

PostExilicProphets 21-06-10a

This is the 10th of June, 2021, and we continue tonight our post-exilic prophet study in the book of Zechariah in the third chapter, or that's where we're heading. We're going to kind of cruise through the first chapter and start with the visions, the eight visions of Zechariah tonight. We have a little bit of a side trip which is interesting to me.

So hopefully it'll be interesting to you. If not, you can just bide your time until things get more interesting, but there's a principle of understanding and interpretation related to the word of God that we have illustrated through the prophet Zechariah. And we're going to begin with that tonight.

I find it very helpful and I hope you will also, but let's begin as we always do by taking a moment to go to the Lord in prayer, square away our gear, clear the decks, and cultivate the presence and ministry of God's Holy Spirit as we undertake a better understanding of God's word. Shall we pray? Father, it is such a privilege to possess a copy of your word of our very own to which we can resort at any time. We can memorize it.

We can peruse it. We can dwell upon it. We can reflect and meditate at the beginning of our day, at the middle of the day, toward the end of the day.

We have such convenience and such a wealth of resources to better our understanding and improve our grasp of the promises and principles and doctrines therein. We pray that as we look together at the book of Zechariah and some of the things that surround it and inform our understanding of it, we pray that your Holy Spirit will be present and teach us and impress these things on our hearts, help us in the understanding in seeing its application in our own lives so that we can be fruitful in the time that remains to us in this life, be good representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ and be fit for service both now and in the ages to come. We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen.

Amen. As I said, we are in the book of Zechariah. This Zechariah is the son of Berekiah, the son of Iddo the prophet.

We find this out in the first verse. Can you think of any other place where this information is given and might be of pertinence? I can think of one. We have not gotten there yet in our study of Matthew, but there is a verse that impinges on this prophet and our study over in Matthew chapter 24.

Matthew chapter 24. And this is something we, I think, need to address. I think we can address it profitably.

So if you'll turn, I'm gonna put a marker in Zechariah and go to Matthew chapter 24. Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees and not in a complimentary fashion. So he is addressing these individuals and the context here is the woes, the woes that are pronounced on the scribes and

Pharisees back in chapter 23.

And when you come to verse 35, will actually be in Matthew 23, 35. 24, of course, is the great prophetic chapter that talks about the signs that precede the second coming. But we'll look at Matthew chapter 23 and we are aiming for verse 35.

Can begin in the, this woe begins in verse 29. So we're in Matthew 23, 29. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous.

The operative phrase in verse 29 there of Matthew 23 is you build the tombs of the prophets. You memorialize the prophets. And yet he's gonna say, you and your fathers slay the prophets.

You slay them and then you memorialize them. If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have partaken with them in the blood of the prophets. Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

Fill up then the measure of your father's guilt. And that's exactly what they are going to do because they will see to it that the prophet, capital P, about which we have much more to say in our study, is crucified, is slain. Serpents, brood of vipers.

The word serpent in Hebrew is nahash, N-A-H-A-S. Just took that away with an asterisk. We'll talk more about that a bit later.

Serpents, you nahashim, brood of vipers. How can you escape the condemnation of hell? This, of course, is Gehenna. This is the place of total destruction of what you produce.

It's the city dump, the condemnation of the dump. Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes. Some of them you will kill and crucify.

Some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city. Notice this is future from the time just shortly before Jesus is arrested, tried, and crucified. And he says, you are going to crucify.

Interesting, since the Jews did not have the power to crucify, and it connotes the fact that they will be in league with the Romans that they claim to hate, and yet they are going to use the Romans to get rid of people they don't like, i.e. use the government, put the power of the government against their religious enemies and their social enemies. Some of them you will scourge in your synagogues. What is the purpose of the synagogue? This is a place of instruction and worship and fellowship and upbuilding, right? Just like a church is supposed to be.

Instead, they're going to tie people to posts and flay them within an inch of their lives. 40 stripes minus one. But look at verse 35 now.

This is Matthew 23, 35. That on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth from

the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah. That's our prophetic author.

That's our receiver of visions in the book of Zechariah. Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. Now, there is no textual problem to which you can appeal in Matthew 23, 35. And yet there's a severe problem.

There is no record that our author, Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, was ever slain anywhere. Jewish tradition and the oral memory of his career says that he lived to a ripe old age and died in his sleep. So this raises the question of the integrity of scripture, inspiration, and so on.

And if you say, well, Jesus is trying to talk about from the beginning of the Old Testament age to the end of the Old Testament age, there's no, why would he make this statement when this Zechariah was not killed? Now, there was a Zechariah who was slain, but he's much, much earlier in the history of Israel. So why would he say, well, it ends with this early, by the way, there are about 30 guys in the Old Testament named Zechariah. It's extremely common name.

There's 30 of them when you scan the genealogies and such. But this is very clearly Zechariah, the son of Berechiah. And there's only one of those we know of, and he's the author of our prophetic book.

Yet there's no record that he was slain. So this presents a problem. Now, there is a solution, and it is in the solution that we find the principle I want to bring forward and offer by way of encouragement for application.

So there have been various explanations of this. Gleason Archer thinks that maybe our prophet was the one who was slain, and that Jesus knew something outside of the scriptural record. Jesus knew that this Zechariah, the son of Berechiah was slain.

And so we have here a detail that's not found in the Old Testament, but is nevertheless true. Well, this has the advantage of not having to explain why Jesus mentions the father of this Zechariah. But Archer says, we just conclude that the later Zechariah died in much the same way the earlier one did as a victim of popular resentment against his rebuke and so on.

Or others think that there was a Zechariah, the son of Berechiah that lived in Jesus' day and that he had been murdered in very recent memory. And they appeal to the fact that Jesus says in verse 35 here in Matthew 23, whom you murdered, you people I'm talking to, whom you murdered between the altar. And so this would have been a guy that was in very recent memory.

But again, there is no record of this and it really loses its force if you have to appeal to an

unknown to explain it. Well, turn with me back to the book of 2 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles chapter 24, 2 Chronicles chapter 24. Studying the prophet Zechariah, it would be good if we know whether or not he died in this fashion and is therefore alluded to by the Lord Jesus.

This started in 2 Chronicles 24 verse 15. Jehoiada grew old and was full of days and he died. Remember he was the priestly mentor for Joash, little baby Joash.

And as long as Jehoiada was alive, Joash was a great king. But Jehoiada grew old and died. He was 130 years old when he died.

A little older than Moses. It buried him in the city of David among the kings because he had done good in Israel toward God and his house. After the death of Jehoiada, the leaders of Judah came and bowed down to the king and the king listened to them.

Therefore they left the house of the Lord God of their fathers and served wooden images and idols. Wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem because of their trespass. Yet he sent prophets to them to bring them back to the Lord, he God.

These prophets testified against them, but they would not listen. Then the spirit of God came upon Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada the priest. The Jehoiada that died at the age of 130 had a son.

And the spirit of God came upon Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people and said to them, now notice this Jehoiada is a priest prophet. He's a priest prophet, as is our Zechariah, as was Jeremiah, as was Ezekiel, priest prophets, double hat, priest and prophet. So the spirit of God came upon Zechariah, this is verse 20, 2 Chronicles 24, came upon Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people and said to them, thus says God, why do you transgress the commandments of the Lord so that you cannot prosper? What is the message of Haggai and our Zechariah? Why are you living the way you are and God cannot prosper you? You plant crops and you get a measly return.

You try to bring home a bag of seed and it leaks out of a hole. What's the matter with you people? Well, this way back in the days of Joash, before the captivity, 2 Chronicles 24, God sent prophets with this same message. Will the sons of the captivity learn from the example of their fathers who went into captivity because they did not heed the prophets? Why do you transgress the commandments of the Lord so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the Lord, he also has forsaken you.

So people didn't like this message. They conspired against him and at the command of the king, which king? Little baby Joash. At the command of the king, king Joash, who's now an adult and has been led astray by the minds of men, by the words of men, by human ideas and human philosophies, at the command of the king, they stoned Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, with stones in the court of the house of the Lord.

Where would that be? Between the altar and the temple, that's the court. Just as Jesus

describes, Jesus is talking about this Zechariah. Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which Jehoiada, his father, Zechariah's father, had done to him, but killed his son.

And as he died, Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada said, the Lord look upon this and repay. The Lord look on it. Lord, remember this.

Remember this and repay. Remember and repay. The Lord does remember.

This is the Zechariah Jesus remembers and speaks of in our Matthew 23, 35 passage. So what about the text? And this comes to the crux of the matter. If you look at the parallel in Luke 11, 51, it says from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah and doesn't mention his father.

So Luke and Matthew are identical in this regard, except in the Matthew passage, it adds the son of Berechiah. I will tell you flat out in my view, and this is one of the things I'm very confident of. This is a flat out error in the text.

You can't find a copy of Matthew that doesn't have it this way. I don't care. It's an error.

We know it's an error because Jesus specifically describes the death of Zechariah between the temple and the altar and people say, well, but wasn't Jesus trying to give a comprehensive example? Abel is the first martyr and this Zechariah should be the last. So it's got to be Zechariah, the son of Berechiah because he's, you know, Zechariah Malachi. And that would span the gamut of Old Testament martyrs.

Abel is the first and Zechariah is the last, right? Second to the last book of the Old Testament, that it has to be him. We must just not have a record of him dying in this way. Well, that's what somebody thought and that's what somebody tried to help God by putting it into the text.

I will add to the word of God. You know, the curse that comes on anybody that adds to the word of God at the end of Revelation. Somebody stuck this in and they did it very early on in the Gospel of Matthew.

And I'm sorry, but it, and you all won't be shocked. Most Christians never hear this from their pastor or from any pulpit because pastors and they teach this in seminary. Don't talk about, you know, apparent errors and discrepancies in scripture because the people can't handle it.

You know, the poor sheep can't handle it. You're not poor sheep and you can handle it and I'll explain why. But this is an error.

It is a flat out error, not just in the English, it is in the Greek. It is in the quote unquote original of Matthew, i.e. the earliest Greek manuscripts that we have, have this error. But I know it's an error because Jesus described, he doesn't just say to the blood of Zachariah and we're left to guess which of the 30 it is.

This is the Zachariah that was slain for being a prophet between the temple and the altar. That

is exactly Zachariah, the son of Jehoiada. So what do we do with this? Oh, well, I guess the Bible is errant and not infallible after all, not at all.

This is the point I want to make and I want to emphasize. If you go back to the second Chronicles 24, 21 and read that description, that's the guy. So if Jesus was trying to say from the blood of the first one to the blood of the last one, how does this function? Well, all you have to do is resort to any listing of the books of the Hebrew Old Testament.

You remember what Tanakh stands for? T-N-C-H, T is the Torah, N is the Nevi'im, the prophets and C-H is the Ketuvim or K. It's the writings, the Ketuvim, Tanakh, Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim, law, the prophets and the writings. Second Chronicles is the very last book of the writings. So when Jesus is talking to these Pharisees, he says from the first book of the Bible, Genesis, to the last book of the Bible, which is not in their Bible, Malachi or Zachariah, it's Second Chronicles.

Jesus' use of this is more comprehensive than trying to cite Zachariah, the son of Barakai. You'd want to say, well, to Malachi. Maybe Malachi had a mysterious death in the temple courtyard.

Keep in mind also that as far as we know, in the days of Zachariah, the son of Barakai, they haven't even managed to finish the temple and put in the courtyard yet. God is still after them to get this thing done, remember? They may or may not have gotten it done, but it doesn't stand to reason that after all that trouble and celebration that they finally managed to fulfill this task that does. Do you think Zerubbabel would have stood for this or Joshua the high priest would have let this prophet that is prophesying about them by name would suddenly let him get murdered in the courtyard? It just doesn't fit.

What does fit is that Jesus is bracketing the entire Old Testament as the Pharisees of his day had it, Genesis to 2 Chronicles. And this is toward the end. There's only a half dozen chapters left in 2 Chronicles or so for that death that he's the last martyred prophet in the Old Testament in that reckoning.

So it makes perfect sense, doesn't it? This compares to me and forgive me if this sounds political or unkind, but of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the countries, in all of the world, if you have an improved, enhanced virus appearing in a town and it just happens to be the town where there is an Institute of virology and the first people to get this mysterious new virus are people who work at that lab of virology. How easy is it to believe an alternate explanation that they got some bad chow down at the market? The United States is sending \$600,000 a year for five years to the Wuhan Institute of virology to figure out how to enhance the function of a coronavirus. And within a few blocks of this, the people that work there come down with a mysterious enhanced function coronavirus.

Oh, it must have been bats down at the market. It is to laugh. Nobody with a lick of common sense is gonna fall for this goofy notion.

How many places have an Institute of virology receiving American money to work on making

the virus spread to humans and do bad things to them? Well, I can think of one. Anyway, there's a point at which just routine, good old fashioned American common sense tells you cause effect. Same thing here.

Good old fashioned common sense tells you that Jesus was talking about Zachariah, the son of Jehoiada. Yet it is in the text with very little appeal to textual emendation or corruption. It says Zachariah, the son of Berechiah.

Why would God let this happen? Is my Bible not trustworthy? Why is it pastors won't talk about this kind of problem? This is not the only one, by the way. Let's take a quick look at David's immediate family. Turn to 2 Samuel 17, verse 25.

While we're on this subject, we'll just give another example. 2 Samuel 17, verse 25. You remember that Absalom drives his father David out of Jerusalem, crosses the Kidron, goes up the Mount of Olives in tears and goes away.

And you've got that whole thing between Ahithophel and the advisors for Absalom. And so in verse 24, this is 2 Samuel 17, 24. David went to Mahanaim, that means the camps.

And Absalom crossed over the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. And Absalom made Amasa captain of the army instead of Joab. This Amasa was the son of a man whose name was Jithra, an Israelite who had gone into Abigail, the daughter of Nahash.

Remember I told you we'd see Nahash again, the serpent? Sister of Zeruiah, Joab's mother. Now here's the problem. Keep your finger here and turn forward to 1 Chronicles 2. Chronicles, as you know, is an extensive listing of tribes and clans and families and descendants.

So 2 Chronicles 2, verse 16. If you start in verse 13, we're talking about Jesse, the father of David. Jesse begot Eliab, his firstborn, Amenadab the second, Shimeah the third, Nethanel the fourth, Raddai the fifth, Ozem the sixth, and David the seventh.

Now their sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail. The sons of Zeruiah were Abishai, Joab, and Asahel. Three, Abigail bore Amasa.

The father of Amasa was Jithra the Ishmaelite. Jithra the Ishmaelite. Over in 2 Samuel, he is Jithra, an Israelite.

Now what's the deal? Is Amasa, his mother, Abigail, Abigail is David's sister. David's got two sisters. One of his sisters is Zeruiah.

Joab and Asahel are sons of Zeruiah. Remember David says, what am I gonna do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? These are his nephews through his sister Zeruiah. Well, his other sister is Abigail and his nephew on the Abigail side is Amasa.

So what does Absalom do? Joab, his cousin, is general of the army. So in place of Joab, he sets that cousin aside, the son of Zeruiah, and he goes to a cousin from another aunt, his aunt

Abigail has a son, Amasa, and he chooses Amasa to be the general of the army. Now, the problem is that in Chronicles, it says that Jesse is the father of Abigail.

In 2 Samuel, it says Nahash is the father of Abigail. Amasa is the son of a man whose name was Jithra, an Israelite who had gone into Abigail, the daughter of Nahash. Now, how can Abigail be David's sister if she's the daughter of Nahash? And all kinds of explain, well, David's mother was married to Nahash and then Nahash died and then she married Jesse, or it's a half sister and all of these elaborate concoctions.

No, it's a mistake. There are two mistakes in this passage. In verse 25, there are two mistakes and you get the idea, maybe there was a wrinkle in the parchment or whatever, but this, we talked before about how the book of Samuel is one of the most poorly preserved in the entire Old Testament.

There are so many places, we don't know how many years Saul reigned, and when it talks about his reign at the beginning of a new chapter, there's no number there. Nobody knows what it was. There are holes and damage all through this text.

Well, this is a place where there is two obvious mistakes in the same verse. The first one is, Amasa was the son of a man whose name was Jithra, an Israelite. Well, if you look at the consonants there, J-T-H-R and I-T-H-R, that's in the Chronicles passage, it's the same guy.

Jithra is, whatever it is over here, Ithra, it's the same guy. Jithra and Ithra, they're the same guy, okay? That's not that difficult. The consonants are the same, it just got pointed differently by the scribes.

The second one is more severe, but it says Jithra, an Israelite in 2 Samuel 17.25. Now, why would you say he's an Israelite? Everybody is an Israelite. This is like saying, Sam, the son of Denny, the American. You know, Denny had three sons, you know, four children, and then it refers back to him and says, Denny, the American.

It makes no sense in a context where everybody is an Israelite. What happened is Ishmaelite got corrupted to Israelite. It's not a difficult, you can see how it would happen in a slightly mangled manuscript and somebody was just faithfully copying along.

You know, how many times did they see the word Israel, Israelite, Israel, Israelite, and they come to something that looks like it and they just knee jerk reflex, Israelite. No, he is an Ishmaelite. That's what made him remarkable.

And they weren't married. It says that this guy went into the daughter, Abigail, the daughter of Jesse should be here, but Nahash. Now, how do you get from Jesse to Nahash? Well, look two verses down.

Look at verse 27 of 2 Samuel 17. Now, it happened when David had come to Mahanaim that Shobi, the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the people of Ammon, Machir the son of Amiel from

Lodabar and Barzillai. Remember Barzillai, wonderful Barzillai, the Gileadite from Rogalin.

These guys all come with assistance. They bring provisions and comfort and encouragement to David when he's on the run. And this is very unusual because Nahash is an Ammonite and Shobi, his son brings along with Barzillai and Machir the son of Amiel.

These guys are foreigners. And David is comforted by foreigners when he has been rejected by his own people, his own son. Right? So a whole lot of Christology wrapped up in here.

But anyway, this word Nahash has crept up, might've been at the end of a line, a line below. You know, they had these wide pieces of parchment they were writing this down on and Nahash got moved up a line and ends up in the middle of the Abigail business instead of down where it belongs in verse 27. So is there a mistake in your Bible? Yes.

What is the point of application here? Hear me closely. We did a whole set of studies on addressing the arguments of Bart Ehrman in interrupting Jesus and trying to crucify the Christian faith on the cross of text problems. That's what he wants to do.

He takes his textual expertise when he got while he was still a God-fearing evangelical Christian and got his training. And he now has turned those weapons. It's like the opposite in my view.

And I seldom call people out by name but he has put his name out there and he has made an issue out of himself in this regard by publishing a number of books directly attacking Christianity in general and the Bible in particular and Jesus in particular, in particular. And so I am not shy about calling out his name. He's made an issue out of himself and so I'll make an issue out of him right back.

But he seeks to undermine the faith of God-fearing Bible-believing Christians by pointing out problems in the text and using his expertise to do so. And he's got a lot of credentials. And so you say, well, this guy knows the text and there's mistakes in the Bible.

Of course, there's mistakes in the Bible. And here's the point, from his own testimony and by his own account, Bart Ehrman lost his faith because he had an expectation of God that God did not fulfill. He had an ill family member, prayed for the family member.

The family member died. Bart said, this God is not to be trusted, forget this. And he goes running into the camp of the enemy.

Well, here's the thing, our faith is not in the text. Hear me closely, we are a Bible church but our faith is not in the text. This text is a human production.

It has been humanly copied over and over and over again in the same way that in any given Bible class or any given sermon, a pastor may make a mistake. Over the course of time, all pastors will make mistakes, understand a passage wrongly, misinterpret, perhaps misapply scripture. We are all human and none of us are perfect.

And God makes no promise that he will guarantee the integrity of communication from a pastor. You have no guarantee that everything I say is right. I wish there was, I would love that.

It would take a huge amount of pressure off of me. As soon as I come before the holy desk and open the holy pages, only holy words, it doesn't work that way, sorry. And you know this, the great thing is this is a wonderful illustration because you already know this, I make mistakes.

But have I ever made a mistake when it comes to the essential truths of the faith that Jesus is the only name under heaven, and whereby we must be saved. That God, the father, God, the son, God, the holy spirit exist. They have communicated to us.

The Lord Jesus has redeemed us and delivered us from our sins and promised us eternal life. Other words, any of the essentials of the faith that Jesus is God and truly God, that he died and was buried and rose again the third day, according to the scriptures, on any of the essentials of the faith on which you base your faith and your practice and your hope of eternal life. Is there any mistake in that? Minor details, I say Joab when I mean Abner.

I remember classically, I made that mistake like two or three times in one Bible class. I kept confusing Abner and Joab and Elizabeth came up afterward and said, dad. But on the essentials of the faith, there is no doubt.

And when any communicator makes a mistake, there are typos in this Bible. My copy of the holy word has typos in it. Really astonished me.

They're so careful about Bibles, but this one has got typos. But I spot the typos and you can spot where I'm not on the mark or in accord. And as I have said many times before, especially when we were going through the books of Samuel, where the text has not been preserved, God gives the diligent student enough material to understand and correct that error.

Do we have enough material to understand and correct the error in Matthew 23, 35? And that the Zachariah Jesus was talking about is not the son of Berechiah, that he's the son of Jehoiada. And that that bracket is so beautiful from Genesis to second Chronicles that Jesus appeals to and punches the Pharisees right between the eyes with it. Fill up the work of your fathers, the sins of your fathers.

You're gonna do what your fathers did. They slew the prophets, so will you. And the king, the government was in accord and gave the order for the priest of God and the prophet of God to be slain right there between the altar and the temple.

One of the holiest places there is and murder was committed. It's a powerful, powerful allusion, not to some unknown episode, to a known and documented scriptural inspired account from second Chronicles. So I know Matthew 23, 35 is wrong in my Bible.

How do I know that? Because our faith is in God, God, the father, God, the son, and in this instance, God, the Holy Spirit. If you are asking and seeking and knocking and you're asking for

bread, a good father does not return a rock or a snake, a Nahash or a scorpion. I think the error between second Samuel and Chronicles was put there on purpose because Nahash is the mistake.

And this is the serpent right in the middle of where Jesse is supposed to be. Abigail is not the daughter of the serpent. She's the daughter of Jesse.

She's the sister of David. But here's this Nahash error right in the middle of it. But greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

Our faith isn't in the integrity of scripture when Ahriman's expectations weren't met in his conception of God, his faith broke. If you put your faith in the text and someone can demonstrate a genuine textual error, your faith would break. We love the word of God.

We appreciate the word of God. We feed on the word of God, but there's a difference in the content and the form. The text here is the form.

And we have this treasure in earthen vessels. It has been copied and communicated by earthen vessels. But if you want to know the truth, God, the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth.

Text errors notwithstanding. Anything we need to know, we will know. We will use this slightly flawed copy because we're not worried about the flaws.

We have the spirit. We have the presence of God. We have the promise of God.

Your faith is in God, not in an inerrant text, not in a King James that was inspired by the guys that translated it from 1609 to 1611 or whatever it was. My faith is not in those old British guys. My faith is not in the subsequent 17 different revisions of that text.

This text is not perfect, but it is adequate for the Holy Spirit to teach us the invisible, ineffable, divine, all powerful truth of the word. Our faith is in God. Don't worry when the occasional slip of the pen or marginal note gets incorporated into the text here.

God will lead us to the truth. I know who Jesus was talking about. And it's a beautiful thing.

And my attention is actually drawn to it by the error. How much attention would I have paid to Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, getting slain if the text error hadn't brought our attention to it and reminded us there's a beautiful bracket between that early Zechariah in the days of Joash and this last Zechariah in the days of Zerubbabel and Joshua. It's a tremendous thing.

God works all things together for good. You and I are sinful and God uses us anyway. Our text is not perfect.

God uses it anyway. Pastors aren't perfect. Lord willing, He uses us anyway.

And it ought to be a wonderful encouragement that things don't have to be perfect for God to

work. This is why I've quit worrying about what the doctrinal statement is of various churches and denominations. I love talking to the people.

And I've been in any number of denominations. Go to Tuna Piano there and talk to the people who meet me at the building. And they are wonderful, God-fearing, Bible-believing Christians.

I really don't care about the finer points of their theology. We are one in Christ. We are mutually blessed when we meet and talk and share our joy in the security of our salvation, the wonder of Jesus Christ, the beauty of the ministry of God's Holy Spirit, the wonderful promises of God the Father and the bright hope that we all have in the future.

On these, we agree. On these, we are unified. One Lord, one faith.

One God and Father of us all. And minor discrepancies, you know, the BART airmens of this world and Satan behind him wants to take the nahash and steal your joy, take away your confidence and break your faith. Don't let it happen.

The minor inconveniences, the mistakes, the errors, the shortcomings in this life, God will use them. He will work them together for good. Think about Joseph talking to his brothers.

You meant it for evil. God worked it out for good. And what a wonderful heavenly father we have that he overcomes evil with good as should we.

Let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll pick up in Zechariah and take a look at the outline of these wonderful eight visions we're about to see.