

**MONDAY**  
**25 OCTOBER**  
**Romans 8:12-17**  
**Psalm 68:1-6. 19**  
**Luke 13:10-17**

**TUESDAY**  
**26 OCTOBER**  
**Romans 8:18-25**  
**Psalm 126**  
**Luke 13:18-21**

**WEDNESDAY**  
**27 OCTOBER**  
**Romans 8:26-30**  
**Psalm 13**  
**Luke 13:22-30**

**THURSDAY**  
**28 OCTOBER**  
**Simon and**  
**Jude, Apostles**  
**Isaiah 28:14-16**  
**Psalm 119:89-96**  
**Ephesians 2:19-end**  
**John 15:17-end**

**FRIDAY**  
**29 OCTOBER**  
**Romans 9:1-5**  
**Psalm 147:13-end**  
**Luke 14:1-6**

**SATURDAY**  
**30 OCTOBER**  
**Romans 11:1-2.**  
**11-12. 25-29**  
**Psalm 94:14-19**  
**Luke 14:1. 7-11**

## REFLECTION

**T**hursday is the festival of Simon and Jude, but most of the week's Gospel readings focus on the unexpected nature of the kingdom and on the acceptability of healing on the sabbath. Leaders

of the synagogue and the Pharisees object to Jesus curing people on the sabbath. They believe you should do no work on the day of rest. The particular Pharisees and leader of the synagogue we read about this week let their anxiety about following God's commandments get in the way of their compassion. They were probably also anxious about this person who spoke with such authority, but in words that were hard to understand.

The kingdom of heaven is paradoxical and strange – unsettling for anyone who has believed all their life that they understand what God wants. Small things like a mustard seed turn into something huge, and those who think they are first find they are last. Some people understand more easily than others, but great and small, we can all be accepted if we have ears to hear.

PRAYER

Lord, help us to understand your words about the kingdom, and give us the language to help others to see it too. May we find joy in its paradoxes that turn our world upside down, but bring healing and wholeness to those who suffer.



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## BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

### PART XXXVIII – ZECHARIAH – A BOOK ABOUT RENEWAL

**G**eorgina Byrne continues our book-by-book series about the Bible.

“Thus says the Lord of hosts: My cities shall again overflow with prosperity; the Lord will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.” Zechariah 1:17

Zechariah is regarded as the companion book to Haggai, which immediately precedes it. Indeed, they share similar convictions and were written at the same time. Whereas the shorter Haggai is a call to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem, Zechariah's vision is more expansive, concerning the general restoration of Judah and the renewal of God's people.

Like Haggai, this prophet speaks to those returning from decades of exile in Babylon. Zechariah is the grandson of Iddo, the head of a priestly family. He notes at the beginning that, whereas former prophets spoke of God's anger and punishment, now the message is one of reconciliation: “Return to me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will return to you.”

The book has two distinct parts, which leads some to conclude that it has two authors. The first half contains a series of eight visions, where Zechariah engages with angels or “men of God” who explain what he sees. The vivid imagery demonstrates that God will comfort Zion and provide protection, God will be a “wall of fire” around the city, and “the glory within it.” The high priest, Joshua, will be restored and the governor, Zerubbabel, who rebuilt the Temple, will be elevated. Evil and falsehood will have no place in the restored land and, once they are cast out, God's envoys, the four winds, will stand guard against them.

This is powerful imagery of a nation so much at peace, so thriving and beloved, that other nations will long to seek the favour their God (8:22-23).

The second half of the Zechariah contains two oracles, different in tone, but echoing something of what has gone before. Again, there are words of comfort – some very familiar: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion...” (9:9) and a sense of prosperity and a bright future. Mixed into this, though, are warnings, also familiar, to the leaders who, as shepherds of God's people, are to take care in tending this treasured flock.

# LIVE the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by Caroline Hodgson and Heather Smith



Last week after Trinity

Monday 25 October to Saturday 30 October 2021

WEEK