

PostExilicProphets 21-06-17b

Thank you Dan, Anna, and Lori for one of my favorite songs, and it's a great reminder of the presence of God with us now and in the future, which is the theme that we are seeing emerge from these visions in the prophecy of Zechariah, to which we return. We're in Zechariah chapter 1, and we're looking at the first two visions. We've seen that, and we're going to see that these speak of larger things, even though there is this idea that God is looking specifically at the nations of the earth as they relate to his people, Judah, Israel, more about that in just a moment.

But there is this emphasis on God's knowledge, God knows. Now it would be easy to say, well, we have an omniscient God, he knows all, he's up in heaven and he knows everything. But over and over again in scripture, we have the emphasis on God using agency for things that he's probably fully capable of doing himself, but he has chosen to involve the angels in his administration of earthly history, in his watch care and surveillance over his own people and those who would do them harm.

And God occasionally allows forces to invade, to overtake, to conquer, to destroy, to take captive his people, and it is part of his purpose. I've been thinking for the last several weeks about God's two witnesses in the book of Revelation. You remember my thoughts about who they are.

But they come and prophesize in those days, and they can call down fire from heaven, and they can rebuke their enemies, and nobody can get near them. And they do this wonderful thing. And then they are suddenly conquered and killed and left for dead.

Are they unfaithful? Did they fail? Did they somehow reverse course and not do well? God allows these two faithful witnesses for a time. They are indestructible. They are nine feet tall and bulletproof.

Anybody that gets near them is burned alive. And why are they not wafted to glory on a cloud of ease? Instead, they are overcome, and they are slain. They are mocked.

They are derided. There is celebration. They call a special Christmas, festive time because these two witnesses have been slain.

And God allows it. Why? Well, we've covered this in other times. It has to do with drinking a cup.

And sometimes drinking the cup that Jesus drank is necessary when you step back and see things from God's perspective. There is a conflict. There is a war being waged.

And there are times when you have to perform a gambit. There is a sacrifice that seems to give the enemy an advantage, but this becomes his undoing. And that's what happened at the cross.

That's what happens with the two witnesses in Revelation. That is what happens from time to

time with God's people. And the question becomes, do we trust God enough to allow him to use us for his own purposes even if there is sacrifice involved, even if for the moment there seems to be a setback or a discouraging development, or it seems as though the enemy has made an advance? Do we trust God enough to believe that he knows what he is doing? And where he wants us to serve, when he wants us to prevail, and when he wants us to suffer a setback or a disappointment or a discouragement or a seeming defeat at the hands of those who surround us.

You think about Paul being arrested and thrown into prison. Could Paul have cried the blues and said, Lord, how am I supposed to do my Damascus Road commission? How am I supposed to be the apostle to the Gentiles when I'm locked up here in this prison? However, what Paul didn't know, what his companions didn't know, what anybody looking on at the time had no way of knowing is that because God took Paul off the board, as it were, off the chessboard, and set him aside, that's where we get our prison epistles. We wouldn't have scriptures that have sustained us and believers like us for nearly 2,000 years except for the fact that God took Paul offline, incarcerated him, and gave him time to dictate these tremendous letters full of theological truth, every word inspired by God and profitable for doctrine and reproof and correction and instruction and righteousness.

We wouldn't have them. If Paul had been so busy journeying and preaching to the crowds of the moment, God was not only looking at Paul's ministry in the present, but God was looking to the future. And what God did in Paul's life in Paul's present day served countless millions of believers that Paul could not even imagine, couldn't picture in his mind.

Thought he was writing to the Thessalonians, but he was writing to us. Thought he was writing to the people of Philippi, but he's writing to us. Thought that he was sending something to the saints in Rome, but writing to us, and every generation of believers since.

Paul didn't know that he was writing a letter that was going to be preserved for the ages. He had no clue. He is going to be surprised beyond all measure to discover that these letters that he wrote in prison and in times of repose have been preserved and have become a part of the Word of God, just like Moses and the major and minor prophets.

Nobody's going to be more surprised than Paul. He had no clue, but we do. And God did in the moment that he was working in Paul's life.

What seemed like a setback, what seemed like a constriction and a limitation and a huge negative, God worked for a greater good and a greater glory. Something beyond imagination, beyond comprehension. Trust God when we are faithful, when we are obedient, when we say, there's a lot of things I don't know, but I know whom I have believed.

I'm persuaded that he is able to take my commitment to him, looking ahead to that day, and use it for his own purposes and his own glory. I don't have to understand it. He understands it.

I don't have to be read into the big picture. I just have to do my part. And God will work my part together in the perfect fabric of his plan because he knows the present and he knows the future, and I don't.

I know very little about the present and I know even less about the future, but God does. And I have to trust that when I have a job that I think is great and I lose it, when I have a capability that I think is great and I lose it, God is at work to will and to do for his good purpose. Paul wrote these words, I'm quoting, God is at work in you to will and to do for his glory, for his purpose.

I don't have to understand it. I just have to do my part. A little gear inside the machine doesn't have to know what the machine does or where the machine is.

All it has to do is stay on its little post and spin. Have its teeth mesh perfectly with the teeth on the two gears, one on one side and one on the other, and am I a clock, am I a combine, I don't know. I just know that I've got to stick and to stay, not chip, not fail, not crack, not quit, not overheat.

I just need to be a faithful little gear right where God has put me, leave the machinery and the purpose of it to God. As the old gospel song says, we'll understand it better by and by. And what a fun thing that's going to be, but I don't want to understand in the future that well, because you failed, God had to replace you with a better gear and you had to be set aside because you couldn't be trusted to stick and to stay and to trust and to operate in faith.

You wanted to know too much. You had to question. You had to say, well, if I can't see it, it must not be legitimate.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. It wouldn't be faith if God sent the angel who spoke with me to explain everything, right? So this is what we're seeing. Now I want to talk a little bit about this particular phrase here in verse 21, the angel who spoke with me is explaining the craftsman that the Lord shows Zechariah.

Notice in verse 21, verse 20, the Lord showed me four craftsmen. Angel didn't show me, angel of the Lord didn't show me, the Lord himself showed me four craftsmen. So Zechariah looks, the Lord, whether by spoken command or by the word of God, the Lord or by additional revelation and a change in the vision, suddenly here are these artisans, these workmen with tools.

And so Zechariah says, what are these coming to do? He can tell that they are doers. They've got some equipment and they have come onto the scene. And Zechariah says, he doesn't just sit there and wait to see what they do.

He says, what are they going to do? Because it's future. So he, the angel who talked with me up in verse 19, he answered me, these are the horns and he speaks and says, these are the horns that scattered Judah so that no one could lift up his head. But the craftsmen are coming to

terrify them to cast out the horns of the nations that lifted up their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it.

Now it says Judah in verse 21, these horns, and these are horns of nations. We know the horns represent power. So these are powerful nations, empires, if you will, that have scattered Judah.

But notice up in verse 19, these are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. And I think this is where people have said, well, because it mentions Israel, but the northern kingdom of Israel is long gone.

This must be a survey of the whole span of history. So two of the horns are Egypt and Assyria, because see, they scattered Israel. I'm going to read you something, and this is by way of demonstration of something I've mentioned a few times, and it's just for fun.

So I was reading Gleason Archer has the Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties. That's a really cool book if you don't have one and want something recreational to read. I really like it.

I don't always agree with him, and sometimes I understand things differently. But Gleason Archer is just a great guy. He's fun to read.

He's always got original and interesting ideas about things, and he's just one of my favorite guys to get a book from. He did a survey of Old Testament introduction that's really good, and he did the Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties, Gleason Archer. Anyway, I just thought, I wonder if Gleason had anything to say.

I call him Gleason. I wonder if he had anything to say about the Book of Zechariah. He's just got one entry in there, and he said, look, the Book of Zechariah is fraught.

People think that it was written by two, three, or four different guys, that the end doesn't match the beginning, and so on. He said, I've done a lot of study and a lot of writing about this, and in a little encyclopedia like this, I can't even talk to you about Zechariah. Toward the end of his little entry, he says, I will commend to your attention some really good commentaries.

He says they're recent, recent commentaries. The first one he mentions is published in 1918, and I mean recent in terms of the entire church age, I suppose. But I thought it was really encouraging that for a recent commentary, he went back to this one that was written in 1918.

Then there was another one that was like in 1932, and then there was something that was more recent, 1950-something. And then one that was coming out from somebody still living, and he said, you know, based on this guy's reputation, it's going to be really good when it comes out. And this has been a few decades back.

Anyway, it just reminded me of the value of not discounting something just because it's old. I've got this commentary that I got when we were in Tahlequah, and somebody in the church, you know, the Tahlequah folks were all gray heads of the past. They were missionaries that were

retired and pastors that were retired.

And when they would move from sort of an apartment situation into a room where they were going to get much more intensive care, because they're approaching the end of their lives, they would have to get rid of their furniture and their books and things. And it kind of brings a tear to your eye, you know, here's stuff they've packed around with them for decades upon decades, and now they don't have room for it anymore. And they would graciously invite me to come over and say, look at these shelves.

I've had my son or my daughter-in-law and whoever come through and pick the things that they want. But here's some things I've still got. I would love to find a good home for them.

Is there anything you can use? Well, one of these dear gentlemen invited me over, and I selected a few books that were just going to have to go to the rag pickers if somebody didn't use them. And this is one of them. And this is a commentary on the Minor Prophets.

It's a two-volume set. He had reinforced the back with tape, and so you couldn't even tell what it was. I pulled it off and had to open it up to see what it was.

But this is a commentary on the Minor Prophets, Volume 1 and Volume 2, by a gentleman named the Reverend E. B. Pusey, P-U-S-E-Y. Don't run out and get this. I don't necessarily recommend it for, you know, the average layman.

It's deep. But let me tell you a little bit about E. B. Pusey. He was in the Anglican Church.

He's a British guy. He went to Eton and then to Oxford. His father was like a lord.

And their last name was actually Bouverie, B-O-U-V-E-R-I. So E. B. is Edward Bouverie. And Pusey was the estate that his father inherited and moved to.

And Pusey is like a town, and it had this estate. And so his father was Bouverie of Pusey. And they eventually just attached it to the last name.

So Pusey is not really his last name. His last name is Bouverie. Anyway, enough about that.

He lived from 1800 to about 1882. And he was Oxford educated. And he became a professor of Hebrew.

And he was famous for the Oxford Movement. And he got into some controversies about the Eucharist. And he called the Anglican Church back to some things that they had kicked to the curb because Catholics did them.

And he said, just because Catholics do this doesn't necessarily mean it's wrong. And so he encouraged people to pay more attention to the Eucharist and things like that. And he wanted people to pay attention to the presence of Christ in the fellowship of believers, particularly when they came to celebrate the Lord's table.

So, of course, I would disagree with him on that. I don't think bread turns into Christ. He did.

But here's the thing. Whatever else a guy may do, he can do one really useful thing. And this commentary on the Minor Prophets, I like for certain reasons.

Again, I don't agree with him on a lot of things. But I want to read you something. This is a big, long introduction in defense of old commentaries.

This thing was published in around the time that Pusey died, the 1880s. And this one is published by Funk and Wagnalls. Funk and Wagnalls.

This edition is 1895. It's the commentary that came out. He finished it.

It took him a while to organize it and proofread it and everything. So it came out around the 1885, 1895 timeframe. This is volume two.

And I want to read you something that Edward Bouverie Pusey had to say about Zechariah. And this is in the introduction to Zechariah. And he's talking about this controversy about the parts of Zechariah that don't seem to match.

It's been like Isaiah accused of being a compilation of various things. But he says, The four portions of Zechariah were probably of different dates as they stand in order in the prophet's book, as indeed the second is dated two years later than the first. We're in the second year of Darius, and you'll see later that we're going to be in the fourth year of Darius.

In the first part, God's people are exhorted to come from Babylon, which command many in the time of Ezra was obeyed, and doubtless individuals subsequently when a prosperous polity was restored. In the latter part, Babylon is mentioned no more. And we're going to see this in latter part of Zechariah.

Babylon's no longer an issue. Only in one place in the imagery of earlier prophets, the future gathering of God's people is symbolized under the previous deliverance from West and East, Egypt and Assyria. But they agree in this.

The four parts of Zechariah agree in this. And I think this is a really astute observation. As in the former prophets, they agree that the foreground is no longer deliverance from Babylon.

We're not talking about getting delivered from Babylon. Babylon's gone. And this is what we're talking about, right? God is in the present and in the future.

He's not rehashing the past. In the first part, the reference to the vision of the four empires in Daniel removes the promise of the Deliverer to the fourth empire. Remember that? The Deliverer comes in the days of the feet of iron mixed with clay and that kind of thing.

Well, I'm going to skip down here a like. In both parts alike, there is no mention of any king or of any earthly ruler. In both, the ruler to come is the Messiah.

In both, the division of the two kingdoms is gone. This is what I'm getting to. Pay attention now, because we had Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem mentioned here in verse 19.

And everybody says Israel is mentioned, therefore we're going to go back to Egypt and Assyria. But listen to this. And I'd already drawn this conclusion, but I like finding somebody that agrees with me, and so I'm going to read them to you.

The house of Israel and house of Judah are united, not divided. They had been distinct wholes. Now they are in interest as one.

We talked about this, the divided kingdom, when we did kings and prophets all the way through. You've got Ahab in the north, you've got Hezekiah in the south, right? But they are now treated as one. Zechariah promises a future to both collectively, as did Jeremiah long after the captivity of Israel, and Ezekiel promised that they should both again be one in the hand of God.

And he's got a footnote here, Ezekiel 37, 16 through 19. Remember, Ezekiel, where is Ezekiel? He's down by the river Kabar, right? He's in the captivity. He gets taken by the hair of the head and shown future things, shown what's going on in the present at the temple, and what's going on in the future.

Remember that? Ezekiel by the river Kabar. Well, Ezekiel promised that they should both again be one in the hand of God. The brotherhood between Judah and Israel still existed, after they had weighed the thirty pieces of silver for the good shepherd.

The captivity in God's providence ended at once. The separate kingdoms of Israel ended the religious schism, ended the object of which was to maintain the kingdom. Judah separated from the northern ten tribes.

They were trying to maintain. Remember, all of the kings of Judah were descended from David. None of the kings of the north were descended from... And so that schism, that division, was partly an effort to preserve God's promise to David that he would never lack a son to sit on the throne.

So, even before the captivity, various ones from Asher and Manasseh and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem to the Passover of Hezekiah. And that is recorded for us in 2 Chronicles 30, verse 11. Notice now, days of Hezekiah, northern kingdom long gone, but you have people that identify from the tribes of Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun humbling themselves, coming to Jerusalem and celebrating Hezekiah's Passover.

Hezekiah, southern kingdom. So, you begin to see the reunification of Israel even before Judah is taken out in the Babylonian captivity. Faithful people from these northern tribes still exist and they come down to Jerusalem.

Judah, Israel, Jerusalem. Verse 19. And a great multitude of the people from Ephraim and

Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, who had neglected or despised the first invitation came subsequently.

And this is found in 2 Chronicles 30, verse 18. 2 Chronicles 30, verse 11 and 30, verse 18 tell us that in the background and quietly, easy to overlook, there is a reunification of the tribes of Israel in Judah, even before the captivity. This is Pusey's point and I think it's a great one.

In the great Passover of Josiah, we hear of all Judah and Israel. This is 2 Chronicles 30, verse 10 and 35, verse 18. 2 Chronicles 35, verse 18.

All Judah and Israel that were present, the edict of Cyrus related to the people of the Lord God of heaven and was published throughout all his kingdom, which included the cities of the Medes where Israel had been removed. The cities of the Medes. This is back in the days of the Assyrian captivity.

The northern tribes had been removed to Media and you find this in Ezra 1, 1 and 2 and in 2 Kings 17, verse 6. I have to go a little slow there because a lot of these are in Roman numerals. These old guys that wrote in the 1800s, all of their passages are in Roman numerals. You really got to pay attention.

Where Israel had been removed. The sacred history is confined to Jerusalem, where the gospel was to go forth, yet even the sons of Bethel, the center of the rival idolatrous worship, which was among the mountains of Ephraim, were among those of the people of Israel who returned with Zerubbabel. And that is in Ezra 2, 2 and Ezra 2, 28.

So Pusey is making a great point here that when this talks about Judah, Israel and Jerusalem, it's looking at the present and at the future. It is inconceivable that as the material prosperity of Palestine returned, even many of the 10 tribes should not have returned to their country. Those who returned recognized the religious oneness of all the 12 tribes, wherever they were dispersed.

At the dedication of the house of God, and this is in Ezra 2, I'm sorry, Ezra 6, verse 17. Ezra 6, 17, at the dedication of the house of God, they offered a sin offering for all Israel, 12 he goats according to the number of the tribes of Israel. 12 goats for the 12 tribes at the dedication of this temple that they're trying to get finished.

Right? 12 tribes, 12 goats. At the Passover were present not only the children of Israel, which had come again out of the captivity, but all such as had separated themselves unto them from the defilements of the people of the land to seek the Lord God of Israel. And that is a quote from Ezra 6, verse 21.

Days of Ezra. This is after Esther, remember, after Hadassah, after Queen Myrtle. 12 tribes, all such as had separated themselves from the defilement came and celebrated the feast.

So, those Israelites who had been defiled by the heathen idolatries came to separate

themselves. The house of David is mentioned in Zechariah 12, verse 7. We'll get there. For of his seed, according to the flesh, Messiah was to be born, but it is his house, not any earthly ruler in it.

Anyway, that's Pusey. But there is a lot of wonderful scholarship and insight from before the days of computers and before the days of all the modern authors and resources that we have. And I love to go back and at least read the old guys, look back to the hole from which we were drawn and the pit from which we were digged, or whatever that is, the rock from which we were hewn and the pit from which we were digged.

We stand on the shoulders of wonderful men who spent years and years and years with just their Hebrew text and their King James Bible, excavating truth. They didn't get everything right. I don't get everything right.

But it's worth. I think these things have been preserved for us for a reason. And this is a tremendous insight because it leads to this conclusion.

These horns that he is speaking of are not the past horns. They are the present and the future. The present for Zechariah is the Medo-Persian Empire.

Now, what horns are coming up for Israel? Don't look back to Assyria and Egypt. Think about the present and the future. From the visions of Daniel, Daniel, nobody knew what a Greek was at that time.

Nobody knew what a Roman was at that time. But we clearly understand what the belly and thighs of brass are and what the iron legs are, right? The future empires of Alexander and of Pompey, right? So, if you're standing at Zechariah's day and looking at these visions and you see four horns, these are the nations that are opposing and attacking the people of God, who would they be? If you've got, like I do, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon and Medo-Persia listed as the four horns, I'm scratching two of those out. It's not Egypt and it's not Assyria.

God's already dealt with them. They're gone. It's the present and the future.

Think about this by way of application. God is not dealing with our past. He's not going back and rehashing our old sins.

If you confess those things, they are gone as far as the East is from the West. God deals in the present and in the future. What am I going to do today for the rest of this day and tomorrow? What is God preparing now and for the future? Forgetting those things which are behind, I press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

It's the present. It's the future that counts. Leave the past in the past.

God's already dealt with it. It's done. Any consequences, any lingering after effects of our failures or our sins in the past, God can turn cursing to blessing.

God turned the infidelity of Judas into the greatest event of human history. It was a failure on Judas' part. He's a believer for crying out loud.

And he made the most colossal mistake of all history in betraying the Lord Jesus into the hands of his enemies. But Jesus knew it was coming because Jesus was in the present looking to the future. And he knew that one of his own disciples would betray him.

He didn't fire Judas. He didn't strangle Judas in his sleep. He didn't say, get thee behind me, Judas.

Satan's going to enter into your heart and you're going to mess up the plan. Jesus treated him just like he did every other disciple. And let God work his plan together, which works all things together for good.

God even incorporates failures. Look at these failures on the part of national Israel and national Judah and the remnants of the nation recombining here in the post-captivity days. All these things are written for our instruction.

We benefit. We can go thou and not do likewise. The exhortations that Haggai and Zechariah give.

Do you remember how God dealt with your fathers when they became lackadaisical and unmotivated like you are right now? Do you not remember how God dealt with your fathers? Wake up, smell the coffee, get with the program, right? God used the failures of the fathers to motivate the children. He motivated the children of the wilderness-wandering 40-year generation to get into the land under Joshua and adapt and overcome, achieve the conquest, move in and take possession, right? They learn from the mistakes of their fathers. And we can learn.

We can learn from our own mistakes. We can learn from the mistakes of others. But the emphasis in the Bible is on the present and the future.

Learn, look ahead, and be motivated by hope to be faithful and obedient. And that's the crux of it here. So I say all of that to say this.

When you look at these horns, what are they going to be? Well, we've got the book of Daniel to parse this out. The head of gold has already come and gone in Zechariah's day. The shoulders and arms of silver are in the process of passing away.

They're in the midst. That's the present. The shoulder and arms of silver, that's the present.

But let me tell you something. Did the Medes and the Persians ever scatter Judah? Did they ever attack Jerusalem? How are the Medes and the Persians involved with Israel? How are they involved? Are they guilty? Are the Medes and the Persians guilty of attacking or scattering Judah, Israel, Jerusalem? No, never attacked, never scattered. In fact, who is it that's going to

release them, honor the decrees, and let them go back to their land? Who's going to issue the decree that they can defend themselves? Who are the good guys out of all of the nations represented in Nebuchadnezzar's vision? Who are the only really good guys? The Medo-Persians.

They preserve Israel. They inherit them as slaves and set them free and let them go home and rebuild their temple and finance it and send them go with God. The Medo-Persians are the good guys in this scenario.

So are they a horn that needs to be ground down and judged? I don't think so. Why would God judge the Medo-Persians? Where was Cyrus from? Remember Cyrus, my servant? God says Cyrus is my servant. He's a Medo-Persian guy, right? They're the good guys.

So who are these horns that need to be ground down? Who comes after the Medo-Persians? Alexander the Great, the Greeks, followed by Pompey who initiates imperial Roman grinding, boot-stomping rule. It's the Romans that are going to put Christ on the cross. It's the Romans that are going to destroy Jerusalem in 70 A.D. I'd say Alexander is a problem.

The Greeks, they come down there and wreak all kinds of havoc. The Romans are a problem. Who after that? Antichrist, your revived Roman Empire, if you will, it's often called, in the days of the Tribulation.

Well, that's three horns. Where's the other horn? Anything bad ever happen to Jerusalem after the Tribulation? Peaceful kingdom comes in, millennial rule, thousand years of peace. Is Jerusalem good to go from then on? Just kind of gets wafted up into the clouds and becomes the new Jerusalem? Does anything bad happen to Jerusalem, say, at the end of the millennium? A little thing called Gog Magog? I would say there's your fourth horn.

So what have we got? Greece, Rome, Antichrist and his minions, and then Gog Magog. I see four horns, and all of them need grinding down. All of them need dealing with.

God is in the present, looking at the present and looking ahead, all the way down the corridors of history until human history ends and eternal history begins. That's how far ahead God is looking for your life and my life. He is in the present, making provision, detailing angels.

He's got reconnaissance angels looking at what is happening in the present, looking at what that is going to affect in the future, and he's already detailing workmen. History is an active process. I don't see the Calvinist sovereign God who wrote it all down in a decree and then went back to the back and went to sleep.

God is actively involved in the present. He is actively involving his angels in working in the present. You find that out in Daniel.

Remember when the angel is trying to get to Daniel and says, I was held up because there's a conflict here. We're fighting, and I had to deal with the prince of Persia. There's not even a

Persia yet, and he's already dealing with the prince of Persia because it's future.

It's coming. So it's exciting to realize how dynamic life is, how actively engaged and involved God and God's forces for good are. God is at work to will and to do.

For his good purposes, he is working all things together for good, and it's an active process. What is happening today, what is happening in the world at large, all the way down to what's happening in our individual lives is a focus of God's attention, and he is detailing reconnaissance to watch and make sure everything is known and everything is evaluated, and he sends out these artisans with their tools, and he is going to deal with those who oppose and resist and try to do negative things to God's people. So I find this hugely encouraging.

We're in the midst of a history that is being written. God has got the broad outlines, but the individual details are being worked out day by day by day. His angels are involved, and we are involved, and our decisions make a difference.

Our lives make a difference. Who we are and why we're here is to make a difference. We represent Jesus Christ to the world, and we represent God's people to the angels and to God himself.

How are we doing? Are we responding to the Word of God, to the rebuke, correction, and instruction in righteousness that we receive, or are we fatalistically sitting back and saying, well, you know, it'll all be good by and by. Haggai and Zechariah are here to tell us that's the wrong view. We're in the midst of something that is active, and God is paying very close attention.

There are angels on horses watching you and watching me and reporting back to God, and he is determining the future based on what's happening in the present. And that determination goes all the way through the rest of this life, into and through the millennial kingdom, and into the kingdom of the Father. And if that doesn't dry out your wood and get your fire going, I don't know what will.

It's a wonderful thing to contemplate, and we'll return to the study of it and the vivid laying out that we find in this book next time. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the revelation that we find in your Word that shows us the true invisible realities that define our lives and define our future.

We pray that as we reflect on these things, that your Holy Spirit will make them live and flame and be real in our souls and provide motivation and encouragement to us to avail ourselves of the wonderful provision you've made for us in your Word and in your Spirit and in our fellowship and in the gifts that you've distributed amongst us, the mission you've assigned to us, the resources you have allocated to us so that we can succeed and we can prevail and we can be overcomers in this life and be thoroughly equipped for every good work both now and in the ages to come. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.