

PostExilicProphets 21-06-03a

This is the 3rd of June, 2021. Welcome to the Thursday night study at Grace and Truth Bible Church. We're continuing our series on the post-exilic prophets, the prophets that ministered to Judah, the returning Babylonian captives.

And having completed Haggai in our last live meeting, we're going to resume our study of Zechariah. If you recall, we've already done chapter one, verses one through six, because of its date. It was interleaved with the prophecies of Haggai and set like a jewel in the midst of those four messages.

So we're going to pick up tonight with the book of Zechariah formally, and we'll start at verse seven. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and our biblical investigations tonight, and then we'll begin. Father, what a wonderful privilege to have the books of the Bible before us with such ease of access, such wonderful resources to help us to understand and get the truth of your word into our hearts where the Holy Spirit can use it to renew our minds, motivate us, and encourage us, and strengthen us for your purposes in this life, and prepare us for those in the ages to come.

We pray that as we look at this portion of your word together and the related scriptures that we will see tonight, that your Holy Spirit will illuminate them for us, impress them on our hearts, and ready us for function and service in the times ahead as we seek to represent the Lord Jesus Christ on this earth and prepare to serve him in the coming kingdoms, his and yours. We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen. Well, I'm excited to undertake this particular lesson because it is a perfect storm.

It's a perfect intersection of our Sunday study and our post-exilic prophet study. I did not plan it. I couldn't have done a better job of interweaving these two studies.

If I had tried it, it just happened. I hope and pray by divine intervention. So we're going to see the link tonight as soon as we talk about Zachariah proper.

Who is Zachariah? We delved into the first six verses, but we haven't really talked about the book itself. It is introduced to us in verse one of chapter one as the work of Zachariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, the prophet. So we get a little bit of information about this because Iddo was a prophet, not only a prophet, but also a priest.

And we find this out. He is mentioned in Nehemiah 12, verses four and 16. But it's quite fascinating because like his grandfather and father before him, although we don't have any information about the function of Berechiah other than his name, but the mention of Iddo tells us as we investigate it that both Iddo and Zachariah certainly were dual-headed.

They are both prophets and in the priestly line. They are priests and prophets. This is going to be significant.

And what I'm going to do is relieve all mystery about what we're going to do tonight. What we're going to do is take an overview that is going to focus on a single great truth about the Lord Jesus Christ. The book of Zachariah is all about anticipating the Messiah.

There is so much Christology in this book. You can hardly digest it all, but it is about the Lord Jesus. Everything in here relates to him either directly or indirectly, not always in the traditional manner.

There's a lot of interpretive ink that has been spilled, but I will, as I always do, I'll tell you what I think, and you're free to compare and contrast that with what has gone before me. But Zachariah probably returned with his grandfather, Iddo. And again, if you go to Nehemiah chapter 12, you find out that Iddo accompanied the first group of returnees, and there are listings given there.

And so in circa 538 BC, and you remember these prophecies are occurring around 520. So this and verse four, of chapter two, if you've got Zachariah open, take a look at verse four of chapter two. There's an angel who is talking and another angel is coming out to meet him.

And one angel says to the other, run, speak to this young man. That's how we know Zachariah is young because the angel says he's young. And that's good enough for me.

Angel service of the Lord speaks, and he says somebody's young, he's young. We saw that Haggai is thought to have been elderly because he speaks of having seen the temple of Solomon before it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. So he would have been an elderly man.

Zachariah is a young man. Zachariah's name, Zachar, is the Hebrew word that means to remember. So this is remembrance of the Lord is the idea.

And that genitive construct can work both ways. You should remember the Lord and it means the Lord remembers. God has not forgotten.

There are times when it's a challenge to convince ourselves that God hasn't gotten busy somewhere else and maybe doesn't maintain full awareness of our situation, but he does. Zachariah, the Lord remembers. But as with so many of these names, it flows in two directions.

If you say the love of Jesus, is this our love for him or his love for us? And the answer is yes, it's both. The concept and the subject slash object are both in view. Same thing here.

And we love because he first loved us. We remember because he remembers us. And so that's the main part of the introduction in terms of the author, the book itself.

We saw the introductory call to change of mind and we've studied it in detail in preceding weeks in our Haggai study. But then beginning in verse seven, we're going to have the next section of the book is going to be eight visions. Zachariah is going to get worn out.

He's going to get no sleep because he's going to have all of these visions in the same night.

Eight separate visions. If you ever had a dream and you wake up and if you think of it right away, you can remember some of what you dreamed.

But if you don't talk to somebody about it or describe it after a little while, you forget. Well, I don't know. I'm sure that it was a ministry of the Holy Spirit, but Zachariah wakes up and remembers all eight of these visions in detail.

He remembers conversations. He remembers what he saw and what he heard. And it is recorded for us here.

Eight visions. There is a beautiful symmetry to these visions that we will see. It's our old friend, the chiasm.

And we'll see that in detail. But I'm not going to talk about the visions yet because what I hope to do tonight is to introduce the structure. You might say this is the skeleton that we're going to come back and flesh out because to understand the central theme, point, and purpose of the book of Zachariah is to unlock the symbolism in all of the visions.

If you know why the visions are happening and what the visions are pointing to, it becomes much easier to eliminate some of the interpretive options that have been suggested over the years. So what we need to do is avail ourselves of what we have been learning in our Matthew study. So you know where Zachariah is.

You can either put a marker there or not. We can find our way back to it. But turn to Matthew chapter 17.

The key to understanding Zachariah is the same as the key to understanding the transfiguration, which is our current study on Sunday mornings and one to which we will return this Sunday, Lord willing. But in Matthew chapter 17, God says something that unlocks both of these episodes, events, portions of scripture, if you will. So even though we're not quite there in our Matthew study, we're running up to it, we're approaching, we've lifted our eyes unto the hills and it's interesting to me, have you ever noticed that in the New Testament, if you've got one like mine, the words of Christ are in red, but the words of God are not in red? I don't understand that.

God, the Father, for purposes of human history, outranks God, the Son, and both of them outrank God, the Holy Spirit, but the words of the Father and the words of the Holy Spirit are not put in red in the New Testament. Even in Acts, when Jesus is talking to Paul on the road, he's already gone to glory and he comes back and confronts Paul on the road to Damascus, his words are in red in my Bible, but the words of God, the Father, this is my beloved Son in whom I'm, it's not in red, well, anyway. So if you look at Matthew chapter 17, you're gonna miss what God said because it's not in red.

So pick up here where we left off on Sunday, Jesus in verse two of Matthew 17, Matthew 17, two, is transfigured before them, i.e. Peter, James, and his brother, John. His face shone like the

sun, his clothes became as white as the light, and behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them talking with him. What were they talking about? We know this from Luke.

What is the subject of this discussion? It's a single word, also a book of the Bible, second book of the Bible. What is the discussion? Exodus. Luke tells us they were discussing his exodus.

Fraught, we'll spend most of Sunday just parsing that one word. But Peter answered and said, Lord, it's good for us to be here. If you wish, let's make three tabernacles, one for you, one for Moses, one for Elijah.

I cannot tell you how disappointed Moses and Elijah would have been if they had had to live in a tent on top of the Mount of Transfiguration. At Peter's suggestion, they've got a city whose founder and builder is God that they want to move into. They don't wanna live on a tent on a mountain.

They wanna be in the new Jerusalem, just like Abraham, who dwelt in tents because he was waiting for the city. Well, Moses and Elijah have already spent their careers wandering about. Moses lived in a tent for, what, 80 years? Think about that.

Not just 40. What was he doing from the age of 40 to the age of 80? With Jethro's flocks, living in a tent. He's sick of living in a tent.

Wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, living in a tent. So he doesn't wanna live in a tent on top of the Mount of Transfiguration, anyway. So, one for you, one for Moses, one for Elijah.

Verse five, while he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them. This is what has become popularly known as the Shekinah glory, representing the presence of God himself. The word Shekinah is nowhere found in the Old Testament.

Little known trivia detail, but you can look in any biblical lexicon and Shekinah occurs exactly nowhere in the Old Testament. It's a rabbinic term. However, bright cloud overshadowed them, and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud saying, how do I know this cloud represents the presence of God the Father? Because he says, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.

Exact quote from the inception of Jesus' ministry when he is identified and baptized by John in the Jordan. One is at a very low elevation, the water, the surface of the Jordan. This one is up on top of a mountain.

One time God speaks from heaven to his prophet and son who are down in the Jordan. The next time it's up on this mountain. But here's the thing that I would suggest if you don't mind marking your Bible that you circle.

What is the next thing God says? This is the key to everything. This is the biggest clue. This is like saying who's buried in Grant's tomb.

What does God say next? Read it out loud. What are the last two words in that verse? Say it with me. Hear him, hear him.

Some of the two most important words in the gospel of Matthew, perhaps in the entire New Testament. Hear him. Now you probably are wondering why I say that.

Here's why. This is a direct allusion to something that the guy at Jesus' side wrote some 1400 years earlier. This alludes directly to something Moses wrote.

And Elijah makes a big deal out of who can hear his prophets and who can't on top of a very famous mountain with an altar and water. And you remember that? Cry louder. Maybe your God is asleep and he can't what? Hear you.

Moses and Elijah both make direct reference to hearing, hearing God and hearing what God has to say. So with that as our starting point, what allusion in Moses are we referring to? Turn back the other direction in your Bible to Deuteronomy chapter 18. Deuteronomy 17 and 18 are, this is the hot link.

This is what you would click if this was on a webpage. And God says, hear him. It's gonna take you directly to Deuteronomy chapter 18, verse 15, 18, 15 of Deuteronomy.

This is what God is talking about. The Lord, your God, this is Deuteronomy 18, 15. The Lord, your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren.

Him you shall hear. God says, when the prophet is raised up from your brethren and in your midst, hear him. Here is the Lord Jesus standing on top of the mountain and God says, hear him.

So who is it that's standing on top of the mountain? It is the prophet that the new King James puts a capital P on here in Deuteronomy 18, 15. You say, well, okay, that's not a complete surprise. However, look at the context of this passage in Deuteronomy chapter 18, starting at verse 15, the Lord, your God will raise up for you a prophet like me.

Verse 16, according to all you desired of the Lord, your God in Horeb in the day of assembly saying, let me not hear again the voice of the Lord, my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die. Now, the same kind of glory cloud that shrouded Sinai is shrouding the Mount of Transfiguration and the same voice that scared the Israelites. And they said, I don't want to hear this anymore.

It's the same God, it's the same presence. It's another mountaintop. The first time God said, all right, I'll speak to you through Moses.

He will be the intermediary. This time God says, I'm speaking to you through my son. What verse does that remind you of? Hebrews 1.1, many parts, many ways.

God spoke in times past to the fathers, but in these latter days, how does he speak? He has

spoken to us by a son. He has spoken. If he speaks, what should we be doing? Hear him.

Old Testament Israel, hear Moses, hear the prophets through whom God is speaking. In the New Testament, hear Jesus Christ. So the Lord said to me, verse 17, what they have spoken is good.

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren. I will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak to them all that I command him. He's like Moses in that way, right? It shall be that whoever will not hear my words.

Are you starting to see a theme here about communication? The words are going to go out. They're going to be there. The law of Moses has been around ever since Moses and the words that the Lord Jesus spoke had been around ever since the Lord Jesus.

It shall be that whoever will not hear my words, which he speaks in my name, I will require it of him. There is going to be judgment for failing to hear the word of the Lord. And then he talks about prophets who presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.

If you say in your heart, how shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken? When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You shall not fear him.

You will not heed him. You will not credit him. So if you were going to sum up what the subject of verses 15 through 22 is, what's he talking about? He's talking about a prophet in Israel, right? A prophet and the coming prophets, Elijah and Iddo and Zechariah and Haggai and name your major and minor prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel and all the rest of them.

This talks about whether or not they can be heeded based on if they give a false prophecy or speak in the name of another God. But all of that is an anticipation of the prophet, capital P, who will come and be like Moses. Hear him.

So if you wanted to just put one word out beside this entire section, you'd put prophet, right? Prophet. Now, if you go back to the beginning of this chapter, what is the subject? It's labeled in my new King James. Is it labeled in yours? The portion of the what? Priests and Levites is what it says in mine.

Look at verse one of chapter 18. The priests, the Levites, all the tribe of Levi have no part or inheritance with Israel. They eat the offerings of the Lord made by fire, no inheritance among their brethren.

The Lord is their inheritance. He's going to continue all the way down to verse eight, talking about the priests. So if you were going to summarize those eight verses and put something out in the margin, what would you write? Priest, right? So you've got prophet out in the margin,

verses 15 through 22.

You've got priest in the margin, 18, one through eight, right? If you flip back to chapter 17, verse 14, let's read that. When you come to the land which the Lord your God is giving you and possess it and dwell in it and say, I will set a King over me like all the nations that are around me. You shall surely set a King over you whom the Lord your God chooses.

One from among your brethren, sound familiar? From among your brethren, isn't that where the prophet comes from? You shall set his King over you. You may not set a foreigner over you who is not your brother. You get the idea.

This is why our constitution says that the president has to be a US citizen. He shall not multiply horses for himself nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses for the Lord has said to you, you shall not return that way again. Neither shall he multiply wives for himself lest his heart turn away nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.

Now, this is where it really gets good. Also it shall be when he sits on the throne of his kingdom. Jesus is gonna use this exact phrase talking to his disciples in Aramaic.

When the son of man comes in his glory and sits on the throne of his kingdom, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, then he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book from the one before the priest, the Levites. And it shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life that he may learn to fear the Lord, his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes. That his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.

So if you were gonna put something out beside verses 14 through 20 of chapter 17 here, what word would you write? King. So if you look at the three words in your margins, what do you have? Prophet, working backwards, like you do in Hebrew, prophet, priest and king. These are the three offices of the Lord Jesus Christ, prophet, priest and king.

Hear him. Why? Because he is speaking my word. The prophet that doesn't speak my word, that doesn't speak in my name, don't fear him.

Don't pay attention to him. Priests, verse five of chapter 18, the Lord your God has chosen him out of all your tribes to stand to minister in the name of the Lord, him and his sons forever. The prophet, chosen by God.

The priest, chosen by God. The king, chosen by God. Prophet, priest and king.

You get here because God says, this is my beloved son, hear him. Now, what we're going to find in the book of Zechariah, just like on the Mount of Transfiguration, about which we'll talk more on Sunday, with this clue, why is it Moses? Why is it Elijah? I despair that I'm going to be able to cover all of that in just two sessions on Sunday, but we're going to make the attempt. But back

to Zechariah, I'm confident that you can find it.

There's a crease in my Bible at Haggai, so you can just flip a page and you're at Zechariah. Zechariah's visions. And this is, I'm going to skip forward and talk about the bones of this that we're going to flesh out by looking at all eight visions but turn to chapter three of Zechariah.

In my Bible, this is subtitled, vision of the high priest. Vision of the high priest. If you go to chapter four, you have the vision of the lampstand and the olive trees.

Zechariah is going to ask, what are these olive trees? Look at verse 11. What are these two olive trees at the right of the lampstand and at its left? This is Zechariah chapter four, verse 11. Zechariah 4.11, Zechariah asks the question, what are these two olive trees? I further answered and said to him, what are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains? He answered me and said, do you not know what these are? Remind you of John chapter three, talking to Nicodemus and Jesus says, are you a teacher in Israel and you don't know about being born again? These are the two anointed ones who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.

The two individuals that are mentioned and that figure in this prophetic book are the same two that figured in Zechariah. And that is Joshua the priest and Zerubbabel the governor. Zerubbabel who is in the kingly line, but can't sit on the throne because there is no throne.

So to confirm that, you can look at chapter six, verse nine and following. The word of the Lord came to me, take the gifts, take silver and gold, make a crown and set it on the head of Joshua, the son of Jehoshadak, the high priest. Speak to him saying, thus says the Lord of hosts, the man whose name is the branch.

So who do you think a priest wearing a crown foreshadows? Whose name is Yeshua. Yeshua here is crowned and he's a high priest. He's a king and he's a high priest.

This is a kingly crown. How do I know that? Because the next verse, he shall build the temple. He shall bear the glory and shall sit and rule on his throne.

Priests don't have a throne. There's no throne in the temple other than the throne of God, the Ark of the covenant, the mercy seat, right? But this high priest who is crowned with an elaborate crown is going to sit and rule from a throne. So if you turn to the end of Zechariah, verse 20 of chapter 14, in that day, holiness to the Lord shall be engraved on the bells of the horses.

The pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bulls before the altar. Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the Lord of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them.

No longer be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts. Holiness to the Lord engraved on the bells of the horses. Now, in your available choices of prophets, priests and kings, who has

horses? And who was told not to multiply them too much? It's okay to have a wife or even a few wives, but don't multiply wives.

Solomon failed this. Who has the horses of those three? The king. Gotta be careful.

Moderation, let your moderation be known to all. The Lord is at hand. Moderation with horses, moderation with relying on human standards of strength, because the king should be relying on the Lord.

That's why he's got the book of the law that he's gonna copy and reflect on and read all the days of his life as he sits on his throne. You realize that the Lord Jesus as a king in Israel, as near as I can tell, is going to follow the law and is going to write out for himself a copy of the law of Moses. And to do that, he's got to refer to the original that is held by the priests, which means that copy is probably stored in the same place as the Ark of the Covenant.

Jeremiah may have squirreled that stuff away before his exile. It's a speculation on my part, but I think in some way, shape or form, the Lord Jesus, either because he represents the living word of God, is going to be the fulfillment of that command, or he and the other sons of David and David himself who are gonna rule from that throne for that thousand-year period are going to write out the law. It's in the law of God.

If you sit on the throne of Israel, you write out your own copy. So I just think that's something I never heard anybody say Jesus was gonna do. I've heard a lot of things he's gonna do in the millennial kingdom, but if he follows the law, then that's what he'll do.

I would love to be close enough to watch that. Maybe there'll be some running commentary. Maybe there will be some elaboration on what those symbols meant, why it is that each of the sacrifices has the details that it has.

We've made a brave attempt to parse some of those things. Every single detail is important, but wouldn't you love to be partaking of some of that hidden manna and to be sitting with Jesus on his throne when he writes out that book and gives running commentary on it? That would be a great thing. So this is the key.

It's the key to the transfiguration. It is the key to the prophecies of Zechariah in general and the eight visions in particular. And that's what we're gonna see as we go through the book of Zechariah.

Now, I would endeavor as we go through this, we're going to look at it from a slightly different perspective. We spent a good deal of time in Zechariah during our Kings and Prophets study, and we will not necessarily retrace that ground in detail. This key puts the book in a fresh light and looking at it from another perspective, it's gonna give us that 3D view that is so valuable in memorable review of the word of God in our hearts as we seek to live our lives.

We can say, okay, prophet, priest, and king, key to the transfiguration, key to Zechariah, so

what? How should we then live? Well, this is powerful stuff, and we'll see why after we take our break, enjoy our special music, and then return.