

PostExilicProphets 21-04-22b

Thank you, Dan and Lori, for that treat. Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of this world will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace. A perfect reflection of the theme of our passage, which is to ensure that we are looking to God through the Lord Jesus.

We're going to see several verses that pertain directly to that concept as we continue our study now. And we're looking at getting this temple built. Zerubbabel and Joshua get the effort underway and get it built.

We'll see how successful that was here shortly. But we want to be sure that we know how to get our temple built, built in the right way, and we'll know it's done properly when it accomplishes its purposes. So, what were the purposes of the temple? Well, first of all, we know from Hebrews that the tabernacle and the temple, which came later, are shadows of a heavenly reality.

And we'll see some verses about that from the book of Hebrews. But Moses was to make the tabernacle and Solomon made the temple according to the pattern that was shown to Moses in the mount. Moses saw the heavenly temple, and that was the pattern for the shadow tabernacle and later temple in Israel.

So, first and foremost, it is an anticipation, and it is an earthly shadow of the heavenly reality. The central chapters of the book of Hebrews are all about this. Jesus as the high priest after the order of Melchizedek, sacrifices that are offered here on earth are a preview and an anticipation of the perfect sacrifice offered by the Lord Jesus.

Jesus as our high priest who has opened a new and living way through the veil, Hebrews 10, the veil of the Holy of Holies, and so on. Hebrews 9 is especially pertinent if you want to put a passage for that first point that the temple, whether it is the Old Testament temple, tabernacle, or the one in our midst and in our hearts, should be a reflection and be built according to the pattern of the heavenly, and it should be a reminder and a motivation and an anticipation of what we will see when we get to glory. So, you can put Hebrews 9, 11, and 9, 24 as just a few representative verses.

Really, all of those central chapters in Hebrews talk about that. First and foremost, at the temple, you have the altar, the altar of sacrifice. So, in this earthly representation of the heavenly reality, it is a place of sacrifice.

2 Chronicles 7, verse 12. We know that when Solomon completed the effort that his father David funded and undertook and wanted to complete himself, in 2 Chronicles 7, verse 12, the Lord appeared to Solomon at night and said to him, I have heard your prayer. This is, by the way, if you read the preceding verse, Solomon had finished the house of the Lord and the royal palace, successfully carrying out all that was in his heart to do for the house of the Lord and for

his own palace.

Nothing wrong with looking out for our own needs, as long as we are also looking out for the needs of others. That is the mind that was in Christ Jesus, according to Philippians 2. The Lord appeared and said to him, 2 Chronicles 7, verse 12, I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice. God says, you built it right, so I choose it as my place of sacrifice.

So, as our second point, the first one being that whatever it is, this earthly temple needs to be a copy of the heavenly and anticipate it and be a preview of it for us. Secondly, it is a place of sacrifice. In the Old Testament, it was animal sacrifice.

It was meal offerings, grain offerings, sheaf and wave and heave offerings. It is where the showbread was presented. It is where the golden candlestick was lit.

It is where the golden altar of incense was sending perfumed smoke on high. Later, we are told that this is symbolizing the prayers of the saints. So, it is going to be a place of sacrifice.

The altar of sacrifice and the altar of incense. So, it is a place of sacrifice. In our dispensation, what kind of sacrifice? You can immediately jump ahead and just put in Romans 12, 1 and 2. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.

This is your reasonable service. If you are going to be holy and acceptable, you cannot be conformed to this world. Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you know what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

This goes back to my point before the break, that whatever is happening to us, we should be able to comprehend its purpose. If we have our minds transformed and renewed by the word of God, if we are offering ourselves as holy and acceptable living sacrifices, then we will know what the good, acceptable and perfect will of God is. This is specifically expressed in our own lives.

Should not be in doubt, should not be clueless. Now, we may not know specifics. God may be preparing us for something in the future.

He may be enabling us by some form of suffering to have empathy. By the way, this was a large part of the purpose for the sufferings of the Lord Jesus in this earth. We do not have a high priest who is unacquainted with our challenges and our trials.

He was tested. He was perazzoed in all points like as we are. Therefore, He is sympathetic.

He understands. And Jesus knew that His incarnation and His hunger and His thirst and His exhaustion, His temptations, His vexations at the hard-hearted people that He came to who did not receive Him had a purpose. Jesus knew that purpose and knowing that purpose is one of

the reasons He was able to successfully resist the temptation to fail or to do things that were out of keeping with the will of God.

And it's the same with us. So, we can know, we should know the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. So, place of sacrifice, this is point two.

If the house of God is in our midst, individually and collectively, it will be a place of sacrifice. We will be able to see and exploit opportunities to look out not only for our own interests but also for the interests of others. There will be love, sacrificial to self, beneficial to others.

Whatever form that takes, whatever opportunity the Lord presents, the Holy Spirit will make it discernible, make it understandable, shine a light on the opportunity and we make a choice. Am I going to run to my own house or am I going to offer sacrifice in God's house? Haggai chapter one. I can consider my ways.

And you know, consider your ways doesn't always have a bad outcome. Oh, I see my sins, I see my faults. It is okay to look and say, I have done a good job.

I have been a good and faithful servant. The master said, come in from the field and make my supper and I did so. I'm a good servant.

I did what I was supposed to do. I don't have to pat myself on the back. I don't think I deserve or earn any grace from God.

But I can know when I've done a good job. You know when you've done a good job. If you've got to clean up something or mow something or mend something or clean something or repair something or undertake some project, you know when you've done a good job, when you gave it your best.

It's as good as I can make it. Given the time and the circumstance, you know, if that's not good enough you'll have to get somebody else because that's my best. You know that hymn, Our Best, every work for Jesus will be blessed, but he asks from everyone his best.

Our talents may be few, these may be small, but, you know, we give to him our best, our all. And you know when you've done that. You know when you've left it all out there on the field.

You're all in. Right? So consider your ways. Sometimes returns a verdict of my conscience, like Paul says, my conscience doesn't lodge any case against me.

My conscience isn't telling me I've messed up. Paul tells the Ephesian elders, I am innocent of the blood of all men. I have done what I was supposed to do.

I have well and faithfully communicated the word of God the very best I could. And there is reserved for me a crown. Paul knows that.

He knows he did a good job as an apostle. Nothing wrong with that. We need to know that.

We need to be able to tell that we are offering a sacrifice that is holy and acceptable to God as our reasonable service. Reasonable means it makes sense. We can look at it and say that was a reasonable, good quality effort for the Lord.

Do what you do heartily as unto the Lord. I made that bed as unto the Lord. I washed those dishes as unto the Lord.

I cleaned that load of laundry. I mowed that lawn. I went to work and did my job.

I shopped that grocery list. Whatever it is. It's all the same as if the Lord was at my house and He said, Could you pick up these few things for me? How diligent was I? I got them all.

Look at the list. Everything's in the basket. Everything's in the sack.

Got all the sacks into the car. Got them all out of the car and into the house. That's important.

You ever left a gallon of milk in your car for a few days in the summertime? Eek. It's even worse if it's a big lump of meat. Had that happened one time.

Won't say who, where, why, or how. But, wow. Not just shopping them.

Not just buying them. Getting them home and to their appropriate refrigerated destination. But we know when we've done well.

We know when we've done a good job. Being a holy and acceptable sacrifice is our reasonable service. That is point two.

The temple is a place of sacrifice. Can we look at ourselves and say, I have been offering sacrifices. I have been doing what I do heartily as unto the Lord.

I don't care if people appreciate it. If they recognize it. If they say thank you.

If they even notice it. I didn't do it for them. I did it for the Lord.

The Lord saw and my father who sees in secret can reward me openly if and when he chooses. Even if he doesn't reward me. I did it for him.

Sacrifice. The temple is a place of sacrifice. What's another temple's purpose? It is a place for prayer and for praise.

Prayer and praise. Isaiah 56 verse 7. The Lord Jesus quotes this. We just saw it in our Passion Week study.

Wish I could think of a better word. But everybody knows what Passion Week is. So we'll just use it.

Isaiah 56 7. My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people. My house is a house of

prayer. Old Testament Tabernacle.

Old Testament Temple. New Testament Temple should be a place of prayer. How healthy is my prayer life? When I consider my ways, what are my prayers like? Do I have a healthy balance of praise? Of thanksgiving? Remember Psalm 100? Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands.

Serve the Lord with gladness. Come before his presence with singing. Singing is a musical form of rejoicing.

Come before his presence with singing. And when you come into his presence, remember, know, understand that the Lord is God. It is he that hath made us and not we ourselves.

We are his people. We are the sheep of his pasture. Talking about the Temple.

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving. Enter into his courts with praise. Be thankful unto him and bless his name.

Why? The Lord is good. His mercy is everlasting. And his truth, his word, endures to all generations.

If you want to know the purpose of the Temple, look at Psalm 100. Praise, thanksgiving, and prayer. That was the purpose of the Temple.

My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people. Jesus quotes that in 21.18 of Matthew. Fourth, that was the third point.

First point, it ought to be an accurate reflection of the heavenly Temple of God. More about that shortly. Secondly, place of sacrifice.

Thirdly, place of thanksgiving, praise, and prayer. We need to be glass half full people. Actually, if we do it properly, we're going to be Psalm 23.

My cup runneth over people. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. And I will dwell where? In the house of the Lord forever.

Fourthly, the Temple was a place of consecration. A place of dedication. People brought things to the Temple.

People brought things to the door of the Tabernacle. Moses and Joshua brought issues to the door of the Tabernacle for sanctification, for consecration, for dedication. If you go to Isaiah chapter 6, you'll remember this familiar scene.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled what? The Temple. Above it stood Seraphim. Now, this is the heavenly Temple.

This is what our earthly Temple should resemble, should be a good earthly copy of. Seraphim

with six wings, covering their face, their feet, and flying. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of His glory. What happened when Moses completed the Tabernacle? It was filled with God's glory. What happened when Solomon completed the Temple? It was filled with God's glory.

What is the heavenly Temple full of? God's glory. And the Seraphim declare it, the threefold holy. And the posts of the door, this is the door to the heavenly Temple, were shaken by the voice of Him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

This is the ineffable, invisible presence of God. I said, woe is me, I'm undone, I'm a man of unclean lips, I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. My eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

Part of prayer is confession. When Isaiah finds himself at the heavenly Temple in visionary form, what does he do? He immediately confesses his sin, and the sin of the people. Remember what Daniel did when he was preparing himself to make appeal to God? When he realized that the 70 years were nearing completion, and the days of Haggai and Zechariah were near? Remember all of that preparation that Daniel spent? And then he prayed, and he confessed his sins and the sins of the people.

Isaiah does the same thing here. And you go on to the commissioning of Isaiah. So the dedication, the commissioning, the purposing of Isaiah takes place at God's Temple.

He is consecrated, he is dedicated, he is commissioned to be the prophet Isaiah at God's Temple. Dedicated things were laid before the Lord at the Temple. Turn to 2 Chronicles chapter 5. As soon as you get to the early chapters of 2 Chronicles, you know you're going to be talking about the construction of the Temple of Solomon.

And in chapter 5, all the work that Solomon had done for the house of the Lord was finished. And Solomon brought in the things which his father David had dedicated, the silver and the gold and all the furnishings. And he put them in the treasuries of the house of God.

Dedicated things brought to the Temple. If you read the final chapters of 2 Samuel or the final chapters of 1 Chronicles, it talks about David not only encouraging the people to give and to donate, but he takes of his own treasure and allocates it and dedicates it for the house of the Lord. And this Solomon takes and brings to the Temple and places it there.

This is the dedication of our own resources. What treasure do we have? Is it just money? Send an amount to a ministry or to a church or to an entity someplace, to a charity? What does it mean? Material things in the Old Testament are spiritual things in the New, right? So what are the dedicated things that should be contributed and reside in our spiritual Temple? What do you think? What are my abilities? What is my spiritual gift? What do you have that you did not receive? In the financial realm, especially if you grew up in the Baptist church like I did, you give back to the Lord. The Lord gave you, so you give back.

He gives you ten, you give him back one. And it's the tithe and so on. Well, we are a spiritual people.

We have a spiritual Temple and our dedicated things are spiritual. How did David amass the wealth that he dedicated to the Lord? Where did the gold and the silver and the treasures come from? His military conquests? They are spoils of war? This is the fruit of exploiting God's blessing and God's grace and God's provision and God's promise of victory and going out and conquering what he needed to conquer. And there were spoils, there were benefits of faithfully fighting God's battles.

What benefits do we accrue, do we accumulate when we successfully fight God's battles? You can think in terms of turning our knowledge, gnosis, into experience and experiential truth, experiential knowledge, seeing and sharing the truth of what God has done in our sight, in us and for us. It's treasure. You know when God has blessed.

You know when God has supernaturally provided strength and spiritual nourishment. And we dedicate that. We don't say, well, I feel like pretty much a spiritual giant right now.

Let me go out and pin on some medals and badges and parade myself in front of the people and get them to notice all of the salad on my chest and think I must have been everywhere and done everything. David took the spoils and dedicated them to God, the fruit of his victories. And by extension for us in the spiritual realm, what do we bring away from victory over temptation, victory over evil, victory over the forces of darkness, hard-won steadfastness in the face of challenge and trial? We have experience and we have appreciation for God that we can share.

We can speak the truth to one another in love. Speaking the truth is not just the truth of God's word. It's also the truth of our experience.

We can be ready to answer those who ask us a reason for our hope. And it's not just, well, I've got pie in the sky by and by. That's why I have hope.

I also have experience. You think about the Israelites who were supplied with manna on a daily basis in the wilderness for 40 years. If somebody said, well, I don't know if God can really meet my needs or not.

Are you kidding me? I've been wandering around out here for 35 years and I never have to wonder where my next meal is coming from. It rains down from the sky. I pick it up on the ground in the morning.

We have a place of dedication. We can dedicate our time. We can dedicate our talent.

We can dedicate our experience. Our talent and our gift becomes sharper and more versatile with experience. You may be a gifted marksman, but the more you shoot, the better you get.

You may be a gifted craft person. You may be a gifted cook. You may be a gifted artisan of

some kind, but the more you do it, the better you get.

And you dedicate that improvement and that ability and that opportunity to God. The temple was a place for the consecration of people. We come and dedicate ourselves before God and the things that we possess.

And these are spiritual assets. It doesn't matter. You can decide what to do with material things.

But this is talking about the spiritual realm. There is a place for material contribution. Paul says, He's got the cattle on a thousand hills.

But if material contribution, if God blesses in a material way, and he puts in someone's heart to redirect that blessing, that's still a spiritual victory. It's a spiritual contribution because it's not the mere materiality of it. It is the heart with which it is given.

It doesn't say purpose in your heart and give because God loves it when you give. God loves seeing money come into the coffers. God loves what he sees in your heart when you give.

And that enables him to bless it and to multiply it the way bread multiplied in the Lord's hands. So it's a place. That's point four point five.

The temple is a place for remembering the law of the Lord. When Solomon finishes the temple and they bring in the Ark of the Covenant, what is left in the Ark? Here's a little pop quiz question as we finish up tonight. What were the original contents of the Ark? I'm not going to give you the passages.

You can look it up. What were the original contents of the Ark of the Covenant? There's a stick. What is that? Aaron's rod that budded.

What does it represent? God's ordained wilderness leadership, right? There is a pot of something. What's in the pot? Manna. What does that represent? God's provision during the wilderness wandering.

And what's the third thing? The tables of the law. You got the stick, the pot, and the tables of the law. By the time you get to the days of David and Solomon, what's left in the Ark? And what's gone? Turn real quick.

You might still be in 2 Chronicles. Turn over to 1 Kings 8. 1 Kings 8. We're heading for verse 9. Notice, city of David in Zion is not the same as the location of the temple. They've got to move the Ark from Zion to the temple.

The temple is not Zion. Zion is not the temple. We've made that distinction in the past.

So the men of Israel assembled in what month? What month did they assemble? Seventh month. What month do we have Haggai prophesying? We're going to see it at the beginning of

chapter 2. But you can put in the margin of 1 Kings 8, next to the seventh month, Haggai chapter 2. And at Haggai chapter 2, we're going to put 1 Kings 8, verse 2. So the elders assembled. The priests took up the Ark.

They brought up the Ark of the Lord, the tabernacle, and, meaning all the holy furnishings that were in the tabernacle, the priests and the Levites brought them up. King Solomon, congregation of Israel, assembled with them before the Ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted, numbered for multitude. Temple is a place of sacrifice.

Priests brought in the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord in its place, along with all of these other furnishings and accouterments. It's a place of dedication, a place of consecration. Into the inner sanctuary of the temple of the Most Holy, under the wings of the cherubim.

For the cherubim spread their two wings over the place of the Ark, and the cherubim overshadowed the Ark and its poles. The poles extended so that the Ark could not be seen. They are there to this day.

Verse 9. Nothing was in the Ark except the two tablets of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. Why? Why is there nothing in there but the tablets of stone? What's different 450 odd years after the tabernacle was constructed? Are they still in the wilderness, needing that sojourn provision of manna? They're not. Their provision comes in a different way and in a different form.

Why is there no staff for Aaron's rod that budded? Why is that no longer in there? In the days when Aaron, father of the Levites, the priests, was the leader, pot of manna speaks of provision, staff speaks of leadership. What was the leadership all the way up until the days of David, really? It was the priest. It was the prophet.

What is the leadership now? The king. God could have had him drop a crown in there or something, but it's not the time. It is no longer the time.

They are no longer a theocracy. They are now a monarchy. So the time to recognize the theocratic rule of God in governmental form, in civil form, is past, as is the time to expect supernatural provision from God.

God's provision is now natural. He's brought them into the land, and they are to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. They couldn't plow the land and plant wheat and earn their bread by the sweat of their brow in the wilderness.

They were on the move. They were mobile. So God supernaturally provided when they could not provide for themselves.

God supernaturally led them with the Levitical priesthood until the days that the land was secure after the victories of David. They had secure borders, and they had peace all around.

Now Solomon is the king of peace.

Shlomo, right? In Yerushalem, the city of peace. So what remains now? The Lord Jesus has returned us to the theocracy. We are not led.

We don't have a government of priests, such as a Catholic church or any other kind of priestly church. What is our leadership in the spiritual realm that we're talking about? It doesn't matter what country we're in. It doesn't matter what time in history we're in.

People have been under every kind of civil government there is, but believers are under what kind of government? We're back to a priest-led government, and the Lord Jesus Christ is the high priest after the order of Melchizedek. So the staff of life representing the Lord Jesus as priest might be in our spiritual Ark of the Covenant. Where does our spiritual provision come from? Instead of a pot of manna, what bread do we eat? What's our bread? We just studied it on Sunday.

I am the true bread that comes down from heaven. I'm the manna. Jesus is the staff.

Jesus is the manna. The Lord Jesus has replaced those temporary shadows of different parts of his future purpose and ministry. We have the reality, and it's a spiritual reality, that Ark needs to be in our temple.

Remember in Matthew, Jesus is going to famously say, in John 2, verse 19, he also says it, when the Jews demand a sign, what sign can you show us to prove your authority to do these miracles? The miracles pretty much prove that he has the authority to do the miracles, otherwise the miracles wouldn't happen. But Jesus answered, John 2, verse 19, destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. They said, well, it took 46 years to build this temple, and you're going to raise it up in three days? And you remember in Matthew 26, verse 61, the accusations that are brought at Jesus' trial is, this man said, I'm able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.

Is that what Jesus said? Does this remind you of the current atmosphere in our country? Take what you say and twist it slightly and turn it into blasphemy or turn it into something that's chargeable. Jesus never said, I will destroy the temple and I will rebuild it in three days. He said, you destroy this temple, meaning his own body, and I will raise it, not rebuild it, raise it in three days.

Distortion, twisting, misinterpreting, conscious rephrasing for purposes of destruction. And it's not just Matthew 26, 61 where they do that. When Jesus is on the cross, Matthew 27, 40, people mocked him saying, you who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself.

If you are the son of God, come down from the cross. Horrifying, scary, blindness, evil, self-righteous, condescension. Many, many references to the Lord Jesus as the temple, as the veil in Hebrews 10, which is his flesh.

So our next point in terms of, is the temple present? The one who has my words and keeps them is the one who loves me. I will come to him and my father will come to him. I will be the holy of holies with the veil that provides free access to my father who will be there as well.

This is one case where if we build it, he will come, Hebrews 10. Well, we're out of time for tonight, but this has to be practical for us. It's not enough to look and say, well, those crazy Israelites, they got back in the land and didn't build God's temple.

All they had to do was stack up those blocks and it would have all been okay. We see the spiritual application for us. We are in joint.

Are we running to our own home, paneled with cedar and the house of God that ought to be in our midst, in us and in our fellowship is lying in ruins. If we want to respond and build this temple, and by the way, we're going to see that even though they build it, they don't do it right and God does not come. That's going to be our study next Thursday night.

It's not enough to think we've built it. Does God come? If we build it right, and this is my modification to whatever it is, field of dreams or whatever. If we build it right, He will come.

If we build it wrong, the glory will never appear. And that's exactly what's going to happen in this second temple. The glory of God never appears.

And the Ark of the Covenant is never in it. There is no Ark of the Covenant in the second temple that's rebuilt. You might call it the third temple.

Well, it's the second temple. Solomon's was the first. The Ark of the Covenant was in it.

But the second temple, there is no Ark and there is no glory because there is no presence, even though they built it. God is not going to come to that temple until the Lord Jesus comes. And there's scripture on that, which we'll see next time.

But plenty of grist for us to do what? Consider our ways. Consider your ways. That's my goal personally in these coming days and weeks is to heed God's direct exhortation in scripture.

Consider your ways. We don't want to make the mistake these people make. We don't want to fail to build the temple that God will inhabit and will glorify Himself in.

A place of meeting, a place of sacrifice, a place of praise and prayer, a place of consecration and dedication. That's got to be our temple. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word.

Thank You for the powerful way Your Word communicates to us across the ages, across the centuries. In the hands of the Holy Spirit, it is living and powerful, swinging like a sharp sword and exposing the very inmost thoughts and intents of our hearts. We pray that as we consider our ways, that Your Holy Spirit will shine a light that will reveal to us clearly how we can establish good priorities and observe them in the time that remains to us in this life.

We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.