end of the world and the second coming of Christ.

[ 16 : 59 ] Now, I want to be clear here. The phrase does refer to the second coming. And we'll see that when we come to chapter 14. But not specifically. Because there's actually more to it than that.

There's more to this phrase, on that day. It not only refers to the last day, the day of judgment and the second coming of Christ. But it also refers to the last days leading up to the last day.

If that makes sense. So, not only refers to the very last day, but the last days leading up to the last day. So, the last days are the days we are currently in.

That's what Zechariah is prophesying about. The days, the last days, they refer to the period of time between the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ and his second coming.

They're the last days. Therefore, we are currently living in the last days. But, you know, when you consider the Bible, when you have a panoramic view of the Bible, it's helpful to think of the Old Testament over here as the age of promise.

[ 18 : 09 ] Where God promised his people through his prophets, his priests, his kings, that the Messiah would come to rule, to establish his rule and reign in the kingdom of God. Therefore, when the Messiah finally appeared in Persian, in the Persian of Jesus Christ, the Old Testament age of promise was overtaken by the age of fulfillment.

Where there was the incarnation and the virgin birth and the life of Jesus and the ministry of Jesus. It was all fulfilled in that age of fulfillment. But the age of promise in the Old Testament, it hadn't fully passed away.

Because the promises of God, they're still being fulfilled in this period of the last days. From the cross to the very last day. And theologians, they call this period, this period we're living in now.

They call it the now and the not yet. The now and the not yet. But what Zechariah preaches and proclaims is that on that day, in the last days, now, I will make a heavy stone for all Jerusalem.

I will make a heavy stone for all Jerusalem. Now, what we need to understand is that as we read this triumphal trilogy, it's not only the phrase, on that day, that's important. We also have to see that the names Jerusalem, Judah, and House of David, they're repeated in chapter 12, 13, and 14.

[ 19 : 39 ] And all these names, Jerusalem, Judah, and House of David, they're all significant because they all represent and they all relate to the church of Jesus Christ, the New Testament church of Jesus Christ in the last days.

The Old Testament, as you know, Jerusalem was the city of the great king. It was the holy place of the Most High. Judah was the royal line from which the Messiah would come.

The house of David was the promised seed and son. And so each name that we're reading here in this triumphal trilogy, Jerusalem, Judah, and the House of David, they all represent, they all relate to the church of Jesus Christ.

And so what we're actually reading here is that Zechariah's opening promise to the people of God is so important. Because when he says in verse 3, On that day, I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone

for all the peoples.

All who lift it will surely hurt themselves. And all the nations of the earth will gather against it. What Zechariah is asserting and affirming is that on that day, in the last days, from the cross to the second coming, in that day, the church will stand immovable and unshakable because they're standing upon the rock.

[ 21 : 00 ] That's what he says. On that day, I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone. And you know, is that not what Jesus said to the first disciples in the New Testament?

Right at the beginning of the last days, Jesus said to his disciples, upon this rock, upon this confession of faith, upon the confession that Jesus Christ is Lord, upon this rock, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

And you know, right at the beginning of the New Testament church, the church needed that promise. The church needed that promise because as the church grew from the tiny mustard seed, and as we know from church history, she would encounter and experience all of these problems and persecutions.

There would be obstacles and opposition. There would be confrontations and challenges. There would be indifference and imprisonment. There would be danger and death in the life of the church. And you know, that's exactly what Zechariah was preaching and proclaiming. He is saying to the Lord's people in 500 BC that there will be many attacks and many attempts made against the church of Jesus Christ throughout our history.

[ 22 : 23 ] But you know, as we read in this chapter, the Lord says to his people, I will watch over them. That's what you have to notice about this chapter. There are promises throughout it.

The Lord says, I will watch over them. I will protect them. I will shield them. I will go before them. I will defend them. I will be their God. And these are wonderful promises that were preached and proclaimed long ago.

And yet they were talking about a period of time that we are living in today. They affect and they apply to us tonight in Barvis.

They affect and they apply to us tonight. But you know, for the Lord's people living in that day and generation, living before the cross, living before Jesus, you know, it must have been a great encouragement to hear Zechariah preaching and proclaiming the promise of the Lord.

Because as we said, for them, they thought the shepherd was silent. They thought the Lord had deserted and discarded them completely. And they wondered about themselves.

[ 23 : 33 ] They saw that the glory wasn't coming back to the temple. And they thought, well, do we have a future? Will the temple be here for the next generation? Will there be those after us who praise and magnify the Lord?

But it was this promise that gave them hope. It was this promise that gave them assurance. It gave them encouragement. It gave them a futuristic focus because they were reminded and reassured that despite what the church may look like, as it lives beyond lockdown, the church will grow and the church will flourish.

And he was saying that the church will be built. There will be a next generation. Children yet unborn will praise and magnify the Lord. Yes, on that day, in the last days, the church will encounter and experience opposition and obstacles.

There will be problems and persecutions. There will be confrontations and challenges. There will be indifference and imprisonment. There will be dangers and death. But the proclamation which has been promised to the church of Jesus Christ, and you know, it's a promise that we should cling to. Upon that rock, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. And you know, this ought to be the greatest encouragement to us tonight.

[ 24 : 56 ] Because as we look and as we live beyond lockdown, with all that's changed over the past 18 months, we might wonder what hope or future the church has in our community.

We might wonder what the church will look like in the future. Will there be a church for the next generation? Will those who are yet unborn praise and magnify the Lord, where we have praised and magnified the Lord?

Will those coming up behind us, will they replace us? And yet, this promise of God's word tonight is that we're not to be focused and fixated just on the here and now.

Yes, we're to work here and now, but you know, we have to have this futuristic focus. We have to have this futuristic focus that it's the Lord's church and the church will grow.

The church will flourish. The church will be built. There will be a next generation. Children yet unborn will praise and magnify the Lord because the promise of Jesus that we need to reiterate and repeat to the Lord is, you have said, Lord, you said, I will build my church.

[ 26 : 12 ] So build it. You said the gates of hell would not prevail against it. So protect it. The promise of Jesus is, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

You know, I love what the late Professor John L. Mackay said in his commentary on this passage. He said about this chapter, God is assuring his church that no matter how intense the conflict and how hard pressed she will be by the world's persecution, he will make them instrumental in overthrowing their persecutors.

He will build his church and the gates of hell will not prevail. And so we see that because of his burden for the Lord's people, Zechariah, he began preaching and proclaiming this triumphal trilogy to the people of his day.

He preached and proclaimed a promise of Pentecost. That's what we see. And that's our third heading. Proclamation, promise, and Pentecost.

Proclamation, promise, and Pentecost. Look at verse 10. It says, And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and weep bitterly over him as one weeps over a firstborn.

[ 27 : 51 ] on that day, the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadar-Rimon in the plain of Megiddo. Now, the day of Pentecost was a special and a significant day in the life of the church of Jesus Christ.

That's recorded for us in Acts chapter 2, which we touched upon this morning. But, you know, it was also, the day of Pentecost was also, or the period of Pentecost, it was also a special and significant day in the life of the Old Testament people of God because Pentecost was and it still is a Jewish festival.

It's part of the Feast of Weeks, which is like, we would refer to it as Harvest Thanksgiving. But it's referred to as Pentecost because it was held exactly 50 days after the Passover, hence the name. The word Pentecost is the number 50 in Greek. And it would be at Pentecost that many of the Jews, they would come from all over the nation, just like they did at the Passover. They would come from all over the nation and sometimes even beyond and they'd gather in the city of Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast, the Feast of Weeks and Pentecost.

And it was on that day, at the very beginning of the last days, it was on that day while thousands of Jews gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate this Harvest Festival that we read in Acts chapter 1 and 2, the beginning of the New Testament church.

[ 29 : 23 ] We read that there are 120 members and they're gathered together for a prayer meeting in Jerusalem. And as the church sought the Lord in prayer, we see that the Holy Spirit came upon the place in power.

As the church sought the Lord in prayer, the Holy Spirit came upon the place and the people in power. My friend, the day of Pentecost was a special and significant day in the life of the church. And that's what this Old Testament prophecy was looking forward to. It was looking forward to the fulfillment of the promise that there would be a day, a day in the last days, when the Holy Spirit would be poured out upon the people and people would be saved.

And that's what Zechariah preached and proclaimed. He preached and proclaimed the promise of Pentecost. Verse 10, I will pour out on the house of David, which is the church, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, which is those gathered in Jerusalem for the festival.

I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and pleas for mercy. You know, the promise of Pentecost was that the Lord would pour out his spirit on the church and on the people.

[ 30 : 48 ] And on that day, on that day, the church of Jesus Christ would be empowered and enabled to preach and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And that's what happened. We read about it in Acts 2. You know, I'd encourage you to read it, to read these chapters. Remind yourself of what the Lord did right at the beginning of the last days when the Holy Spirit came upon the church.

The church began confessing Christ as king and the church began working and witnessing for the Lord. And you'll notice when you read the chapter, it wasn't just the apostles.

We're told that the whole church, all the members of the church, all 120 members, they were speaking to people about Jesus. They were inviting and urging them to come to Christ. The church was working and witnessing for the Lord. And you know, you look at ourselves tonight, 2,000 years later, we're still in the last days. We're still in this age of promise.

[ 31 : 55 ] And things haven't changed because the role and responsibility of all the members of the church is that we're to keep confessing Christ as king. We're to keep working and witnessing for the Lord.

And you know, my Christian friend, you might excuse yourself and say to me, well, Murdo, it was easier to be a Christian then than it is now. But as you know, that's not true at all.

The early church was persecuted for their faith and you know the history. But we're not persecuted at all. Coming to church is comfortable. No one is coming in the door telling us not to be here or to preach the gospel.

You know, the hardest thing we have to contend with is wearing a mask to church. But Murdo, some might say, you've just said that the day of Pentecost was special and significant.

It was a significant day in the life of the church and yes, it was. But you know, the wonderful thing is we still have the Holy Spirit Jesus promised his church in John 14, I will ask the Father to send the helper, the comforter, who is the Spirit of truth and he will be with you forever.

[ 33 : 10 ] My friend, as the church, we still have the Holy Spirit. But as members of the church, do you know, are we still confessing Christ as King? Are we still working and witnessing for the Lord?

are we still living consistent Christ-like lives? And I ask you this because I ask myself the same question. Do you know, I don't preach anything to you that I haven't first preached to myself.

And I ask myself this question often. When was the last time you spoke to someone about Jesus?

Do you know, I ask myself that often, even as a minister.

When was the last time you spoke to someone about Jesus? When was the last time you brought Jesus up in a conversation? When was the last time you invited someone to church?

When was the last time you challenged someone about their spiritual condition? And then I read the promise of Pentecost. I will pour out in the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy so that when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and weep bitterly over him as one weeps for a firstborn.

[ 34 : 25 ] On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-Rimon in the plain of Megiddo. Now, an interesting point to note about verse 11 is that the mourning for Hadad-Rimon in the plain of Megiddo, that all took place when King Josiah died.

King Josiah was what you could call a Christ-centered king. He was the one who restored the temple. He reformed the worship in Israel. But when he died, all of Jerusalem and all of Judah, they mourned for their king.

And that's what we see here because we're told that on that day, on the day of Pentecost, in the last days, this day of promise, when Peter stood up on the day of Pentecost, he spoke about Christ.

He shared the good news of the gospel. He preached Christ and Him crucified. He said to the people there, this Jesus, this King, this Christ, whom you crucified and killed, God raised Him from the dead.

And as John says in his own gospel, these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

The Scripture here in Zechariah 12, verse 10, they will look on Him whom they have pierced.

[ 35 : 42 ] And you know, what's remarkable about this promise here, the promise of on that day, on the day of Pentecost, when the people heard the gospel, they mourned over their king.

Just like they mourned in Hadar Rimon in the plain of Megiddo. They mourned over their king. They mourned over King Jesus. And they mourned over their sin.

They mourned. There was repentance. That's what we're being told. And when you read Acts chapter 2, we're told that the people were cut to the heart.

They were cut to the heart. And you know, their first response is, what shall we do? They're hearing about the gospel. They're hearing that this Jesus they crucified is now risen.

He's king. And they're mourning over the king. They're mourning over their sins. And they're asking, what shall we do? What shall we do about our sin and rebellion? What shall we do about our defiance and disobedience? What shall we do about Jesus?

