

Kings and Prophets 17-09-21

This is Thursday, the 21st of September, 2017. We continue our study of kings and prophets. We find ourselves in Zechariah chapter 3. Just have Zechariah and Malachi left to complete our study.

We'll take a moment as we begin to go to the Lord in prayer, dedicate our time and our fellowship to the Lord Jesus and to the glory of the Father, and then we'll begin. Father, what a blessing and a privilege it is to have the full-orbed revelation of your truth contained in the pages of Scripture. We can each have our own copy.

We can read it whenever we like. We can think upon it and reflect on it and memorize it and have access to it any time of the night or day. We thank you for the gift of your Spirit that enables us not only to see it and to hear it, but to understand it and to see its pertinence in our own lives.

We pray tonight as we look at this portion of your Word that the Holy Spirit will be our teacher, that He will illuminate the passages that we examine, and will shine the light of your truth in our hearts to show us where we can improve, where we can do better, where these things apply to us in a way that can rebuke and correct and instruct us in righteousness so that we can present ourselves before your throne as a worthy offering, reflecting the glory of your Son, the Lord Jesus. We pray these things in His name. Amen.

Well, you will remember now in Zechariah, we have this message. Haggai and Zechariah are confronting and addressing the people of God who have returned to allegedly, ostensibly rebuild God's house after the Babylonian captivity, which sort of morphs into the Medo-Persian captivity. After it has ameliorated and they've been allowed to return, Cyrus issues the decree, go back, here's the money, here's the authorization, get her done.

And they come back and they have all kinds of parades and celebrations and carnival, Ferris wheels going, everything is wonderful, there's shouts of hosanna, and then it all comes crumbling to the ground and it grinds to a halt. So after this goes on for 18 odd years, God sends the people Haggai and Zechariah to wake the people up. But He doesn't say, look, here's where you went wrong in the construction, here's the problem with the logistics and with the work crews and with the impediments and interference that you've experienced, here's how to get that fixed.

What is the message that God sends when the project in the literal sense has fallen to the ground? God says through Haggai and through Zechariah, you are my people and these things have a deeper and greater significance. It's not just the circumstance. Why do you think the opposition succeeded? Why do you think the slowdown was not overcome? Wasn't a slowdown when Moses built the tabernacle? Quite the opposite.

People were donating so much stuff, Moses had to tell them to stop. Remember they were

bringing all of the loot they got from the Egyptians and Moses said, stop, stop, we're getting buried in gold and silver and precious stones, enough. When Solomon built the temple in David's design, he had Hiram king of Tyre, they had workmen, they had cedars of Lebanon, they had gold and silver.

Remember it says Solomon made silver like gravel. He made it like asphalt. It wasn't as valuable as paving stone, there was so much of it.

They had no problems building the tabernacle, they had no problems building the first temple. Why did this one fall to the ground? I mean it never even rose off the ground. There is a problem that goes beyond the mere circumstance.

This is what Haggai talks about. This is what Zechariah talks about. So we've seen Haggai and right in the middle of Haggai's prophecy, he gets a little bit of it done and then here comes Zechariah.

It's a one-two punch. Haggai had the left jab, here is the right cross from Zechariah and it is a powerful punch and that's why it's a much longer prophecy. We saw the timing of it and we have begun to look at the content of it.

So you will remember last time that this prophecy of Zechariah begins with eight visions, one right after another. There is the introduction and then you have these eight visions. What does the introduction say? Remember, God is going to deal with His people according to their ways and according to their deeds.

Remember that balance? The ways is the trend, the priorities, the goals, the values, the deeds are what those issue forth with in our lives. So it isn't enough to address the deeds if you haven't fixed the ways. It isn't enough to philosophize about great ways if it doesn't issue forth in deeds.

They have to match. They have to be consistent. They have to complement and supplement each other, ways and deeds.

We even have, it's close in the government, they used to have the Ways and Means Committee. There are ways and there are means. Here is where you get the stuff and here is what you do with it.

Well, it's the right hand and left hand of God's plan in our lives. We often satisfy ourselves when we are thinking thoughts in the abstract that, well, in all my ways I acknowledge Him. Well, that's not enough.

It has to show, it has to make a difference in the thoughts and the actions of a life. And you can't comfort yourself saying, well, I know what is good and I know what is right. We have to do what is good and we have to do what is right.

So this is the Zechariah and Haggai punch, counter punch. So Zechariah, the introduction, it is your ways, I'm going to deal with you. Remember verse 4? Turn from your evil ways and your evil deeds, but they did not hear and they did not heed.

The hearing would go to the ways. The heeding would go to the deeds. It just tracks perfectly parallel all the way down.

Look at verse 6. My words and my statutes, God's words define what is good and what is evil. God's statutes give you the deeds that comport. The statutes, this is like your laws.

Don't exceed the speed limit. Be sure you have insurance. Be sure you are properly tagged and licensed and that you've passed the driver's license exam.

Statutes. These are the physical outworkings of the words, the laws in general. And when your fathers didn't do this, did it not overtake them? How do you think you got into the captivity in the first place? Those who don't learn from history, doomed to repeat it.

And what did they say? They returned and said what in verse 6? According to our ways and according to our deeds, so He has dealt with us. He, capital H. Then you have the first of the eight visions. Now, if you have a piece of paper, it will help you to map this out because one of God's favorite and therefore one of our favorite communication devices is at work here.

What is God's favorite communication device in His Word according to me? The chiasm. God loves the chiasm. Right at the center of the historical chiasm is the cross, which is a kind of chiasm in and of itself.

Chi is the cross letter in Greek. The cross is the first letter in Christ, in the anointed one. We have a chiasm here.

But you would think well the nice thing about a chiasm is it is usually made of an odd number of things and so when you've got seven things, there's going to be three preceding and three following and the one in the middle is the important one, right? Well, we have eight things here. Eight visions. They are easy to count.

They are very obvious. As soon as you look at Zacharias prophecy you say, wow, eight visions. Well, what is eight the number of? If you think about the Old Testament and you think about Israel and you think about the number eight, what comes to your mind? Anything? Think about Abraham and the sign of the covenant.

Circumcision, right? A baby is circumcised on the eighth day. Why? Six days God created the heaven and the earth. He rested on the seventh.

So what's the eighth day? Remember in Leviticus 14, one of my favorite chapters. I've mentioned it dozens of times over the years. You should know what's in it by now.

What's in Leviticus chapter 14? It is the cleansing of the leper. Actually God cleanses him. This is

what the priests and what he are supposed to do in an interactive fashion when he is healed of his leprosy.

Leprosy was a walking death. He is dead. But when you read that beautiful picture, this is what Jesus expected Nicodemus to know in John chapter 3 when he said, you must be born again.

Nicodemus said, crawl inside my mother, I don't get it. He said, are you a teacher in Israel and you don't know this? There is new life. There is life from death.

There is a new birth. And it's pictured in Leviticus 14 and other places in the Old Testament. The cleansed leper shaves off all of his hair at one point.

Shaves off his eyebrows. Shaves off his chest. Shaves off everything.

And comes into the fellowship and into the full assembly on the eighth day. It is being reborn. It is being renewed to access and to fellowship.

Eight is the number of renewal. So we have eight visions here which tell us there is going to be a theme here of renewal. Now, think back to Daniel.

Kings and prophets. We went through the prophet of the captivity, Daniel. Right? And what's the first thing that happened to Daniel and Hananiah and Mishael and Azariah when they were taken captive and hauled off to Babylon? What is the first thing that happened to them? They were made eunuchs.

You would think, okay, no future for these guys. In Israel, your future, your legacy, your heritage. We've been going through Ruth down at church on Sunday mornings in Sunday school.

And the whole thing with Boaz and the kinsman redeemer is Naomi's husband and both her sons died. Their claim to the land and everything is cut off. And she says, you girls can't wait for me to get married and have more sons.

You'll be old as I am by the time they're old enough to marry you. We were cut off. I have no future.

And it's really interesting because in the first chapter, she tells Orpah and Ruth, I can never have a son again. I can't do anything for you. Go home.

Go back to your mother's house. It's interesting to me. It says, go to your mother's house.

It doesn't say, go to your father's house. Anyway, I digress. There's a real interesting interplay between man and woman all the way through the book of Ruth.

There's a place in the middle where Boaz tells Ruth to follow his young men. And it says, so she followed the women. Just watch for that sometime when you're doing Ruth.

Anyway, what was I talking about? Ruth, offspring, eunuchs, cutoff, Daniel. And yet look at the prophecy of Daniel and how seminal and how influential it has been. That's a bit of a pun.

In biblical interpretation, it is the crux of prophecy. It is the keystone for everything that comes after. You can't figure out Revelation if you don't have Daniel.

You can't figure out Ezekiel if you don't have Daniel. And Ezekiel acknowledges Daniel. I mean, it's terrific.

And God proves that circumstance doesn't dictate the future the way we think it does. God's will and God's word dictate what the future will hold. And at the end of Ruth, oddly enough, the women come to Naomi.

And when they see that she's got a grandchild, they say, Naomi has a son. And it balances when she says, I can have no son. Well, at the end, all the women in the neighborhood are saying, she has a son.

So, here you have this idea of rebirth. Israel looks like it's been cut off. It looks like the presence of God isn't going to come.

Even when they finish the temple, the glory doesn't show. Remember how disappointed Daniel was partway through the book. When he starts having these visions, he gets sick for days.

He needs to be comforted. He's got to be picked up and strengthened because his hope is rightfully and honestly, his heart is for Israel and for the future of the nation. And the visions show that other nations are going to prevail till the end.

It isn't until the stone cut without hands comes and smashes the feet of the image that anything changes. And even then, he still doesn't really see Israel. Where is the nation? What has happened to the nation? Well, these eight visions in Zechariah answer that question because the future for the people of God is not a national hope, although it is there.

But the emphasis and the center of God's revelation shifts from national hope to hope in a person. It is going to be a person. Don't wait for better times by and by in your circumstance as a nation.

Look for the One who will come, capital O. It is going to shift and you'll see the images change and now they are personal. You don't see animals and horns and things so much. You begin to see people at the center of the vision because what God does, especially through Haggai and Zechariah, is tell these people, you know, you think if you rebuild the temple and then you rebuild the walls and you rebuild the city and you rebuild the country, that you are going to rebuild the nation.

Rebuilding and renewal and renaissance and revitalization and the future does not rest in this nation and its circumstances. It rests in the coming Redeemer. It rests in the One who shall

come and He is personal.

This is what Daniel comes to understand when he seals up the vision at the end. You remember in 9 with the vision of the 70 weeks, it is the Prince who shall come and the people of the Prince who shall come and the Anointed One will come but not for Himself. You say, well, how come the weeks are not about the nation? It says, well, you know, there is a wall that is going to be a wing of abomination and all the rest of it.

But what sticks in your mind is that there is a personal conflict between an Anointed One and somebody else who is the Prince who shall come and it is a personal conflict and ultimately God's Anointed prevails. But seal it up, Daniel. It is not going to happen until the time of the end.

Here in Zechariah, these eight visions, it is a rebirth, it is a renewal, it is a fulfillment of God's covenant promises, the covenant that is sealed on the eighth day for every male in Israel. Well, here is the eight visions that fulfill the eight day old son's covenant promises but they are personal. So now look, if you write them down, I said if you have a piece of paper it would be really helpful.

So what is vision number one? We saw it last time. Vision number one is the man on the horse and there are three other horsemen behind him. So we have got four horsemen.

This rings a bell, we see four horsemen in the apocalypse. There is a man on a red horse and behind him there are three more horses. Another red horse, a sorrel horse, which is kind of a brown, a mucky in between, and a white horse.

And we looked at the interplay and the positioning. I told you I drew a little stick figure diagram to figure out, here is the angel of the Lord standing in the midst. Daniel and the talking angel are on one side, the angel on the horse with the three other angels, slash, men on horses behind him.

And it is a military thing. So vision number one there now is the horses. And what did we say the big idea of this is? What do these horsemen do? They go to and fro in the earth.

So number one, horses. If you are writing short things, you can put number one, horses, angel, to and fro. And the idea is they are gathering intel.

They are reporting on the status of the earth. They say the nations are resting in quietude. And the angel says, well, can't have that.

These are the nations that have disrupted God's people. They have been in implement of judgment and they shouldn't be in quietude. Because you don't mess with God's people.

These things must come, but woe to him by whom they come. It was necessary that Jesus be betrayed, but that doesn't excuse Judas for the betrayal. Same thing with these nations.

They have been a scourge, but they continued to kick Israel when they were down. And so God is going to judge them. So number one, horses.

They go to and fro, they gather intel, and they are under the leadership of this angel. Now, if you wrote that down as number one, indent a little bit because we are doing archaism, and put number two. Vision number two began in verse 18 of chapter one.

And this is, I raised my eyes and looked and there were four horns. We had four horses, now we got four horns. I talked with the angel, the angel who talked with me.

This is not the angel of the Lord. This is his guide angel, his interpreter angel. What are these? He said, these are horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

Not just Jerusalem, and not just Judah, Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. We'll talk about those in a little more detail momentarily. Actually, not momentarily, but eventually.

What are these coming to do? He said, these are the horns that scattered Judah so that no one could lift up his head, but the craftsmen are coming to terrify them, to cast out the horns of the nations. So you've got the four horns, and they are the ones that sort of gouged and wounded Israel. The craftsmen are coming to deal with these horns.

These workmen are coming to deal with the four horns. So you've got the four craftsmen dealing with the four horns, one craftsman per horn. And that's vision number two.

So on your paper you can put horns slash craftsmen. There's four of them. And what does it mean? Horn represents power, and the powers are going to be judged.

The craftsmen are going to, what are they going to do? Sand down the horns, cut off the horns, destroy the horns, fit the horns for some other purpose. Craftsmen often used horns, cut them off the animal, turned them into shofar. It's a bit cryptic, but we know that they represent power and those powers that disrupted God's people are going to be dealt with.

So number one, God knows what's going on. He's got these reporting angels who are out doing recon and bringing back reports. And they go, four of them, four is the number of universality, northeast, south and west, four corners of the earth, four dimensions if you will, however you want to think of it.

So comprehensive intelligence, here are the four powers that have desecrated and done despot to God's people and they are going to be dealt with. Indent to number three, which is the third vision in chapter two, I raised my eyes and looked a man with a measuring line in his hand. I said, where are you going? He said, I'm going to measure Jerusalem to see what is its width and what is its length.

It's interesting to me because this Jerusalem gets measured for width and length. Remember the New Jerusalem, what are its dimensions? It is the city that is built four square. It's got four

dimensions.

This one's just got two. This is the earthly Jerusalem, that's the heavenly Jerusalem. It's exponentially more dimensional.

So what does a measuring line, what's a yard stick do? This is evaluation. This is also promise because as the guy is going out, another angel was coming out to meet him who said to him, run and speak to this young man saying Jerusalem shall be inhabited, towns without walls because of the multitude of men and livestock in it for I the Lord will be a wall of fire all around her. I will be the glory in her midst.

Interesting promise because when these guys get revved up after Haggai and Zechariah prophesy, they are going to finish the temple but they have no end of difficulty and they build up the walls. It's not a city without walls and the glory of God never shows up. They get ready to have a big dedication for the temple and the guest of honor doesn't show.

God isn't there. No Shekinah, no priest being driven out because of the brightness of the glory. It doesn't happen in the second temple.

But here's the promise. So number three, your measuring line, this is evaluation and promise. The city is measured and what he basically says is, I've measured Jerusalem, the width and the length.

How was an ancient city defined in terms of its width and length? What defined the borders of the city? The walls. So this guy measures the walls and the promise is, well this city is not sufficient. Jerusalem is going to be a city without walls and without borders because there's going to be so many, it's going to be so prosperous, it can't contain all of it within the walls and it won't need the walls.

So he says what you see now, pay no attention. Eventually it is going to be something new and God's glory will be in it. So it's a promise for the future.

That's number three. One more indent now. Number four, we come to, and by the way the whole rest of that chapter is promise.

Flee from the land of the north. I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven, says the Lord. Once again, four winds.

They're spread to the four corners of the globe. They're spread in every direction. Up Zion, escape you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon, thus says the Lord.

He sent me to the nations to plunder you, but what touches you touches the apple of his eye. This is where that apple of the eye phrase comes from in verse 8 of chapter 2. I will shake my hand against them, they shall become spoil for their servants. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me.

Sing and rejoice, daughter of Zion. I am coming, I will dwell in your midst, says the Lord. It didn't happen in Zerubbabel's day.

It didn't happen in Ezra and Nehemiah's day. It didn't happen until the Lord Jesus came and they missed it. So it's going to happen again.

It's going to happen in the future. Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and they shall become my people. I will dwell in your midst.

Then you will know the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. The Lord will take possession of Judah as his inheritance in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem. Be silent all flesh before the Lord, for he is aroused from his holy habitation.

This is for the future. It goes way out. Chapter 3, this is now vision number 4. Then he showed me Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him.

So, party of three. Joshua standing there. He's in front of the angel of the Lord, and Satan is at his right hand to oppose him, to accuse him.

Shatan means the accuser in Hebrew. So the Lord said to Satan, the Lord rebuke you, Satan. The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you.

Is this not a brand plucked from the fire? We'll come back to that. Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and was standing before the angel. We have a second mention of the angel.

So then he answered and spoke to those who stood before him saying, take away the filthy garments from him. And to him he said, see I have removed your iniquity from you and I will clothe you with rich robes. Now we have a little subtle clue here.

He's standing there in dirty robes and he says, take off his filthy robes. So the filthy robes are gone and before anything else happens, he says, look, I have taken your iniquity away. Well, what's Joshua wearing? Nothing apparently.

All of the filthy clothes have been taken away. And before anything else is done, he says, I have removed your iniquity from you. So we know the filthy robes equal iniquity.

It wasn't his person. Notice he doesn't get washed. He doesn't get bathed.

They don't wash his feet. They don't scrub him down. They don't hose him down.

His clothing, that which was put on him is filthy. This is critically important. Priests could not be defiled.

They couldn't do their job if they were in a state of defilement. And here is a high priest, Joshua the high priest, standing there in polluted robes. So he says, take the robes off.

And so now he's standing there unclothed, unrobed. And he says, look, I have taken your iniquity away. But interestingly, this is iniquity that has been put on him on the outside.

While he's standing there, this would be a great time to cleanse him, to wash him, wash him and be clean. Go to the laver, oh Joshua. This is what priests do.

That's why I've got that great big bronze bowl full of water, the great bronze sea, remember that? Every tabernacle, every temple incarnation had that big sea. Joshua doesn't have to go to it for personal cleansing. Just hold that thought.

And I said, he says, I've removed your iniquity and I will clothe you with rich robes. He doesn't have them yet, but he says, I'm going to clothe you with rich robes. Hasn't happened yet.

It's a prediction. And I said, let them put a clean turban on his head. So they put a clean turban on his head and they put the clothes on him and the angel of the Lord stood by.

How many times has the angel of the Lord been mentioned now? In case somebody forgot to notice that there might be a chiasm, you have a little chiasm clue here. Angel at the beginning, angel in the middle, angel at the end. The angel of the Lord standing by.

Who is no longer standing by? Who was the same in verse 1? He showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord and Satan standing at his right hand. Now they put a clean turban on his head and they're putting the rich robes on him. Who's not standing there anymore? The accuser is gone.

Apparently when they carried out the filth, Satan was somehow attached to it and went with it because he's no longer there. The angel is standing by. It doesn't say Satan was standing by.

And by the way, notice Satan doesn't get a word in the story. He's standing there, but he gets rebuked and he's gone. Evidently the rebuke disappears him.

Trap door opens, away goes Satan. Now, then the angel of the Lord admonished Joshua, verse 6, saying, thus says the Lord of hosts, if you will walk in my ways, if you will keep my command, then you shall also judge my house and likewise have charge of my courts. I will give you places to walk among these who stand here.

Hear, O Joshua the high priest, you and your companions who sit before you, for they are a wondrous sign. For behold, I am bringing forth my servant the branch. Behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua.

Upon the stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave its inscription, says the Lord of hosts. And here's the inscription.

This is what is graven into the stone. And I will remove. And in this mode here in Hebrew, it really shouldn't be and, that wow should be surely, even.

It works like chi in Greek. And I will remove. Where it can, it intensifies it a bit here.

I will surely remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day, says the Lord of hosts, in that day, that one day when I remove the iniquity of the land, the way we remove these robes, everyone will invite his neighbor under his vine and under his fig tree. Remember all the celebration they were having in the story in Ezra, when they finally get the temple finished? They had a great celebration at the beginning when they got started, then they bogged down.

They finally finish it. It took them two decades, but they finally get it done. Then they have another big celebration, but God doesn't show.

What does God say is the day to celebrate? When is the real celebration? Under the vine, under the fig tree, under the vine and under the fig tree. Not standing around the completed edifice, but in the land of promise. This harks all the way back to God's promises to Ezra when he brought him out of Egypt.

A land flowing with milk and honey. Every man having his own vine and his own fig tree. They will celebrate in that day.

What is that day? It is the day when the iniquity is removed. Any commentary you check on this chapter in Zechariah, well I shouldn't say any, the typical commentary that you check on Zechariah on this chapter is going to say Joshua represents Israel. This is a picture of God removing Israel's iniquity and fitting them for service.

Now with the rich robes and the clean turban, they can do their priestly duties. They are a priest nation to God and so on. Taking nothing away from that, I think there is a little bit more here.

But let's finish out our chiasm and then when we do the last four visions, you'll see why we did it now. So that's Joshua the high priest. If you're writing your little chiasm diagram there and you've got down to your fourth indent, you say number four Joshua, he's a high priest.

And to abbreviate, I just put filth and then an arrow to clean. He started out with filth, he ends up with clean. Filthy robes, clean robes.

Filthy turban, clean turban. Iniquity, no iniquity. So however you want to annotate that.

And notice Satan is standing by and then Satan is gone. In verse 8-10, we had a couple of very significant things mentioned. My servant the branch in verse 8. Make a note of it under your point four.

Just write branch. First time it's been introduced here. My servant the branch.

He says, Joshua high priest, you and your companions are a wondrous sign. This whole thing is a wondrous sign. I'm bringing forth the branch.

And notice the stone that I've laid before Joshua with the seven eyes. And the stone is a

memorial. It is graven in advance.

It says I will remove iniquity in a day. There's another place that says a nation will be built in a day. But that's subordinate to the person who accomplishes this in a day.

I'll remove the iniquity of the land in one day. In that day, that's when everyone will invite his neighbor under his vine and under his fig tree. When does Israel, to do justice to the rightful ideas that you find in the commentary, when is Israel going to realize that their iniquity has been taken away? It was all future for them until Christ came.

When are they going to realize that in one day their iniquity problem has been solved? When will they see that? It's day one of the millennial kingdom. It's the resurrection of the Old Testament saints. It's after the close of the tribulation when the Lord Jesus returns.

They will be raised and realize that from the day they died to the day they raise, it's the same day. Remember what Jesus said to the thief on the cross? Today you will be with me in paradise. The intervening time disappears.

They die and in that day when they look on the living Lord, the king of glory, the Messiah who is the king of the millennial kingdom, my iniquity, personal and national, has been taken away. Remember the confession that Daniel made? Even the confession that Ezra tries to make? They recognize that they've got the filthy garments. You can't always figure out which ones are filthy.

I think Ezra's got a little identification problem. He knows there's a problem. I think he misidentifies it.

So anyway, under four, Joshua the high priest, Satan is standing there. There is an accusation made. But the filth is removed.

Clean garments, i.e., if the filthy garments represent iniquity, what do the rich robes and the clean turban have to represent? It is a robe of righteousness. And then beside that, or under it somewhere on four, put the branch and the stone. The stone has seven eyes.

The seven eyes is like the seven spirits that are before the throne. The seven-fold spirit talks about the adequacy and the perfection of the person and work of God's Holy Spirit. Almost always when you find that associated with eyes or spirits or a presence of some sort, it's the Holy Spirit.

And the Holy Spirit is being talked about in Zechariah, such as He few times in the Old Testament do you find the Spirit so greatly focused on and amplified and magnified as you find Him here in Zechariah. He's going to be evident plenty more soon. That's number four.

So now, under your number four, on your fourth indent directly below the four, write your five. And now we're going to start creeping back out. We're going to de-indent.

So four and five correspond. And five is going to be in chapter four. This is the vision of the

lampstand.

You're probably familiar with this from the past. The angel who talked with me came back and wakened me as a man who awakens out of sleep. He said to me, what do you see? Isn't God always this way? He doesn't say, behold.

He says, hey, what do you see? And he's going to do this repeatedly. And Zechariah is going to kind of catch on after a couple of prompts. But he says, what do you see? I said, I'm looking and there's a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it.

On the stand, seven lamps, seven pipes to the seven lamps. What do we say? Seven so often connotes and harks to Spirit of God. Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl, the other at its left.

So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me saying, what are these, my Lord? The angel who talked with me answered and said to me, do you not know? I put a little box around that in my Bible. Anytime God says, do you not know? You should know. John 3, Nicodemus.

What? Crawl inside my mother? Are you a teacher in Israel and you do not know? Remember when the disciples think that Jesus is getting on them because they forgot the bread and the boat? And he says, when we fed the 5,000, how many baskets did you take up? When we fed the 4,000, how many baskets did you take up? Do you not yet understand? You should understand. You should get this. Zechariah should know this.

He is leaning on the interpreter when he is supposed to be digesting for himself. Point of application. When you are in any kind of Bible study, personal devotions, listening to somebody on the radio, hearing a tape, or recording, watching a video, in any kind of a Bible class, do not sit passively and wait for somebody to stick the next spoon in your mouth.

You should know. Do your best to know. Sometimes we just honestly do not.

It is like, I give up. I tried to grab the spoon and I dropped it on the floor, so please help me out. But we do not want to become passive.

God expects us. The Lord Jesus Christ expects us to be active students, to be anticipating, to be thinking, to be figuring these things out. And Zechariah is going to get a gentle rebuke here, not just here, but in a coming passage directly ahead of us.

Do you not know? Come on, Zechariah. Think. Put your thinking cap on.

We are supposed to be thinking, not passive. You might as well be a Catholic if you just want the church to tell you everything you are supposed to believe. We analyze.

We try to put two and two together here and come up with the answer on our own. So when he asks this question, it seems to be one question too many. The angel says gently, Do you not know? Come on, Zechariah.

I am a little disappointed in you. I thought you would catch this. I said, No, my Lord, I don't.

I give up. So he answered and said to me, This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, not by might nor by power, but by my spirit. Now we are vindicated.

We are justified in seeing this number seven associated with the spirit. It is the spirit of God. Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain.

He shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of grace, grace to it. Moreover, the word of the Lord came to me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house. 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? People cry when they see the foundation laid for the second temple. You get it all finished and you say, Well, the glory didn't show up.

It's small things. It's small potatoes. Who has despised the day of small things? The day you want to watch for is the day of big things.

What's the big day that we were just told about? When iniquity is removed in a day. These seven rejoiced to see. Who are these seven? Seven lamps being fueled with olive oil.

The seven lamps rejoiced to see. Can you think of any place else in Scripture where there are seven lamps? Do you not know? No, I'm kidding. Yeah, the seven churches.

Remember Revelation? Jesus walking among the lampstands. These lamps are the seven churches. So who is rejoicing to see the plum line in the hand of Zerubbabel? They say the church doesn't appear in the Old Testament.

Well, not overtly, but why do we count? Why are we represented as seven? Why are we lamps? And why is there anything to burn? Because we have the full or ministry of God's Holy Spirit. That's what makes us church. That's what seals us into Christ.

We are baptized into his body by the Holy Spirit, right? All of the things that we have, we have because we are in him, because we are in Christ. And the Holy Spirit is what puts us in Christ. And so, yes, this is a picture of the Holy Spirit, but we are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

We are the lamp where the Holy Spirit lives and burns and does his energetic work. And what do we rejoice to see by extension here? The measuring line in the hand of Zerubbabel. Now where did we see a measuring line? Look up in your chiasm here.

That was number three, right? And so here's number five. It's like it's encouraging us. It says, now look, we're going to come back out.

We're going to start corresponding to things you just saw. And so in five, we have a little footnote that says, get ready to go back and be looking at three again because number six is

coming up next. And we'll do the rest of these details soon.

But we rejoice to see the plumb line. The seven rejoice to see it. These are the eyes of the Lord scanning to and fro throughout the whole earth.

Well, I thought the seven in the most recent context was the seven lamps. But now he says it's seven eyes. Well, where were the seven eyes? Well, that was back in the vision of the high priest.

Remember the branch and the stone? And the stone had the seven eyes. So he's saying, okay, Zechariah, we're coming back out on the other side of the chiasm here. So you got to be ready to start making the correspondence.

So here's your measuring line and here's your seven eyes going back. And so that gets us ready for the sixth vision in chapter five, which is the vision of the flying scroll. Not a flying carpet, flying scroll.

I turned and raised my eyes and saw there a flying scroll. He said to me, what do you see? I said, I see a flying scroll. It's length is 20 cubits.

It's width is 10 cubits, twice as long as it is wide. So you would think, well, that's going to divide into two perfect squares, right? Kind of like the holy of holies and the holy place. But it's going to divide into two perfect squares.

So you would think, well, this sort of suggests that if it's twice as long as it is high, we're getting a two for one here. We're going to have something doubled perhaps. Then he said to me, this is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth.

The scroll contains a curse and it's written on the front and it's written on the back. Can you think of another place where there's a scroll that contains every time you break a seal and unroll it, bad things happen, right? It's kind of like that. He says, this is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth.

Every thief, underline it, every thief, circle it, every thief shall be expelled according to this side of the scroll and every perjurer, every false testimony guy, every false swearer shall be expelled according to that side of it. Two things we were expecting it to and here they are. You would think, well, isn't it every lazy workman that's not finishing the temple? Isn't it every guy who's married a foreign wife? What would this be? What is the crime here? Taking what does not belong to you and avowing something falsely, swearing, vowing, dedicating falsely.

Verse four, I will send out the curse, says the Lord of hosts, it shall enter where the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by my name. This isn't just any old vow, any old testimony. This is in God's name.

This is doing something in the persona of a man of God, the person of God, the people of God.

We're the people of God and this is what we do. We're doing this in the name of the Lord.

We represent the Lord and it is false. It's a cheat. It's a deceit.

It doesn't represent God at all. Remember how hard he comes down on the prophets who say, I have dreamed, I have dreamed and they speak and it isn't God's word at all. And the woe that goes to those who teach for doctrines, the traditions of men in the name of God, falsehood, misrepresenting God, misrepresenting God's will and God's word, playing false, creating a faith that isn't the faith, creating a doctrine that isn't the doctrine.

This is swearing it's true, avowing that it is true, teaching it for truth and it doesn't represent God at all. You rob God and you lie about God to others. You misrepresent God.

We're supposed to be His representative. Israel was then, the church is now and when you play false to that responsibility, the curse is going to fly into your house. How hard is it to keep out something as thin as a scroll? I guess the thing just slips under the door or comes through the window.

Notice, it shall remain in the midst of his house and consume it with its timber and its stones. Notice, this goes into the house and eats it from the inside out. It isn't a stone made without hands that smashes it from the outside.

Something insidious and unstoppable gets a hold of it from the inside and eats it from the inside out. No way to fix that. No way to defend against that.

Now, very quickly, keep your finger here and turn over just a couple of pages to Malachi because Malachi is a contemporary of Haggai and Zechariah. He prophesies at the same time about the same stuff. He addresses the same issue.

The Burden of the Word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi, I don't have time to do the whole book, so just skip to verse 4 and skip the first half of verse 4. He says, Jacob, you have become Esau. You have become Edom in a nutshell. When he's talking to Edom, he's really talking to Israel.

He says, I thought you were Jacob. I thought you took the better part. I thought you looked for the blessing.

You've become just like Esau. You're trading it away for a mess of pottage. Look at the middle of verse 4. Thus says the Lord of hosts, they may build, but I will throw down.

I thought the whole message of the prophets was stop wasting time and get ready and build. In the midst of that, Malachi comes and says, if you build, I'm going to tear down. Why? What have we seen over these past weeks? Your heart's not right.

You can't build for me unless you build truly. Build in a way that represents me. Build in a way that reflects the glory of God.

God's glory is not going to come. You can build it, but you're building it wrong. You're building a false temple.

You're building a wrong temple. You're building a temple to yourself and not a temple to God. God's not going to bless it.

If you build that temple, God says, I will tear it down. What is God's house supposed to be called? It's the holiest place on earth. For crying out loud, even the Muslims think that the rock on top of Mount Zion there has Mohammed's footprint in it.

They built a whole shrine and the dome of the rock around that whole thing. See that little dent in the rock there? That's where Mohammed's foot pushed the rock down while he was going to glory. Well, this is supposed to be God's, the train of his robe and the place of his glory and the place of his name and his presence.

And he says, you know what this is going to be called? You build this, I will tear it down, and the place is going to be called the territory of wickedness. It's going to be the wickedest place on earth, not the holiest place. And the people against whom the Lord will have indignation forever.

Not favor, not blessing, not the unique place where God dwells among his people. This will be known as the place where God is forever furious and forever indignant. He says, you'll never get anything done here.

It's going to be wickedness, not righteousness. It's going to be curse, not blessing. Your eyes will see and you will say, the Lord is magnified beyond the border of Israel.

What's going on here? It's those seven bulls that are rejoicing and we're a devastation. And that's exactly what's happening today. To this day, Jerusalem is trampled underfoot by the Gentiles.

And where is God being glorified? Beyond the borders of Israel, in the nations, us. Malachi told them when they still had a chance. Zechariah told them, Haggai told them when they still had a chance.

And in the same way that they missed it when the Lord Jesus stood in their midst, they missed it. They missed it at this point. Skip down to verse 8, talking about the defiled sacrifices they were offering.

They're going to get this temple built, but the temple is defiled and the people are defiled and the sacrifices they bring are defiled. The whole thing is a sham operation and God calls them on it. Verse 8, when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, is it not evil? When you offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil? Offer it to your governor.

Even your governor wouldn't take this stuff. I'm the Lord of Glory. I'm a mighty king.

Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably? You spend your money trying to smack up to the political authorities in your local neighborhood. You're trying to get in good with the mayor here and you're shorting the Lord of Glory. What is that? Will a man rob God? Robbing Him of the first fruits? Robbing Him of the best? Robbing Him of what is rightfully His under the covenant? Entreat God's favor, verse 9, that He may be gracious to us.

While this is being done to your hands, you're saying this, oh entreat God, we want Him to be favorable, we want Him to bless us. But you're doing this with your hands. Is He going to accept you favorably, says the Lord of Hosts? Look at verse 11, from the rising of the sun even to its going down, worldwide.

My name will be great among the Gentiles. In every place incense will be offered to my name in a pure offering. My name is going to be great among the nations, says the Lord of Hosts, which is an abomination to Israel.

They say, you mean among the uncircumcised, the hoi polloi, the heathens and the ne'er-dowells out there? That's where your name, how can that be? That's supposed to be our heritage. Remember He says in another place, I will make you jealous by a people who are not a people. Verse 12, you profane it.

You say the table of the Lord is defiled and its fruit and food are contemptible. What a weariness and you sneer at it. You bring the stolen, remember the thief in Zechariah? You bring what is stolen, the lame and the sick.

By the way, you remember our rule of thumb is always, as goes the nation in the Old Testament, so goes the believer in the new. Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, calling out, charging, condemning, presenting the word of the Lord that says you are thieves and you are false professors when you bring these contemptible sacrifices that you wouldn't even give to a fellow man that you were trying to please, much less when he says, I am a great king and my name shall be great. I'll find somebody who will honor my name.

What does Romans 12.1 say? I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you do what? Present your bodies a living sacrifice. So as goes the nation in the Old Testament, believer in the new, what do you think is going to happen if we do the Romans 12.1 thing and the sacrifice that we bring is stolen, lame, sick, flawed? You look at how severe the condemnation is in Malachi chapter 1 and chapter 2, and yet are we guilty of the same thing? Paul says, I plead with you brothers, by the mercy of God, present yourselves holy and acceptable. This is your reasonable service, holy and acceptable.

Don't be conformed to the world, be transformed by the renewing of your mind so you'll know what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. It's easy to see how people miss it. It's tougher to see how we miss it.

But this is the call. And if you look quickly down here in chapter 2 of Malachi, we'll see it

eventually, look at verse 2. If you will not hear and you will not take it to heart to give glory to my name, says the Lord of hosts, what's he going to do? I will send a flying scroll. I will send a curse upon you.

I will curse your blessings. Whoa. Your blessings will turn into a curse.

I have cursed them already. Why? What's the last line in verse 2? Because you do not take it to heart. What have we been saying these past weeks in the return from the exile? What is the problem? Why do they start to build and it falls to the ground? God says you go to collect stuff in a sack.

You collect ten and by the time you get home it's only two. You plant your crops and you have only a meager return. Have you figured out why that is? It's right here.

Malachi tells them straight out. I will curse your blessings. I have already cursed them.

Because your heart is not right. The first place God has to be honored is not the physical and the external that they are trying to build on Mount Zion or rebuild. It is in the heart.

Back to Zechariah now. Let's just quickly finish out our chiasm and we will pick up with some of the details here that line up next time. So we see the flying scroll.

Thieves and false vows. This is a great portion of what Malachi indicts them for. And what Paul pleads with us to not follow by way of example.

Look up to 3. See how 6 is right under 3 there? The flying scroll is right under what? The measuring line. The evaluation. I cast a measuring line over the city.

There is a promise for faithfulness. There is a curse for unfaithfulness. There are going to be those who are in the land, who are in Jerusalem.

They won't even be able to close the gates because there will be so many people and so many animals in it. But there is an evaluation. And according to the scroll, if you can't pass under the rod, you are going to be in the darkness which is outside.

It will be a curse instead of a blessing. And the promise is the opposite. Remember the measuring line came with that great promise of rebuilding and renewal and of glory and of prosperity? Well, here is the corresponding promise.

If you are a thief, if you are taking from God for yourself what rightfully belongs to Him, whether it is time, whatever kind of stewardship it might be, there is another promise. Then right after this, verse 5 of chapter 5 of Zechariah, then the angel who talked with me came out and said to me, lift your eyes now and see what this is that goes forth. I said, what is it? He said, it's a basket that is going forth.

He said, this is their resemblance throughout the earth. This is beyond the borders of Israel

now, throughout the earth. Here is a lead disc filled up and this is a woman sitting inside the basket.

So this is a heavy basket. Then he said, this is wickedness. The woman sitting inside the basket and threw the lead cover over its mouth.

So here is a woman sitting in the bowl, shoves her down, puts the lid on. She is inside this basket. I raised my eyes and looked.

There were two women coming with wind in their wings. They had wings like the wings of a stork. Anytime you see wings, it tends to speak of divine enablement, divine presence.

And you can see this at the other end of the Bible when you get to Revelation. The woman who is threatened by the dragon is given two wings of an eagle and she flies to a place of safety, divine provision. They who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength.

They will mount up with wings as eagles. It is divine enablement, divine power. Wind in their wings.

They have wings like the wings of a stork. They lift up the basket between earth and heaven. I said to the angel who talked with me, where are they carrying the basket? He said to build a house for it in the land of Shinar.

Where is Shinar? What is in the middle of the plain of Shinar? Babylon. So this wickedness is going to be trapped in the basket and placed there. When it is ready, it will be set on its base.

So you are going to get another babble. There is going to be another manifestation of wickedness in the plain of Shinar. And it is put there at God's behest.

I would just roughly suggest that the woman sitting in the basket, can you think of another place where there is a wicked woman sitting somewhere? All throughout the earth. Revelation 17, Scarlet Harlot sitting on the beast, seven heads, ten horns. She prevails for a time and then she is destroyed.

This woman is trapped in the basket, set in the plain. There is going to be a house built for her and she is going to be let out. But you get the idea, not for long.

What does that correspond to? The basket goes up to two, the horns and the craftsmen. These horns that have afflicted the people of God are going to be dealt with by the craftsmen. This woman who is in the basket is going to be trapped and dealt with.

She prevails for a time. She is not destroyed. She is not taken away.

But the squirrel does not eat her. She is in the basket. But it is an inescapable basket.

She is bottled up and then she is going to be let out for this house that is going to be built for

her in the plain of Shinar. So it corresponds. Then finally, number eight in chapter six is a vision of four chariots.

I raised my eyes and looked. Behold four chariots coming from between two mountains. The mountains were mountains of bronze.

Anytime you see mountains they tend to be obstacles or impediments. Bronze mountains would be particularly difficult to remove. Jesus did not say, if you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you could say to a bronze mountain, be lifted up and cast into the sea.

These might not move. Notice though, very quickly, four chariots and if you put number eight underneath number one, four horses at the beginning, now you have got horses and four chariots. Each chariot pulled by multiple horses.

They line up and these horses have colors. First chariot, red horse. Second chariot, black horses.

Third chariot, white horses. Fourth chariot, dappled horses. Strong ones.

I answered to the angel who talked with me, what are these my Lord? He says, these are four spirits of heaven who go out from their station before the Lord of all the earth. Black horses goes to the north. White goes after them.

The dappled are going toward the south. Strong seeds went out, eager to go that they might walk to and fro throughout the earth. Remember, I had you write down to and fro on number one.

Here you got to and fro on number eight. Go walk to and fro throughout the earth. So they walked to and fro throughout the earth.

He called to me and spoke to me saying, see, those who go toward the north country have given rest to my spirit in the north country. How interesting. God dwells in the sides of the north.

God's people join him in the north. There is respite in that direction. Then, and here's the greatest thing, because when you look at the middle of that chiasm, you don't have one point, you have two, right? You've got Joshua and you've got Zerubbabel right in the middle.

You've got Joshua the high priest and you've got the lamp stand. Both things associated with what? Why do you need a high priest in Israel? What is it only he can do? Where is it only he can go? What do you need a high priest for? Only he can enter the holiest, right? Where is the golden lamp stand in Israel? In the holy place, right? Zerubbabel is associated with this seven-fold lamp stand, this menorah if you will, that is fed with this supernatural oil from these two trees. Joshua is the high priest.

Zerubbabel is the governor. He's the ruler. About as high as you can get in their circumstance, certainly locally.

He is the civil authority. I would submit to you that Joshua and Zerubbabel, this lamp stand and this high priest figure who has the iniquitous filthy robes removed and is clothed not just with clean ones but with rich ones and has the clean turban on his head, speak not only perhaps of Israel and God cleansing them and fitting them for service, harking forward to the day when they will be renewed in a day but it's the Lord Jesus himself. It is Yeshua himself.

Notice that that filth is external. He bears it. It is a shame.

Satan can make accusation based on it but it is taken away and he is clothed with rich robes and he is now fully qualified to minister and here is this great lamp stand right in the middle. Now how do I know these two things are associated? You remember if you wrote down that with Joshua you had the stone and the branch, right? With Zerubbabel you have the impediment of the mountains is removed and he says build. It's the great promise, right? Well, here after this vision of the four chariots, the word of the Lord came to me saying, receive the gift from the captives and he names them.

Take silver and gold, make an elaborate crown, set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehoshaphat the high priest. Now what was Zechariah's one contribution to the scenario when we were looking at Joshua back in vision four? They took off his filthy robes. He says give him a clean hat and so they do but what does he really deserve? The clean hat is a priestly garment and they say well, yes, that's apropos and they set it on him but what does God say here? Take silver and gold, make an elaborate crown, set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehoshaphat the high priest.

Speak to him saying thus says the Lord of hosts, behold the man whose name is the branch. From his place he will branch out and he will build the temple of the Lord. I thought Zerubbabel was building the temple of the Lord.

His hands will finish it. Remember that in vision five? Here is one individual who is both. He wears the crown of civil authority as well as the turban of priestly authority.

He is the branch but he is also the one who will build the temple of the Lord. Yes, he shall build the temple of the Lord. He will bear the glory.

When is the glory going to come in? When he builds the temple and he bears the glory in. He's the means by which the glory enters. He will sit and rule on his throne.

That is Zerubbabel function. Priests don't sit on thrones but with this crown, at the conclusion of the eighth vision, you have all eight of them rolled up into one and it's all about the Lord Jesus Christ. You look at these.

The status of the nations. I will go down and see if the imagination of men's hearts is only evil all the day. Remember God says I will go down and see.

He's got these horsemen who go through the earth. There are powers who need to be judged.

There is the measuring line, evaluation.

Remember we saw the inkhorn angel at one point when we were doing Ezekiel where he is going to mark those who are going to be separated out. There are those who are going to measure. Some will stay and some will go.

You have Joshua and Zerubbabel at the center. The flying scroll is going to eat those who don't measure up in that measuring line. What did Jesus say to the disciples right before he left? All authority has been given to me in heaven and in earth.

He is prophet, priest and king all in one. So this is a beautiful Christological picture and embedded within it are those seven lamps that are suggestive of the seven lamps he's going to walk among in Revelation chapter 1 and talk directly to their angels in chapter 2 and chapter 3. But here's the bottom line of the whole night. When you think about these eight visions and you think about the shortcoming that is pointed out by Haggai and Zechariah and explicitly by Malachi with the heart not being right and the necessity to have a holy temple that only the Lord Jesus can build and a holy sacrifice that only those who are faithful can bring, that is our opportunity.

We have that now. They'll have it in the millennial kingdom. Ezekiel saw the millennial temple.

They'll have that chance. God will pour his spirit out on their flesh. Their old men will see visions.

Their young men will dream dreams and so on. We have it now. This speaks to us now.

The crown and the branch together reminds us that our life is not about circumstance. It's not about getting the building built. It's not about bringing a sacrifice and punching that ticket, marking that off on the to-do list.

Our life is invested not in places, not in things, but in a person. The solution is a person. The consummation of history and the fulfillment of all of God's covenant promises is not in a mechanism.

It's in a person. It is the branch. It is the priest.

It is the king. It is this man who stands there at the end of chapter 6. Behold the man whose name is the branch. Next time I make a refrigerator magnet, that's the one to make.

Behold the man whose name is the branch, Netzer. He will be called the Netzerene, the Nazarene. He's the branch.

And he branches out and builds the temple of the Lord. He bears its glory, sits and rules on his throne. It's not just a crown.

Remember the hymn, Crown Him With Many Crowns? It's an elaborate crown. It's a

multifaceted crown. He's the king of Israel.

He will be the king of the nations. And hopefully he is our only wise and sovereign potentate as well. We have a unique relationship to him.

We can rule and reign with him if we can pay attention and not miss the message of these three great prophets. Well, we'll pick up here and see a few more of these amazing details. That's just skimming the tops of the waves.

We could spend a year in Zechariah and not begin to plumb its depths with a measuring line. But we'll conclude for tonight in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for the wonderful revelation, not only of your plans and purposes and your provision and your prophecies to Israel, but their unique application and significance to us as members of the body of Christ with an opportunity to avail ourselves of the presence of your sevenfold spirit, the wonderful truth of your word, the time that you've given us as a stewardship, the opportunities and the blessings that we have. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will keep us ever mindful of these things to alert us to our opportunities and our potential each and every day that we can transcend circumstance, we can transcend the earthly and the mundane and remember who we truly are and why we are truly here. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.