

PostExilicProphets 21-06-03b

As we return to our study, the glory of God, and God the Father speaking from that glory cloud, focusing attention on His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is prophet, priest, and king. And as we take a look at this now in anticipation of our journey through Zechariah, this is what is going to unlock it. And the intertwining of Haggai and Zechariah is no accident.

If you flip back now to the first chapter of Zechariah, then turn back one more page to the end of Haggai. We looked at the end of Zechariah, now we're going to look at the end of Haggai to see how significant this is. You remember that the visions are addressed through Haggai 2, if you look at chapter 2, verse 2, Haggai is told, by the Lord, speak now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Jehoshadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people.

We saw this. And there is a further address beginning in verse 10, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet saying, thus says the Lord of hosts, ask the priests concerning the law. You've got priesthood and you've got the law made an issue in this portion of Haggai.

What does the law say? The priests should know this and the priests should be adhering to it. Then in verse 20 of chapter 2, the word of the Lord came to Haggai on the 24th day of the month, 24th day of the month. Zechariah's night visions are going to come on the 24th day of the month in Zechariah 1.7. Here is the 24th day at the end of Haggai.

And who is this one addressed to? Not the priest, not Joshua, only Zerubbabel. Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake heaven and earth. I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms.

I will destroy the strength of the Gentile kingdoms. One of the symbols of strength is the horse, the cavalry. It's a royal army asset.

I will overthrow the chariots and those who ride in them. We are going to see horses and chariots bracketing these eight visions in Zechariah. Horses and chariots.

It's anticipated here by Haggai. Horses and riders shall come down, everyone by the sword of his brother. But now look at the last verse.

In that day, says the Lord of hosts, I will take you, Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, says the Lord. And I will make you like a signet ring for I have chosen you, says the Lord. Zerubbabel is chosen.

Now chosen for what? What do we have in history? He helped lay the foundation stone for the temple and so on, but he gets bogged down and doesn't finish it. Here's the thing. Joshua, the high priest, and Zerubbabel, the governor, who is standing in for a king who cannot take his throne.

Does this in any way suggest an idea to you? Zerubbabel, had things been different, had the nation not been disobedient, what would Zerubbabel be instead of governor of Judah? He would be king of Judah. He's a son of David. He is in the royal line, but he cannot take the throne because there is no throne.

Why is there no throne? Because the people were faithless and disobedient. So you have Zerubbabel, but Zerubbabel's fate, now this is a point of application. You think, well, poor Zerubbabel, he couldn't be king because people messed up his opportunity.

People were faithless and he didn't get the chance. What does God say? You wait, Zerubbabel, because in that day I will take you, My servant, My servant, any faint bells ringing here, behold My servant, Isaiah, the suffering servant, the servant who comes and offers the kingdom, and when he comes to his own, his own receive him not, and so there is no throne and there is no kingdom at that time. But for the joy that was set before him, Jesus endures the cross that came before the crown.

You get the idea that Zerubbabel had to bear quite a cross when he was trying to get the Word of the Lord accomplished and the people weren't with him and they kept devolving into petty squabbles and so on. God says, Zerubbabel, My servant, son of Shealtiel, we talked about what, we reviewed what Shealtiel's name means, I will make you like a signet. What is a signet or a signet ring? This is the impremature of a king, right? Or a noble, somebody with authority, and when he presses that thing into wax or clay, that's the royal seal.

I will make you a royal seal. You're going to be this, God says, because I have chosen you. I have chosen you.

So this is the key. What we're going to see is that the high priest, Yeshua, in Haggai and Zechariah, represents the Lord Jesus. Zerubbabel, the governor who would have been king if things were different, but is going to be on a throne with royal authority, ruling on behalf of God, represents the Lord Jesus.

You can't get a single individual to represent all of the facets of the beloved Son of God. So like we saw in Leviticus 14 where you can't have both a living and a dead animal and God's not going to raise a dead animal back to life every time, or Azazel the goat, you have two goats and you put the blood of one on the living one and release him into the wilderness. You have to use two things because one is insufficient to accomplish everything that the symbolism communicates.

Well here you have both Joshua, Yeshua, and Zerubbabel, both representing the Lord Jesus Christ. This is key. It's key.

When we get to Zechariah and start looking at these eight visions, we're going to see that it takes more than one symbol to fully convey what the Messiah is going to be and what the Lord Jesus is going to do. And this just makes the book of Zechariah fall open like a decoded

message. You use the decoder ring and suddenly everything becomes clear.

We're going to see hats and crowns, we're going to see horses and chariots, we're going to see trees and lamps and oil and it is going to fall open in a very straightforward manner. And the key is realizing that this post-exilic phase, God has already turned his attention away from the physical temple. He's not going to wait for Israel to get their mind right and their heart right and build this temple so that he can come and indwell it with his glory.

God's glory is going to come in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, these post-exile prophets, even though they are talking about building the house of the Lord, God's not really interested in the building and it's not about the building. Let me ask you a couple of trivia questions here, we'll see how good your memory is.

How many of the kings of the southern kingdom, the kingdom of Judah, how many of them were descended from David? Could trace their ancestry straight back to David. I'll give you a hint, there are 21 kings of Judah. How many of them were descended from David? Any takers? All of them, all of them, from Rehoboam all the way down to the end, Jehoiachin, Jeconiah, all the way down, all of those kings of Judah, every single one of them was a son of David.

Now, here's another trivia question, let's see how you do on this one. How many of the kings of the northern kingdom were descended from David? Do you remember the name of the first one? Jeroboam. What tribe was Jeroboam from? Ephraim, tribe of Ephraim.

And every subsequent king in the northern kingdom, down through Ahab and all of those, no goodnicks, not a single one descended from David. All of them in Judah, none of them in the northern kingdom. But to whom did God send prophet after prophet after prophet? Where were most of the Old Testament prophets sent before the exile to the northern kingdom? Where did Elijah minister? And Elisha, largely the northern kingdom, and on down from there.

Just a little point of trivia, but why is that important? Why do we care? Well, think about this, if the Lord Jesus is prefigured in kings, then which kings are we going to be looking at? We want to look at the kings of Judah, these are the sons of David, Jesus, one of his titles is son of David, so who are these returning exiles? Are they northern kingdom or southern kingdom? Who got taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians? Southern kingdom, right? So who should know how to recognize a Davidic king? These people, they should know, when they hear these visions, when they receive these prophecies, they should know. Now, second point of application for the night, who should be able to recognize the Lord Jesus and his specific relationship to us today? We're looking at each other, it's us. The people of Judah returning from Babylon to Judah, what should they have known? And what did they not know? I'll put it another way, and we don't have time to really look at it, but there is a great Wikipedia article, I don't often recommend Wikipedia, but this is a great summary if you don't have a lot of commentaries and Bible dictionaries and such.

There is an article on the Hasmonean dynasty, the Hasmoneans. Now, you know, we're talking

about Maccabees and post-Old Testament, pre-New Testament days in Judah, that's what we're talking about. So you look up in there, the Hasmonean dynasty.

Now, what is a Hasmonean? Where does the word Hasmonean, where does it even come from? We get the idea about Herod and Mariamne and the Hasmoneans. What is a Hasmonean? You know this, you just don't know that you know it. If you want to get back to Hebrew or even Aramaic roots of a thing, the first thing you do is take all of the vowels out.

So if you take all the vowels out of Hasmonean, you've got H-S-M-N, right? Ha-Shimonean. Ha-Shimonean. Hasmonean comes from the root word Shimon, because Shimon is the first of the Maccabees to rule as a king, king-ish.

They had a brief period of independence. And to understand all the ins and outs, I'm not going to cover it because it's not Bible, it's just interesting. And it's interesting because we're looking at the kingship of the Lord Jesus as it is prefigured in Zerubbabel, who is not a true king, but he is descended from David.

So are the Maccabees. Judas Maccabeus is from the tribe of Judah and is a distant descendant of David. That's why his name is Judah or Judas.

Judah the Hammer. Maccabeus just means the hammer. It's Latin or something, but he is legitimate.

But they also eventually set up a priesthood and eventually they had to choose. Read the Wikipedia article on the Hasmoneans. You get the origins of the Pharisees and the Sadducees in there.

You find out the feeble attempt without God's impremature, without God's support, to try to reestablish the monarchy in Israel and to reestablish the high priesthood. And they can claim some legitimacy for the Hasmoneans, but when you get down to Herod, he's not a Hasmonean. So he decides he'll marry one to try to legitimize himself.

And Marianne is from the house of Hashimone. Anyway, it's a very interesting story. But I say that to say this.

Man cannot bring in the kingdom. The kingdom doesn't come until God's time and God's man. And the Maccabees, for all of the establishment of Hanukkah and the rest of it, hooray for them, but they couldn't pull it off.

Man, in man's energy, man's time, man's way, trying to bring the kingdom in, failed. When you hear believers today talking about, you know, if we build it, he will come, or let's do kingdom work and let's bring people to the kingdom. This is not God's time for kingdom.

God will bring the kingdom when he brings the king. And the first millennial king is the Lord Jesus Christ, and there is no kingdom until he sits on the throne of his kingdom. And that does

not happen until day one of the millennium.

We are not kingdom people. We are body of Christ. We represent the Lord Jesus Christ, and we are to be known for our hope, our expectation of future kingdoms, kingdom of the son and ultimately the kingdom of the father.

But we anticipate, we look forward to. Now is not the kingdom. There is a kingdom.

You can talk about the kingdom if you understand what you're saying. If you look at the very final, I think it's the last verse in Acts, Paul, under his house arrest, what is he talking about? Do you remember that? You read the very last verse in Acts lately? It says in verse 31 of, I guess that's Acts 28, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him. Preaching the kingdom of God.

Now, do we study? Do I preach? Do we learn about the kingdom of God? Are you interested in the kingdom of God? Where do you want to live in the kingdom of God? What did Jesus say in my father's house? There's a lot of places to dwell. My father's kingdom, my father's environment. When we think about the kingdom, are we trying to do kingdom work now? Are we trying to prepare for and be qualified for service and function and residence in the kingdom of God? It's hope.

It's a part of our hope. It's not a part of our walk by faith. Our daily application of the word of God is not related to kingdom.

That's our motivation. Hope is the motivation. Love is the measure.

What is faith? Faith, hope, and love. Triad of Christian virtues. This is a review.

What is faith? Faith is the means. We don't get life done to the glory of God unless we understand faith. And faith does not relate to the kingdom.

Hope relates to the kingdom. Hope does not disappoint. Be ready always to give an answer to anyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you.

Hope of the glory of God. Hope of the presence of God. Hope of the kingdom of God.

Hope of dwelling in the new Jerusalem, not outside, waiting for a creaky wooden cart to come with the leaves off the tree of life. So we have to understand these virtues just like we need to understand the difference between king, priest, and prophet. How is Jesus presented to us in the book of Hebrews? Turn to the book of Hebrews.

This, I'm thoroughly convinced as you know, was written by Paul. Look at chapter 7. This Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God. Interesting, no? Melchizedek, after whose order the Lord Jesus is high priest, was king of Salem.

This is Jerusalem. Jerusalem, jeruges means town of. The town of Shalom, the town of Salem.

Melchizedek was king of it and priest of the most high God. He wore two hats at the same time. Now, let's think about the transfiguration again.

Who's up on the mountaintop with Jesus besides the disciples, the three? There's Moses. Now, what hats does Moses wear? We know he's a prophet because God says twice, I will raise a prophet like you. So Moses is a prophet, but he's also a law giver.

He's famously the source of the law, the law of Moses. What is a law? What's contained in that? This is civil authority in Israel, as well as regulations for the priests and so on. But this comes, he is an intermediary in a theocracy.

God is the king of Israel, right? And Moses is his spokesman. Moses communicates the law of God. And this regulates cities of refuge and not only the priestly code, but also the civil, the civil code.

How to resolve disputes, how the life in national Israel is to be conducted, and even how an earthly king will function. But that's Moses. So Moses represents kingly authority of God himself in bringing the law and prophet.

Because much of what is in the law is prophetic. And the song of Moses is highly prophetic. Now, the other guy standing there is Elijah.

First thing you think, Elijah, he is a what? He's a prophet. Moses is a prophet with kingly overtones. Is Moses a priest? No, he is not.

Who's the priest? It's his brother Aaron and the descendants of Aaron. This is part of the problem when they tried to reestablish the priesthood in the days of the Maccabees and following and reestablish the high priest. The reason those priests were not legitimate in Jesus' day is the same reason Herod and the rest of those guys were not legitimate.

They could claim a descendancy when they reestablished. They had a bunch of guys that weren't even, they were just political functionaries. And they said, hey, I'm the high priest.

I killed my predecessor and now I'm the high priest. And this is all tied up with proxy wars between Antony and all of those guys. Just read the Hasmonean article, you'll get it all filled in.

But the bottom line is there was a false hegemony there under Herod and there was a false priesthood under the high priest who claimed descendancy from Aaron but not the priestly line. There were other Levites descended from Aaron, but they weren't qualified for priesthood. Well, neither were the priests in Jesus' day or in Paul's day.

Remember when the priest commands that Paul be slapped and he says, you know, you're a whited wall and so on. You're judging me according to the law and you have me slapped in violation of the law. You're a whitewashed, you're a whited wall.

And then he says, well, I didn't know what office he held. But that office really isn't legitimate.

Here's the thing.

That scene on the Mount of Transfiguration is very similar to what we're going to see in the Book of Zechariah. This is the central theme structure I want to establish before we get into the details of the vision because you can wander around in those things and get lost. You're in a forest of myrtle trees with horsemen and chariots and lamps and oil flowing all over the place.

This is the big idea. In the future, when you think back to the Transfiguration or you think back to the Book of Zechariah, just remember, it's all about Jesus and his three identities. And it takes more than one thing to represent everything that Jesus is.

You can't just have Moses standing there on the Mount of Transfiguration. You need Elijah. Is Moses a prophet? Yes, but he's the government and he's a prophet.

What is Elijah? He's a prophet, but what else? What's the biggest thing Elijah ever did? When you think Elijah, what's the first thing you think of? Mount Carmel and it's this is like robot wars, except it's priest wars. This is priests of bail and who? He builds an altar and offers a sacrifice. What kind of function is that? That's a priestly function.

So you've got Moses, which is ruling authority and prophetic authority, and you've got Elijah, which is priestly authority and prophetic authority, standing on each side of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is all three. In the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, who are the symbolic individuals that recur over and over again? Yeshua, the high priest and Zerubbabel, the would-be king, the civil authority. But he's not a king, just like Moses was not a king.

Moses speaks for the king. What is Zerubbabel according to the last couple of verses in Haggai? I think it's the last verse. You are my signet.

You speak for me. Zerubbabel and Moses are like brackets. King, but not a king, ruling authority, but representing the true king.

And that's what the Lord Jesus is. It's just such a beautiful construction, such a beautiful form of communication, what God does here. This is what we're going to see in the book of Zechariah.

So as we come to each of these visions, and we've got guys on horses and the horses are of different colors, and what are they doing? And then the symmetrical prophecy at the end, which is chariots drawn by horses of different colors. This is going to fall in place like when you're solving the last few spaces of a puzzle. You just say, oh, well, I've got six pieces over here and I've got six blanks.

That one goes here. This one goes here. It's going to totally fall into place because this is the key.

If you look at the Lord Jesus, if you hear ye him, all of this makes sense. And it makes sense in the time as well, because, and here's our third and final point of application. What kind of

prophets are these we're looking at? The post-exilic prophets.

These are God's last words to his people before somebody comes, right? These are God's final words to his people before Jesus comes. What would we benefit from most in this day and age right now? I would like to have God's final words to his people right before Jesus comes. That's what this is.

And in the same way that God turns his attention away from the rituals and the forms and the substantial symbols such as the temple and the feasts and the sacrifices of the law of Moses, we look at these invisible truths, these spiritual truths that prepare us for the return of the Lord Jesus the same way that these scriptures were supposed to prepare the people of Judah for his first coming. To prepare for the coming of the prophet, priest, king. That's the purpose of these scriptures.

What should you and I be preparing for? The return of the prophet, priest, king. And he didn't even become king the first time. He is going to be king this time.

And that's why these prophetic scriptures include this royal element that you don't find in earlier days. You don't find it in the earlier days of Israel. God sort of concedes kingship because he says, I really want you to have a divine king.

But when the people say, give us a king, or the people say, depending on if you look at it in singular or plural, then God concedes. But he says, you know, this king thing is going to be humanly engineered and it's going to fail. It failed before the captivity and it fails again after the captivity and after the close of the Old Testament canon.

You can't engineer a kingdom without God's time, God's man, and God's spirit, as we're going to see. And the anticipation of the time and the ministry of the Holy Spirit is nowhere more fully revealed than in the gospel of Zechariah, the good news of Zechariah. The Holy Spirit is all through this.

We're also going to solve a few other puzzles, like the identity of the angel of the Lord. When you have a new King James and you see the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament, angel is capitalized. Should it be or should it not be? Zechariah absolutely, utterly nails and answers that question, as with so many others.

So this is going to be a fun study. We're going to learn so many cool things. And most importantly, it fixes our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our kingdom.

What is he the author and finisher of? Our faith. Faith. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world.

We walk by faith and not by sight. Faith is the means. Hope is the motivation.

Love is the measure. Of how we're doing, it's a great gut check day by day, but Zechariah is

going to open these things up for us and put them up in poster board fashion. And I can't wait to get started.

And that's where we will start when we resume our study next week, next Thursday night. But we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the wonderful power and glory that you reveal in your word.

We know that not only is it a revelation of your past actions, but in the hands of the Holy Spirit, it has present action to transform us, to renew us, to equip us for every good work, to enable us to bear fruit. That is a blessing to fellow believers, a blessing to the world, a reflection of the identity and savior hood of the Lord Jesus and an opportunity for others to ask us about him and what he has done in reconciling the world to himself and through himself to you. We pray that as we reflect on these things, your Holy Spirit will impress them in our hearts and show us their pertinence and application in the hours and days that remain to us in this life.

We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.