Kings and Prophets 17-09-07

This is Thursday, the 7th of September, 2017. We continue our study of kings and prophets. We are in the early days of post-exile with return to the land.

We're examining the historical record as well as the prophets that God commissioned to communicate to His people during this time. And most importantly, looking at the interaction between that history and those prophetic messages. What does it tell us? Why did God send Haggai and Zechariah and Malachi in these days with the specific message that they deliver? And we see that much of it revolves around looking back at the reasons for the captivity, looking at the present mission to restore and rebuild God's house, and looking to the future because much of what is potential remains unfulfilled at this time.

Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our study and then we'll begin. Father, we thank You for this time of fellowship and of opportunity to learn new things from Your Word and to see their pertinence in our own lives. We pray that as we look at this portion of the history of Your people, that Your Holy Spirit will teach us and guide us and help us to see what it means to us, how we should live in the light of it, so that in the days that remain to us in this life and on this earth, we can maximize the potential and take the most advantage of what You have graciously given to us through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We pray these things in His name. Amen. Well, we have seen, and once again, just to be sure we've got a mental grip on the context here, we have a set of pretty firm dates to put this time in context.

Nebuchadnezzar had three invasions of the southern kingdom of Judah. One was 605 B.C. This is when Daniel and his three friends were taken. Then 597, we believe this is when Ezekiel was taken.

And then finally 586, when the temple was destroyed and the remaining people who are going to be hauled off to Babylon are taken away. So 586, destruction of the temple. We come down through the career of Daniel, that we have seen in some detail, to the days of Cyrus.

We know that Daniel lived all the way down to that time. And in the days of Cyrus, the early days of his reign over this region, we find him issuing the decree that the book of Ezra begins with that provides for the returning of the exiles to the land, specifically to rebuild the temple. That's their mission.

That's what their provision is given for. And so we see that this mission is given to Sheshbazer and or Zerubbabel. No one's really sure if they are one and the same guy.

There's an intriguing note when you look at Zerubbabel's family. He had an uncle named Shenazar, I believe it is. S-H-E-N-A-Z-A-R.

And so knowing how these names can be corrupted, especially the Babylonian names when they come across into the biblical text, it's possible that Sheshbazer was Zerubbabel's uncle and that he helped to lay the foundation and handed off the work to his nephew. Sheshbazer could also be a Babylonian title that Zerubbabel held. Both of them are said to lay the foundation of the temple.

So whether they were two men working together or two different ways of referring to the same guy, there's been a lot of blood spilt trying to settle that question, and it's really not important or we'd be able to settle it. Regardless of that, the first six chapters of Ezra deal with this return in 536, authorized by the decree of Cyrus to get God's house out of the rubble and back in operation. And we saw that this begins with high hopes and great fanfare and within two years grinds to a halt.

So the building of it started in Ezra 3, verses 8-13, and by chapter 4, verses 4 and 5, it has stalled out. The friction from those who dwell there and the revoking of authorization that happens when letters are sent back to the Persian Empire bring the thing to a halt. This is unprecedented.

Israel in the wilderness, when Moses was constructing the tabernacle, they were surrounded by enemies, and enemies did not come in and stop them building the tabernacle. Solomon took seven years to build his temple and nothing stopped him. Yet here, with full royal authorization and plenty of provision, they are stymied and the work stops for about 18 years.

So it is at this time, the building of the temple starts in 536, and this sort of makes sense because that's 70 years after the first incursion by Nebuchadnezzar. If you add 70 to 536, you get 606, 605. That's 70 years from the beginning.

Remember, Daniel got excited about that upcoming anniversary of his own captivity, and he goes before the Lord with that very well-prepared session of prayer and intercession. So with the two-year delay and everything grinding to a halt, since it began in 536, it goes along until about 534, and then it quits. These dates are important, so make a note of them.

Rebuilding the temple begins in 536, so it grinds to a halt two years later. That's 534. Well, 14 years later, in 520, you have God sending the prophet Haggai and the prophet Zechariah.

Fourteen years later. So 520, this is the second year of Darius that we have seen noted time and again in the book of Haggai. So that's where we are.

Sixteen years have gone by since they started, and God says, What's going on? Why haven't you finished the mission? What's the matter? And if you remember our survey of Haggai, which if you just want to browse through those pages, God says basically in the first part of it, You say it's not the right time. You say you don't have enough. You look around and you say, well, we're going to reap the grapes and there's not enough there.

We're going to reap the crops and there's not enough there. We're trying to use resources and

there's not enough there. And so in essence, the argument in the first part of chapter one, when God accuses the people and charges them, He says, the people say it's not the right time to build the house of God.

Why is it not the right time? We don't have enough to take care of ourselves. How can we build the house of God? That's essentially it. It's not the right time.

God says, but you are living in paneled houses. So your case doesn't hold water. You're living in a paneled house.

My house is still nothing but a foundation. So you're citing the fact that there isn't enough. God says, you know why you don't have enough? The cause and effect are exactly backward.

The reason you don't have enough, the reason you lack strength to complete it, the reason the opposition is overcoming you, and the reason there is holes in the bag that you try to bring things home with, is you have not finished my house. You're using those as arguments for not finishing, but it's circular. The reason you don't have enough, the reason you are encountering opposition is, you have not finished the house.

So what's the problem? Is God right or are the people right? Lord, we can't finish, we don't have enough. God says, you don't have enough because you're not finished. This, when you do the subtraction on both sides of the equal sign and solve for the variable here, it is their dedication.

They have to do this by faith. They've got to strike out and do it and not wait until, well, it looks like the right time. God already told them the time.

He issued a decree through Cyrus 18 years earlier. It's been the right time for nearly two decades. And their argument, based on circumstances, flies in the face of the Word of God.

God gave them the Word. God gave them means, motive, and opportunity. They say, well, it's not the right time.

What is their argument? Look at our circumstances. God says, circumstances are not an argument. You determine what is right and what needs to be done based on the Word of God.

This is a great illustration for us in terms of how we should prioritize and how we should make our decisions. Are we doing situational ethics? It's right because the situation says it's right. It looks like the right time because I'm parsing circumstance.

Or do we look at the Word of God that gives us guidance and it says, now is the appointed time. Now is the day of deliverance. My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Take no thought for what you will eat, what you will drink, what you will wear. Your Father in Heaven knows you have need of these. But if you wait until you have them before you go listen to the Lord Jesus teach or follow Him as a disciple in His day, you've got it backwards.

The disciples who were fishermen left their nets and left their boats and followed the Lord Jesus. They didn't wait until they were independently wealthy enough to follow Him. Remember that whole ministry for those three and a half years was supported by donations, by people who recognized who Jesus was and sent gifts and made provision and housed them and fed them.

So there is a principle here that we have to determine what is right and do what is right, determine the will of God, see the commands and the ordinances of God and follow them, not waiting until circumstances seem fortuitous. This is what hung these people up. And for 18 years they stagnated.

Nothing happened. And the most important building in town, the Temple of God, which was the reason they were able to return, lies unfinished. What does the Temple of God represent? What is it for? It's called the house.

Remember we said this is the word bait. Well, whose house is it? It's God's house. Remember David's great angst was, I've got a house and God doesn't.

I want to build God a house here in my capital city. And God said, your intentions are good, but your son is going to build a house. The son of David will build the house, which is the dwelling place of God.

But God honored David's heart because he was a man after God's own heart. That is the heart that is lacking in the people who come back with Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel is ready to do it.

Joshua the priest is ready to do it. But they can't get momentum going in this group of people because the people are convinced that it's not the right time. We don't determine the time looking at circumstance.

We determine the time looking at the word of God. That's our first point. Now think about this timing, though, because this is what our whole kings and prophets study has helped us to do, is place the message in the context of events.

So we say, in 520, here comes Haggai and Zechariah. Well, 520 is a really busy year for prophecy. In the eighth month of that year, which is the second year of Darius, according to Haggai, the second year of King Darius in the sixth month, that's when Haggai's first message comes.

Now the sixth month is toward the end of August. What happened during the captivity is people began to realize that, well, our calendar really ought to be based on the law of Moses. And so when they're counting months now, they're not counting from the traditional ancient Near Eastern head of the year in the fall.

They're counting from Nisan, from Abib, from what God told them at Passover, this will be the beginning of your year. So when it says here in Haggai 1.1, in the second year in the sixth

month, this is six months from Abib. That's when the Lord gives this message to Haggai.

It's the sixth month. And we actually can figure out the date. It was the 29th of August, 520 BC.

That's when the first message comes. What is the content of that message? What we just discussed. You sow a lot, but you reap a little.

Your argument that it's not the right time is faulty. Get with the program. Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified, verse 8. That's your key verse for that whole section.

Stop telling me it's not the right time. Stop worrying about the fact that you ought to be motivated and understand that the reason you don't have plenty is that your spiritual priorities are not in order. So instead of trying to solve the shortage problem, solve the spiritual priority problem, and the shortage will take care of itself.

God will take care of that. God is using the shortage to get their attention. That's the message that comes in the sixth month.

So, Zerubbabel, with all the remnant of the people, in verse 12, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him, and the people feared the presence of the Lord. Haggai, the Lord's messenger, spoke the Lord's message to the people, saying, I am with you, says the Lord. He doesn't say, wait for the rain, which is going to be an issue later on.

He doesn't say, I'll give you a bumper crop this year. He doesn't say, pretty soon the opposition you're experiencing from the Persians and the Samaritans will diminish. What does he say? Get with it and get it done.

Why? Circumstances have changed? No. I am with you, says the Lord. No circumstances have changed.

The reason they're going to pick up their tools and get with this is the prophetic message comes, and God reminds them, I am with you. What is the name that the angel Gabriel says to give to the baby that's going to be born in Bethlehem 520 years later on? Emmanuel, which is God with us, right? God with us. And when the Word is made flesh and dwells among us, what is the dwelling place of God? What's it called here? What's God's house called? The temple, right? So, the arrival of the temple, the presence of the temple is the place where the presence of God is going to be manifest.

God says, I'm with you. Recognize the importance of this dwelling place for me in your midst. It's going to be the same message 516 years on when the shepherds get the Word, when Simeon and Anna get the Word, when the wise men from the East get the Word, that Emmanuel has come.

It's a spiritual priority. So, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the son of Shaltiel, governor of Judah. Oh, by the way, I don't think I mentioned this earlier.

You remember what Zerubbabel means. Names are no accident in Scripture. Remember what Zerubbabel means? Zerubbabel.

Seed of Babylon, right? Seed of Babel. How about Shaltiel? Shaltiel is formed from the suffix, of course, is God, El. But the beginning of it is the word that means to request or to ask.

So, Shaltiel means asked of the Lord. Similar to Shmuel. It uses a different verb.

A different word for calling. There's a little bit different emphasis. But this is from the word that means to request or to ask.

And so, the son of asked of the Lord is Zerubbabel, the guy who is going to lay this foundation and is going to see this temple completed. He is the guy that gets it done. And God's going to have some things to say about him as a result.

And Yeshua, the son of Jehozadak. We know what Yeshua is, right? What's the other name for the baby that's going to be born in Bethlehem? Yeshua, right? Emmanuel is Yeshua. And he is the son of who? Jehozadak.

I mean, this Joshua. This Joshua the priest that's Zerubbabel's partner in the project is Joshua the son of Jehozadak. Well, here the beginning of the word is the divine name, Yahweh.

You can see the first part of Jehovah there, right? So this is Yahweh. And what's that last part? Zadak. Remember the Hebrew word for righteousness? Tzedek.

Jehot Tzedek. The Lord's righteousness. The Lord is righteous.

There is a lot of Christological anticipation here, is there not? In all of these names. By the way, who is the seed, capital S, of the woman going all the way back to Genesis 3? Talking about crushing heads and bruising heels, the seed of the woman. Who is that? The Lord Jesus Christ.

He's the fulfillment of that. God himself giving the first prophecy in the Bible, back there in Genesis 3, the seed of the woman. Here's a man whose name is Seed of Babel, seed of the nations, basically.

So there's a lot of anticipation of the Lord Jesus here. They obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him. The people feared the presence of the Lord.

Haggai says, I'm with you, says the Lord. Immanuel, God with us. So the Lord stirs up the spirit of Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua, the son of Jehoshadak.

You notice why we get their full names here over and over and over? It's thumping on the football helmet here. Do you get it? Are you listening? Are you paying attention? This is prophetic. It is symbolic.

It is anticipatory. It resonates down through the ages. There's more going on here than just, here's how the second temple got started.

The spirit of all the remnant of the people, the remnant. How many times have we seen, except God had left us a remnant, except there were a faithful few, we would have been cut off. We would have been no more.

But God has promised that there will be survivors. There will be some in every generation who will hold the fort of faith. And so these people, awakened by the word of God through Haggai, get this done.

They came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts their God. The Lord of hosts their God. When? 24th day of the sixth month.

So they get the word on the first day of the sixth month. And three weeks later, they get busy. Now, evidently, it took three weeks to get the effort organized.

It took three weeks for Haggai to repeat this message, to preach it, to reach everybody with it. It's understandable, you can't get on national television. But they get this done, and they begin on the 24th day of the sixth month.

Sixth month. Look at chapter 2, verse 1. On the 21st of the month. This is three weeks later.

The word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet. And he says, Speak now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Jehoshadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, these same ones that started the work three weeks ago. Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? How do you see it now? In comparison, is this not, in your eyes, as nothing? This temple that they're working on now, and it's beginning to take shape, right? It's going to have some structure.

They're beginning to see its dimensions. They're beginning to see its, you can begin to visualize it, right? They say, is this not as nothing? What would be another way of saying this? You see this temple, how it has no form or comeliness that you should desire it? When you look at this temple, it seems very unimpressive compared to what you would expect to house the glory of God. Does this have some traction in our retrospective view? This temple, this dwelling place for the glory of God, the fullness of deity in a physical form here, doesn't it almost make you weep because it doesn't reflect the glory that you would expect in the beginning? Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel, says the Lord, and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehoshadak, the high priest, and be strong, all you people of the land, says the Lord, for Emmanuel.

Emmanuel, I am with you. God says it again. Don't judge by the appearance.

Don't judge by the seeming lack of glory. God says, I'll put my glory in this thing. I am with you, says the Lord of hosts, according to the word I covenanted with you.

This humble beginning is a lot like that humble beginning when you came out as recent slaves from Egypt, making bricks out of mud, unskilled, untaught, unwise in the ways of warfare, unable to defend yourself. The reason you could go boldly out of Egypt and head for the Promised Land against seven nations greater and mightier than you wasn't because you had great circumstances. It wasn't because you were skilled and had a wonderful army.

Why were they able to go? There was a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire. There was God in their midst, right? And soon there was a tabernacle with the glory of God in the midst. You were able to go and you had this potential, not because you are mighty, not because you are great, not because your circumstances are ideal, but because I am with you.

What's our great memory verse? Fear thou not. Why? For I am with you. Be not dismayed.

I am your God. Why does He have to say, be not dismayed? Why does He have to say, fear not? Because there's something fearful and dismaying right there in prospect. When I'm sitting up there in my chair at my desk, I don't need anybody to tell me, fear not or be not dismayed.

There's nothing scary up there. When do you need exhortation to be not afraid and be not dismayed? When there are fearful, dismaying prospects and circumstances all around you and God says, fear thou not. Why? I'm about to fix this circumstance.

Is that what He says? Fear not. I'm going to move this out of the way. It won't be fearful in just a minute.

Be not dismayed because I'm about to change your circumstances to great prosperity and comfort. Is that what He says? He says the same thing He says here. Fear thou not because I am with you.

Don't be dismayed. I am your God. And He doesn't say I'm going to fix the circumstances.

What's the rest of that verse say? I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness.

The strength isn't going to be poured into the circumstances. The strength is poured into us. That's how Zerubbabel and Joshua and this faithful remnant are going to get this temple built.

It is according to covenant. And God says it's because I am with you. Don't judge your situation by your circumstances.

Judge your situation by how present is God. Are we qualified for His presence? Do you remember why the glory of God left the temple that got knocked down by Nebuchadnezzar? What did Ezekiel say? Remember when the Holy Spirit raised him up by the hair of the head and dropped him down in that temple? And God says, Son of man, look at what they're doing. I can't

stay here.

Why? They're weeping for Tammuz. They're worshiping idols. They've set up abominations in my holy precincts.

I can't be with you if you do not sanctify and hallow the ground I'm supposed to occupy. The place I'm supposed to dwell. And render the honor that is due God in the very first commandment.

That's how they lost His presence and lost everything that goes with it to include the city, the land, their freedom, their relatives, their future. They lost everything. They frittered away their birthright.

And when God says I am with you, He says according to the covenant. Look at verse 5 of chapter 2 of Haggai. According to the word I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt.

And we looked at that covenant. Remember the blessings and cursings on Mount Ebal and Mount Gerasing? That's the covenant. If you obey, if you are faithful, if you keep my laws and my statutes, if you love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, one of you will put to flight a thousand.

Your crops will come in in abundance. Your animals will be healthy. You will have many children.

You will prosper. There will be land flowing with milk and honey. But if you do the opposite, you will experience the opposite.

That's it in a nutshell, isn't it? Mount Ebal and Mount Gerasing. The covenant I made with you when we left Egypt. Thus says the Lord of hosts in 2.6. Once more it is a little while I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land.

I will shake all nations and they shall come to the desire of all nations. That's what Babel represents. Babel is the nations.

That's where the nations originated. In the plain of Shinar. What was the name of that tower where the languages got confused? Babel, right? They have the potential here with this symbolically named man and this symbolically named priest.

The governor and the priest, the civil authority and the religious authority here combine with their fathers and their fathers' names to create this great time of potential. It's like Jesus said about John the Baptist. They say, well, isn't Elijah supposed to come before the Messiah? He says, if you were ready, if your heart was right, if your priorities were right, John the Baptist is Elijah.

He's Elijah if you're ready for him. But of course they weren't. And that opportunity, because that humble temple that showed up in their midst wasn't impressive.

It didn't seem to... Only three guys saw the glory inside that temple up on the Mount of Transfiguration, right? God says, look, verse 7, I will fill this temple with glory, says the Lord of hosts. It doesn't look glorious now, but I'm going to fill it. And there are people that just couldn't grasp that, couldn't express faith in it, couldn't believe it, couldn't act on it, couldn't reorder their priorities out of faith instead of looking at circumstance.

How do I know this? I've said over and again that the timing here is really important. All of this is in the year 520, right? Haggai prophesies in the sixth month. And he prophesies in the seventh month.

Then you notice down in verse 10, it jumps down to the ninth month, right? So there's a couple of missing months there. Well, guess what? And you can make a note here in your Bible. I'm amazed that Bibles don't do this.

But in my Bible, there's a great big arrow that points to the very nice gap that the new King James has put there between verse 9 and verse 10. And in mine, it's labeled, the people are defiled. Something has happened between verse 9 and verse 10.

A couple of months have passed, but it's not silent. Flip one page and look at Zechariah chapter 1, verse 1. In the eighth month of the second year of King Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah, the son of Berechiah. So you have the word from Haggai in chapter 1. You have the word of God to his people through Haggai at the beginning of chapter 2, 2-1-9.

Those two messages are delivered. Then God speaks through Zechariah. He sends a different messenger.

Zechariah is the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo. And there ought to be a comma after Iddo because the word the prophet there refers to Zechariah, not to Iddo. The word of the Lord came to Zechariah, the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo.

That's how it's constructed in Hebrew. And you can fix it by just putting a comma there in your English. But Zechariah is the prophet here.

Now, right after that wonderful promise, that wonderful presentation of opportunity and that challenge that God gives through Haggai in chapter 1 and the first half of chapter 2, what happened? Haggai gives that on the 21st of the month, in the 7th month. Well, here we are in the 8th month and God says, The Lord has been very angry with your fathers. Therefore say to them, Zechariah, Thus says the Lord of hosts, Return to me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts.

Do not be like your fathers. Now let me ask you something. We were talking about fear and dismay a minute ago, right? You don't have to tell somebody to not be afraid when they're in comfort and security.

We get that encouragement when there is a temptation or an opportunity or a challenge in the

area of fear and dismay, right? So if God sends a whole fresh prophet into the mix here and he says, Return to me. Don't be like your fathers. What's the situation? Is everybody gangbusters full of faith and did God have to send a message like this when Solomon was building his temple? Did he have to send a message like this when Moses was building the tabernacle? Why does this message come with fresh impetus from a fresh prophet just a couple of weeks after Haggai just got through presenting this wonderful opportunity? Why do you tell somebody to return? Everybody sitting in this room right now, please return to the room.

Oh wait, you haven't left. Who do you tell to return? Somebody that has left. Somebody that has departed.

They are astray. They are away. They are gone.

And you say, Return. Return to me and I will return to you, right? So within, again, this wonderful impetus, Zerubbabel and Joshua are ready to get this thing done and they begin the work. And before they can get into it even a couple of weeks, God sends Zachariah and he says, Look, you've got the tools in your hands and you're building and they're going to get this thing done in the next two years.

They're going to get the temple finished. But God said, Are you looking at the externals? Are you weeping or rejoicing because you see the shape and size of this physical temple? That's not what you base your judgment on. You base your judgment on the fact that I say I will fill this temple with my glory.

The glory is what counts. My presence is what counts. And even as they resume the work, it's like Balaam riding off at God's behest to stand on the mountain and look over the camp of Israel and say some words.

God has to stop him because even though he's going in the right direction, he's doing it in the wrong spirit. God stops Moses, as I said last time, on his way back to Egypt because he's going in the right direction but he's going in the wrong spirit. There's sin in the camp.

There's disobedience in his own household. Same thing here. They've picked up the tools and they've whipped up a frenzy.

Here's Zerubbabel and Joshua who seem to be two good men. But God sends Zachariah and he says, You're working but you haven't returned to me. You're doing what your fathers did.

Who's their namesake father? Who's the nation named for? Israel, right? What night did he get that name? He wrestled and how did he try to obtain his blessing? How did he try to maintain the presence of the Lord? Physical force. I will use my strength and I will not let you go until you bless me. Now stop and think about that.

We've thought about it a lot in the past but think about this just for a moment. What is the criteria for receiving blessing from God? It's like the question in Esther. What shall be done for

the man whom the king delights to honor? Who does God delight to bless? He's really got a hold of my ankle here.

I guess I better bless him or I'm never getting free. What is the criteria for blessing? Jacob knows this. Way back at Bethel when he was on his way out of the land and now he's on his way back in.

But he spoke with the Lord. God showed him the ladder with the angels ascending and descending which is also a picture of the coming Son of Man. You remember that? Jesus refers to that later on.

He says you'll see angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man. That's the bridge between heaven and earth. That's the way, the truth and the life.

What's going on here? The Lord has been very angry with your fathers. He doesn't say he's very angry with you. He says he's been very angry with your fathers.

In other words, if you don't learn from history, you're going to be doomed to repeat it. This is the strategy of the indirect approach. He doesn't shock them by saying I'm very angry with you.

They say we're working on the temple. He says what got your fathers in trouble? Why was I angry with them 40 years in the wilderness? It isn't that they didn't leave Egypt. It isn't that they didn't camp when the cloud stopped and move when the cloud moved.

What did they get in trouble for? What does the book of Hebrews lead off with? With whom was he angry for 40 years? They would not enter into God's rest. They would not enter by faith into rest. Some of you will remember there is a well-used term, faith, rest.

You enter into the rest by faith. It isn't a matter of working your way into the rest. It's a truism that as couples get older, they keep saying we're working toward retirement, but you keep working and working and you often don't ever get to retirement.

Just one more thing and then we'll retire. Do this and we'll be done. Well, you're never done.

They are unharnessing your corpse in the midst of your furrow there and you never get there. Enter into the rest not by work. Enter into rest by faith.

Enter into the presence of God not by work, not by I will not let you go until you bless me. I will use my strength to force you to bless me. We'll build this house and you'll have to bless us.

God says you're missing the point. I've told you that I'm withholding blessing. I'm withholding prosperity to get your attention, but I don't want you working blindly so that the crops will come in and the bag will no longer have holes.

You've got to turn, return, return to me so that I can return to you. It's a relationship and that is the key to the book of Zechariah. If you're familiar at all with what's coming up in Zechariah,

and just look at your, we don't have time to do much more tonight, but look at chapter 2. If you've got a New King James, how is that chapter subtitled in your edition there? It says, Vision of the Measuring Line.

It's a measuring line. What do you use a measuring line for? You determine the size of a thing. God is stretching a measuring line out over Jerusalem.

Have these people learned? He's measuring their spirit. He's measuring their soul. He's measuring their faith.

He's measuring their heart. There is a measuring line stretched out. In chapter 3, you have the vision of the high priest, Joshua the high priest, and in his symbolic role, anticipating the Lord Jesus, there is a lot going on there.

But you'll notice it's not about the building. God doesn't send an angel to say, you really came up short on this temple foundation, and these dimensions are not exactly what I specified in my word, and the pattern shown to Moses in the mount isn't being followed here. The blueprints that David laid out are not being, who's being looked at? Who's being evaluated here? The symbol is the high priest himself, his person.

Remember when Haggai said these people are saying it's not the right time? It's what's going on in the heart. In chapter 4 of Zechariah, you have the lampstand and the olive trees, and look at verse 6. Now you know where this comes from. This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel.

We don't typically quote that part. This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, not by might, not by power, by my spirit, by my presence, says the Lord of hosts. Who are you, O great mountain, O great circumstantial difficulty, O unclimbable peak, O insurmountable obstacle? Who are you? Before Zerubbabel you shall become flat.

He will bring forth the capstone with shouts of grace. Grace to it. Where the Lord came to me in verse 8 there, verse 9, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple.

His hands shall also finish it. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. Now, God promised through Haggai that he was going to fill this temple that Zerubbabel began with his glory.

That temple never got finished. And the glory of God never came. Keep your finger here really quickly and turn over to 1 Kings chapter 6. 1 Kings chapter 6. We saw this way back at the beginning of our study.

This is what you don't see in Ezra. It came to pass in the 480th year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel. By the way, how long total does it take Zerubbabel to build this temple? He did two years, got stopped for 18 years and then he builds for two more years So how long total work does it take? Two years at the beginning, two years at the end, right? So how long did it take him? Two plus two is?

Four.

How long does it take Solomon here? In the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel he began to build the house of the Lord. The house which Solomon built for the Lord. Here's its length, its vestibule and all the rest of it.

You have the description there throughout chapter 6. Move down to verse 36. He built the inner court with three rows of hewn stone and a row of cedar beams. In the fourth year, the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid in the month of Ziv.

And in the eleventh year, in the month of Bul, which is which month? The eighth month. It's the same eighth month we're looking at in Zechariah. Zechariah comes on the anniversary month.

It's the same month, it's the eighth month. The month of Bul. It's got a three-syllable name that I can't even pronounce.

Marchesvan or something like that. Bul is the old name, so we'll use that one. But the message of Zechariah is pregnant with additional meaning because it comes in that month when Solomon's temple was finished.

These guys have begun the work, right? And in the eighth month, Solomon was finished. According to all its plans, he was seven years in building it. Seven years.

These guys are going to take more than three times that long to finish God's temple. Back in Zechariah, the hands of Zerubbabel, chapter 4, verse 9, have laid the foundation of this temple. His hands shall also finish it.

Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. For who has despised the day of small things? You look at the temple and you're weeping. Some of you are happy, some of you are sad.

It doesn't match the glory. We don't see the glory of God come. If you continue reading that account of the finishing of the temple, the glory of God fills it.

It drives all the priests out. It's a blinding sight. There's massive amounts of sacrifice and celebration.

God's presence is manifestly there. It never happens here. And yet God says, I will fill this temple with my glory.

So, what happened? There is an interval, a hidden interval, between the founding of this temple and when it will actually be finished. When this temple is actually finished, it's going to be the millennial kingdom. It's going to be the millennial temple of Ezekiel 40-48.

And that temple is the temple that God will fill with His glory. That temple, by the way, is the temple that Zerubbabel is going to put the capstone on. How is he going to do that? He's

coming back.

That's the great affirmation of resurrection that so many people don't see when they look at the Old Testament. They say, there's no concept of resurrection. How is Zerubbabel going to finish the temple for the glory of God to fill it unless he comes back? Zerubbabel, by the way, is of the line of David.

You can confirm this in Chronicles. The line is given over in... Let me find my note. If you look at the end of Haggai, verse 23 of chapter 2, in that day, says the Lord of hosts, I will take you, Zerubbabel, My servant.

In what day? Look up above. 24th day of the month, speak to Zerubbabel, saying, I will shake heaven and earth. I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms.

I will destroy the strength of Gentile kingdoms. I will overthrow the chariots and those who ride in them. The horses and their riders shall come down, everyone by the sword of his brother.

In that day, says the Lord of hosts, I will take you, Zerubbabel, My servant. The son of Shealtiel. Notice how his dad keeps getting mentioned because he's an important guy.

Asked of God. I will make you like a signet, for I have chosen you, says the Lord of hosts. This Zerubbabel.

By the way, Shealtiel is descended from David through one of David's offspring, Jeconiah. Remember how the line of the Lord Jesus, the legal line that's given in Matthew, comes through Jeconiah? But there was the Jeconiah curse that said his descendant would not sit on the throne. And that's why the Lord Jesus' actual descendancy, because Joseph was his stepfather, and his stepfather Joseph was descended through Jeconiah, and that fulfills the Jeconiah curse.

Well, guess what? Zerubbabel is descended through Shealtiel and through Jeconiah from David. He's under that same curse. But, guess what? Because the Lord Jesus comes in the intervening time, Zerubbabel, even though he's from the line of Jeconiah, is going to be God's signet, and he is going to rule, and he's going to be one of those Davidic rulers in the millennium, because the Lord Jesus heals the curse.

And because Zerubbabel is a man of faith, it's just like the curse on the Moabites. Ruth overcame that. It's like the curse on the Hittites.

And Uriah overcomes that. And it's so interesting that because Zerubbabel is coming back after the Lord Jesus has rubbed out and fulfilled and set aside the Jeconiah curse, Zerubbabel is going to come back and lay the cornerstone of the temple. You would think, well, the curse of God, there's no greater insurmountable obstacle and higher mountain than that.

How can I ever succeed? How can I ever rule? How can I ever get past the fact that somebody before my time brought me under a curse? Well, we're all in that situation. Adam and Eve did

that to us in the garden. Who healed that curse? The Lord Jesus Christ.

And Zerubbabel is a beautiful picture of the healing of that curse in the millennial kingdom. He is going to finish the millennial temple that's described in those nine chapters of Ezekiel, and he is going to be God's signet, the seal of his authority. Because he, along with the other sons of David, we know, and you can just write these passages down and look them up, but Jeremiah chapter 30 verse 9 tells us that David himself is coming back to rule.

Ezekiel chapter 34 verses 23 and 24 affirm that David himself is coming back. That's Jeremiah chapter 30 verse 9, Ezekiel 34, 23 and 24, and again in Ezekiel 37, 24, so that's three passages in Ezekiel, 34, 23 and 24, and 37, 24. Also in Hosea chapter 3 verse 5. The Old Testament also affirms that in addition to there being one shepherd, which is David, slash the son of David, you have shepherds, plural, and this is found in Jeremiah 23 verse 4, and Jeremiah 33, 17.

So there will be under-shepherds, there will be proxy rulers, there will be privileges. It says the Lord Jesus is going to rule, but it says we will rule and reign with him, if we're qualified. And it's going to be the same in the Millennial Kingdom for these Davidic heirs.

David will not lack a man to sit on the throne. And that, again, the breach in that during this time, and in all of this intervening time, is healed by the Lord Jesus himself. So it's a wonderful picture.

And all of this happens before Ezra and Nehemiah ever show up. Remember now, the first six chapters of Ezra are really the Zerubbabel Joshua return. That is the time of potential.

That has the authorization of Cyrus. That has the provision. That has the commission.

That has Haggai and Zechariah prophesying in the strongest possible terms, here is the Lord encouraging, directing, reminding you, I am with you. And this whole effort falls to the ground because they make the same mistake their fathers did. And what we're going to see in the rest of Zechariah, what we're going to see in the rest of Haggai, and what we're going to see in the Ezra and Nehemiah returns is the pathetic remnants that are left in the land because they do not heed, they do not hear, and they do not respond to this challenge to return.

To look at the examples of their fathers and avoid the same mistake. All they are going to do is look at circumstances. All they are going to do is be bogged down with details and with obstacles.

All they are going to find is that God is not with them because as Haggai tells them, as we close here, look at chapter 2, verse 10 of Haggai, on the 24th day of the ninth month, after Haggai's first prophecies, after Zechariah's great prophecy at the beginning of the next book, on the 24th day of the ninth month in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying, thus says the Lord, ask the priests, what happens when something unclean touches something holy? It's defiled. Haggai says, so is this people, in verse 14, and so is this nation before me, says the Lord, and so is every work of their hands. In this short span of time,

in the second year of Darius, God sends two prophets with the challenge and with the opportunity, and he says, don't be deceived by circumstances, don't be put off, don't say it's the day of small things, don't cry when you look at this seemingly humble temple, over and over again.

They can't see it, they don't get it, and so in the ninth month, Haggai comes back, and he says, you remember what I said earlier, two months ago, remember what Zechariah said last month? Well, guess what? God says, you are defiled, your hands are defiled, this nation is defiled, everything you touch, and everything you offer, is unclean. You haven't figured it out. And all of the subsequent history from now on, this is what Malachi is going to make explicit, and he is a prophet from this very same time.

Remember his chapter 2 and chapter 3 in Malachi? In what way have we defiled your altar? In what way have we polluted you? We don't understand, we are following the law, and we don't understand why you are unhappy, and God says, your heart is not right, you are looking at the wrong things, you are trying to grab hold of me and say, bless me, and you are missing the whole point. It is the presence of God, it is the power of God, it is faith in God, it is loving God with our heart, soul and strength. And absent that, none of the righteous works of the law will suffice.

By the works of the law, shall no flesh be justified. We are unclean, we are defiled, if God cannot cleanse us from the inside out. That is what we will see in these upcoming chapters.

We will close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the tremendous clarity that these portions of your word bring to our view of ourselves, of the opportunities that you put before us, the circumstances that surround us, and the divine resources that are available to us in this age as never before because of the work of Jesus Christ, the gift of the Spirit that he left to us, the presence and power of your word that is available to each one of us at any hour, any time of the day or night. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will keep us mindful of these things, that these truths will convict and persuade us, that we can think and act in the light of them and avail ourselves of the opportunity that you have put before us to redeem the time, to bear fruit, fruit of the Spirit, fruit of righteousness, lay hold of righteousness by faith, lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven, and most of all, have the privilege of reflecting your glory in the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, both now and in the ages to come.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.