MAJOR ON THE MINORS | HOPE CHAPEL

THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH

God Gets Angry - God Defends His People - God Transforms His People

Evan Johnson | Sunday 20 September 2026 | 9AM Gawler | Part 11

Big Idea: *God's anger is not directed at you - it is directed at everything that would harm you. And because he loves you, he will stand on your mountain and split it in half. He defeated the enemy on a hill outside Jerusalem, and the power of that victory belongs to you today.*

Background - The Book of Zechariah

Zechariah is the second-to-last of the 12 Minor Prophets and the second-to-last book of the Old Testament. It is the longest of the Minor Prophet books. It was written in the eighth month of the second year of Darius the Great - king from 522 to 486 BC - placing it approximately 18 to 20 years after the Babylonian exile. The latter half of the book was written some 40 to 60 years after that.

This means Zechariah and Haggai were contemporaries - both prophetically ministering in Jerusalem at the same time, around the same years that the foundation stones of the temple had been sitting untouched. They must have crossed paths, and may even have prayed and discerned together.

The book contains strange visionary imagery - flying scrolls, olive trees supplying a lamp with endless oil - and a substantial amount of prophecy that points directly to Jesus. Like most of the Minor Prophets, it opens with God's anger, and moves toward restoration and transformation.

Evan brought three clear points from Zechariah, each building on the last:

- God gets angry with evil
- God defends his people
- God transforms his people

POINT 1 | God Gets Angry with Evil

Most of us have a complicated relationship with the idea of God getting angry. We either dismiss it as Old Testament language that doesn't apply to us, or we carry a quiet fear that his anger might be aimed at us personally. Evan addressed both.

> **Zechariah 1:2–6** *The Lord was very angry with your ancestors. Therefore tell the people: This is what the Lord Almighty says: Return to me, declares the Lord Almighty, and I will return to you, says the Lord Almighty. Do not be like your ancestors, to whom the earlier*

> *prophets proclaimed: Turn from your evil ways and your evil practices. But they would not listen or pay attention to me, declares the Lord.*

This is heavy language, and Evan didn't soften it. But here is the key reframe: the Bible never says God doesn't get angry. It says his anger is directed at evil that harms the ones he loves.

God is not angry at you. He is angry at the evil that would harm you. We are not the victims of God's anger - we are the beneficiaries.

Why God's Anger Is Different from Ours

We often overlay our human experience of anger onto God - quick to rise, reactive, emotional, lashing out because we are frustrated. God's anger is nothing like that. It is slow to rise, considered, targeted, and purposeful. It is not indiscriminate - it is not God throwing his toys out of the cot. It is a considered response to a problem.

The ancestors in Zechariah were not let down by a quick-tempered God. Their generations had practised child sacrifice, ritual prostitution, rebellion, and the abuse and oppression of the vulnerable. And when God displayed anger toward that, it was aimed entirely at cleansing the evil and liberating those it was crushing - not at the people themselves.

> **Zechariah 7:9–12** *This is what the Lord Almighty said: Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other. But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and covered their ears.*

The standard God was asking for is not impossibly high. Don't plot evil against each other. Show mercy. Care for the vulnerable. And yet they turned their backs and covered their ears. God's anger was a reasonable response to flagrant, repeated, deliberate evil. Not a slip or a struggle, but a generations-long, hardened rebellion.

Evan put it this way: God's anger lasts for a moment, but his favour lasts for a lifetime. Sorrow may come in the night, but joy comes in the morning. He never goes too far, and he always delivers those who are faithful.

Reflect: *Have you been carrying a version of God that looks like an angry parent waiting to catch you out? What changes if you let this reframe in - that his anger is directed at what would harm you, not at you?*

POINT 2 | God Defends His People

Zechariah 14 is an apocalyptic-style vision of God gathering the nations around Jerusalem as agents of judgment - and then turning on those very nations to rescue his people. It draws on imagery the returned exiles would have understood viscerally: they had just lived through their city being surrounded, put under siege, and their people dragged into exile.

> **Zechariah 14:3–5** *Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. You will flee by my mountain valley... Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.*

A city is surrounded, under siege, with no way out. And God comes and stands on the mountain that is part of what is ringing it in - and splits it in two. He opens a valley where there was none. He makes a way out.

> *Evan made it personal: what is the mountain in your life right now that you can't get past? What dead end is in front of you that feels like there is no way through? He said directly that he believed there was someone in the room for whom God was going to stand on their mountain and split it in half.*

The Pattern in History

The same pattern appears at the cross. All of hell thought it had won. Death and darkness closed in, surrounding the Son of God. And at just the right moment, when every enemy of God thought they were taking possession of their prize, God turned the tables.

The resurrection was God stepping forward in glory, drawing his enemies in and then defeating all of them at once. He allowed them to think they were winning, and then he turned on them. Zechariah was writing this pattern down 550 years before it happened - and he had no idea that was what he was pointing to.

The darkness you are in will not last. God will reveal his power at the right moment - and turn defeat into victory for his people, as he has always done.

When God opens a way through your mountain, don't overthink it, don't second-guess it, and don't wait for more certainty. The scripture says they fled through the valley like people fleeing an earthquake. You run. You get out. You go through the opening he has made.

Reflect: *Where is your mountain right now - the dead end, the thing you can't see your way past? What would it mean to position yourself at the front so that when God opens the way, you are ready to run?*

POINT 3 | God Transforms His People

Evan took the final section of Zechariah 14 - verses 20 and 21 - and drew out something that sounds strange until you understand its meaning:

> **Zechariah 14:20–21** *On that day HOLY TO THE LORD will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, and the cooking pots in the Lord's house will be like the sacred bowls in front of the altar. Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the Lord Almighty, and all who come to sacrifice will take some of the pots and cook in them.*

In the temple worship, everything was prescribed and separated. The words 'holy to the Lord' were written on one place only - the high priest's golden headdress. One person. One place. One set of rules. That was how you approached God.

These verses describe the complete collapse of that barrier. Holy to the Lord is inscribed on the horse bells, on the kitchen cooking pots, on everything. Not to debase or cheapen what is holy - but to elevate the everyday to holiness. Every person, every space, now has access to God. No special priest needed. No correct sacrifice, no correct bowl, no correct formula.

This is exactly what Jesus did for us. The curtain in the temple tore from top to bottom on the day he died - God reaching down to humanity, throwing open the way. The word 'holy to the Lord' went from one golden headdress to every person who comes to him.

> *The presence of God in you does not get reduced or threatened when you walk out of this room. It transforms where it goes. Holiness is an explosion moving outward from the temple into all of life - and now the temple is you.*

Evan's closing challenge was direct: God did not go to all the effort of defeating death, sin and hell to leave you floundering in your old life. Take on the transformation that is already yours. The power that split the Mount of Olives in a vision, the power that split the grave open on Easter Sunday - that is the power available to you.

Reflect: *In what areas of your life have you kept God in a compartment rather than letting him be 'holy to the Lord' across everything - your work, your home, your relationships, your everyday? What would it look like to live as if all of it belongs to him?*

Conclusion

God's anger is directed at your enemies, not at you.
He will stand on your mountain and split it in half.
And when he opens the way - run.

Zechariah is a book written to a people rebuilding after ruin, surrounded by opposition, uncertain of the future. God's message to them was the same as his message to us: I am angry with the things that would harm you. I will defend you when it matters most. And I am transforming everything about how you access me - not through a ritual, not through a priest, not through getting it right enough. Through Jesus.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

Use these on your own during the week, or with your LifeGroup.

1. How have you typically thought about God's anger - something to fear, something to dismiss, or something else? How does Evan's reframe change that picture: that God is angry at what would harm you, not at you?

2. Zechariah 7:9-10 describes what God was actually asking from the people: justice, mercy, compassion, care for the vulnerable. How are you tracking with those things in your own ordinary life?

3. Evan named the bait-and-switch pattern: God drawing his enemies in, letting them think they're winning, and then turning the tables. You see this at the cross. Where do you need to believe that pattern is still in play in your situation right now?

4. Evan said directly: I believe there is someone here for whom God is going to stand on their mountain and split it in half. Does that land for you? What is the mountain you're facing? What would it take to position yourself at the front, ready to run when the way opens?

5. The closing image of Zechariah - 'holy to the Lord' inscribed on everything, even the cooking pots - describes the total collapse of the barrier between holy and ordinary. In your life, what areas feel most separated from God? What would it mean to let holiness expand into those spaces?

6. God didn't rescue his people to leave them floundering. Evan's closing challenge: take on the transformation. Where is the specific next step of transformation that you have been putting off or avoiding?

Key Scriptures This Week

- Zechariah 1:2–3 - Return to me, declares the Lord Almighty, and I will return to you
- Zechariah 7:9–10 - Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion
- Zechariah 7:12–13 - They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen
- Zechariah 14:3 - The Lord will go out and fight against those nations
- Zechariah 14:4 - His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives - it will split in two
- Zechariah 14:20–21 - Holy to the Lord inscribed on everything; every pot holy
- Psalm 30:5 - God's anger lasts a moment; his favour lasts a lifetime