

PostExilicProphets 21-06-24b

Let's resume our study now in the book of Zechariah and in support of both my awkward memory and the point that we just had before the break, keep your finger here and turn back to Isaiah chapter 60, we're ready for it now. This is a millennial prophecy and in verse 8, Who are these who fly like a cloud and like doves to their roosts? Surely the coastlands shall wait for me and the ships of Tarshish. First, to bring your sons from afar their silver and their gold with them, to the name of the Lord your God and to the Holy One of Israel because He has glorified you.

This is a prophecy of the millennial kingdom where the ships of the Gentiles will return the people of Israel and the wealth of their lands to the presence of God in Israel in Jerusalem. Now look at the next verse, verse 10 of Isaiah 60, The sons of foreigners shall build up your walls. So, is the millennial Jerusalem going to have walls, yes or no? Yes it is.

When will the dimensions be determined and when will the walls be built? At the beginning of the millennium. They are not built previously and they are not dimensioned and sized previously. Why? Because in Zechariah's day the number of people who chose to be faithful and obedient had not yet been determined.

God didn't look ahead through the corridors of time and say, well I know in advance how many are going to be faithful and how many are going to believe. So man with the measuring line measured Jerusalem to be this big. The whole purpose, I think, of this third vision of the measuring line is wait to measure until we know how big it needs to be.

And that is determined the same way that towns without walls have their size determined and that is by the people who choose to dwell there. The walls will be built to provide a circumference around the people who dwell there by choice, by desire, by right and by divine intervention. You remember there is going to be an episode at the very beginning of the millennium where Israel will pass under the rod and those sheep of the flock who are qualified to enter the kingdom and enter the city will be allowed in.

Others will be bonked on the noggin and sent elsewhere. You're not qualified. You did not choose.

The Lord Jesus pictured this as the door to a banquet hall where he has sat down to enjoy a fellowship meal and these come to the door and knock and say, Lord, Lord, in your name we did this and that and the other. And he says, I never knew you through the door. Depart from me, you workers of iniquity.

And they are not allowed in. They are resurrected. They are alive.

They see the banquet feast, but they view it from outside. They are not allowed in. They are excluded.

We've seen these parables over and over again. And it is a reminder to us that our eternal future, where we are, what we do, our level of privilege, service, opportunity, blessing, reward, inheritance depends on what we choose now, just as it did for these Old Testament saints in the days of Zechariah. Why are you building this physical temple building? Do you understand the importance of the presence of God in your midst? Or is it just something to do to be well thought of by fellow workers and those who are observing from the outside? Where is your heart? Is your heart in it? That's what matters.

So the glory of Lebanon shall come to you. Notice verse 11. Your gates shall be open continually.

They'll not be shut by day or night, that men may bring to you the wealth of the Gentiles and their kings in procession. The nation and kingdom, which will not serve you, shall perish. Those nations shall be utterly ruined in that day.

That day is not Zechariah's day. That day is not our current day. For us, the children of God, the people granted exclusively as a possession to the Lord Jesus Christ, as his unique reward, we do not see that day yet either.

But that day is coming, just as it's coming for the Old Testament saints. They will be raised. Those who were faithful and obedient will be in the kingdom, in the land, in the city, and the glory of the nations will be brought in, in that day.

It is a future hope that was designed in the prophecy of Isaiah, designed in the prophecy of Zechariah, to motivate, encourage, and give people grounds for faith. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. How much faith would it have taken if God had come in with angelic armies, swooped in and decimated the Persians in the days of Haggai and Zechariah, in the days of Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest? If God had massacred the captors and said, here you go, where would the measuring line have been stretched? How do you know who has faith? If you make everything visible and immediate, instead of promising a future deliverance, and see who trusts God for it.

Who is willing to endure to the end to be saved? And who will respond to an immediate blessing and an immediate deliverance, but can't last the distance? Look at Israel in the wilderness, after being delivered from Egypt. They were delivered with a mighty hand, they went out with their oxen and their sheep and their donkeys and their children and their old people, and you've got Charlton Heston walking down the hallway of the palace of Pharaoh there. We will go with this and with that and with the other.

Well, they got a few days out in the wilderness, and everybody faded in the stretch, right? God says, I'm going to make you a promise, and I'm going to see who believes it. I'm going to see who is motivated enough to live their life, not yet having received the promises. Hebrews 11, Abraham and the patriarchs waited for a city whose founder and builder is God.

He dwelled in tents, and he did it his whole life because he was looking ahead in faith. Abraham is going to be richly blessed and richly rewarded, despite his occasional failures. It's his faith to dwell in tents, waiting for the city that God would build in God's time, in God's ways, with the dimensions of God's walls determined by God's measuring line based on who wants to be there.

So, Zechariah 2, that's the measuring line vision. What have we seen now? If you think of these visions, you've got the horsemen in the glen, that's the myrtle trees. If we get crushed, we've said this in other ways.

You remember in the past we've talked about what are you like under pressure? If you squeeze an orange, you get orange juice. If you squeeze a lemon, you get lemon juice. One is sweet and one is bitter.

What's on the inside comes out when we're under pressure. We want to be these myrtle leaves. And if we are crushed, this fragrance of faith and hope and love emerges, which God will reward in due time.

The promise is that God has a designated time, a designated process, and a designated way to deal with the horns of power that have scattered and oppressed His people. We have been scattered. We have been oppressed, even in this modern day, not to the extent that some of the martyrs of the past have.

But we are discriminated against for being Christians and believing the Bible and being quote, unquote, unscientific and so on. It's all how you read the science. People are beginning to realize that, that science is kind of like the Bible.

You get 100 scientists together and you're going to get 105 opinions about what the science actually says. You know, you get four theologians together and you get seven different readings of what any given passage means. Well, science is the same way because in the secular world, you can't get a consensus around what the data mean.

How much data do you use for background and context? How big is the sample? How accurate is the evaluation? Is the sample large enough? Was it double blind? Did the people who conducted the study have an agenda? Were they funded by someone? Did they have reason to hide the truth for their own benefit or alter the truth or whatever? And when human beings are involved, science is no path to truth any more than anything else. Science gets twisted and manipulated to serve people's ends just like everything else. And some people in this country are just now waking up to the fact that a lot of the alleged science around climate change and viruses and the rest of it has been manipulated and has been artfully twisted to serve political ends and so on.

Well, what do we know from these visions? Number one, God is fully aware and aware in detail of our situation. Number two, God has a time and a way and a process whereby he is going to

deal with those who oppress us. Thirdly, the scope of future opportunity and reward and proximity to God and his presence is a matter of our choice.

It's not predetermined. It's not foreordained. There are no limits to the size of the city yet.

But this city is going to have walls and it's going to have gates, but those will be built after the people of God have made their choice. Foreigners, Isaiah 60, will build your walls, but they're not going to be built until the population has been determined. The city is going to be inhabited the way cities without walls are inhabited and it's by choice.

Then the walls will be built. Now we come to the oracle after this vision. Up, up, verse six of chapter two, Zechariah.

Flee from the land of the north, says the Lord, for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven, says the Lord. Up, Zion, escape, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon. You notice daughter of Babylon.

This is actually two appositional nouns. It's kind of like in the story of Robin Hood and they say Maid Marian. Well, this is Maid Babylon, M-A-I-D.

There's no word for daughter here. Babylon is the woman here and this is young Babylon. She's going to be more of a woman riding the beast in Revelation chapter 17 and along in there.

But this is earlier in her career and she's not the scarlet harlot. She's the maid. She's early in her career, but this is mystery Babylon.

This is maid Babylon in younger days. And notice Babylon has already disappeared off the scene. They've already been crushed and defeated in the days of Belshazzar and the latter days of Daniel by the Medes and displaced by the Medo-Persian Empire.

And the Medo-Persian Empire is starting to fade out. And within a hundred years, it's going to be powerless. So why would God say in Zachariah's day when Babylon is already a fading memory, flee from Babylon and from the maid? It's what we saw when we did the book of Revelation, when we looked at the scarlet harlot riding the 10 headed beast and so on.

This Babylon is put for all future oppressors, all future religious, political, social substitutes for what ought to govern the people of God and which will instead try to crush the people of God, decimate them, bring them to heel with forces of fear and intimidation. Remember the intimidation in Babylon? Bow when you hear the sound of the sack, but or we're going to throw you in the furnace, intimidation. You will pay a heavy penalty if you don't do what we want, even when it comes to your faith.

Hananiah and Mishael and Azariah refused. God delivered them. So flee from the land of the north, says the Lord.

I have spread you abroad. Like the four winds of heaven, says the Lord up Zion, escape you who

dwell with maid Babylon. For thus says the Lord of hosts.

He sent me after glory to the nations, which plunder you for he who touches you, touches the apple of his eye, says entered into our language. And it's been a part of English for centuries, but there is no Hebrew here for apple of his eye. This is, there are 18 passages in the Hebrew Old Testament where the scribes knew that something bad had happened.

And they're called the Tikkun Soferim. There are 18 famous, oops, there's something wrong with the Hebrew here that the scribes identified and put in a list. This is one of them.

And to cut a long story short, this just means you touch my eye. Notice who's speaking here. He who touches you touches my eye, touches my very eye.

It's one of the most sensitive externally available surfaces on a human body, right? You can touch somebody almost anywhere else. But when you touch the eyeball, that is the most sensitive exposed surface, certainly on the face. And perhaps, you know, in terms of exposed surface that somebody can touch, the eye is what you don't want touched.

And that's what it says. But this is my eye. This is Amy.

And the word for apple, although it's a long, gory story, but it's not supposed, it's not apple. There's no such thing as an apple in the eye. It's not an apple that you like to look at.

It doesn't go back to Eve in the garden or anything. It just means he who touches you touches the surface of my eye is a good interpretive translation here. And it's not his eye, it's my eye.

Look at the next verse. For I will shake my hand against them. He who touches you touches the surface of my eye.

I will shake my hand against them and they shall become spoil for their servants. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me. Now it's interesting the interchange between God speaking as the Lord and this one who has been sent.

And this is of course the Messiah who is interchangeable with God himself. I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven says the Lord in verse six. It's the Lord who's talking.

Up Zion, escape you who dwell with maid Babylon, M-A-I-D. For thus says the Lord of hosts, he sent me. The Lord says, he sent me.

Who sent me? Well, who can send the Lord but the Lord? But this is a different member of the Trinity. He sent me after glory to the nations which plunder you. He who touches you touches my eye.

I will shake my hand against them and they shall become spoil for their servants. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me. There's only two choices here.

Either the Lord is still talking. The one who has had his eye touched is talking or you end the quotes and this is Zachariah. When this prophecy is fulfilled, you'll know that the Lord has sent me to tell you this, but it's the former.

Sing and rejoice verse 10, O daughter of Zion for behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst says the Lord. Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day and they shall become my people and I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you.

Same thing again. This is a messianic passage and it should have told the people of Israel, should have told the scribes and the Pharisees and the chief priests, the students of the old Testament who were dwelling in Israel in Jesus day that when he said, I and my father are one, it is a fulfillment of these passages and others like them. You will know that the Lord has sent me when I dwell in your midst says the Lord.

And you will know that the Lord has sent me when I the Lord dwell in your midst, who is the visible member of the Trinity who dwells with us, whose name is Emmanuel, God with us. How can God be in heaven on his throne and on earth dwelling among people? There are multiple persons in God incorporated. So they should have known.

There is no excuse for charging Jesus with blasphemy when he says, I as the Messiah have been sent by God and yet I and the father are one. The Lord will take possession of Judah as his inheritance in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem. Be silent all flesh before the Lord for he is aroused from his holy habitation.

That is the third vision. And what does it tell us? If the people of God have the promise of God with us, the Lord dwelling in the midst, what promise do we have? What did the Lord Jesus say in John 14 and following? The one who has my words and keeps them, he's the one who loves me. I and my father will come to him and make our habitation with him.

They will dwell with us now in a spiritual and perspective way. We will dwell with them in the eternal future. One is predicated on the other.

If we are not the ones who love him, if we do not have his words and keep them, we are not the ones who love him. He is not going to come and dwell with us now and we will not go and dwell with him in the eternal future. One leads to the other.

We either have both or neither. The presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and God the father, as well as the Holy Spirit who indwells us at all times. We either cultivate that, we build on it, that happens for us by faith and obedience, having his words and keeping them, being motivated by hope.

It either happens now so that the reverse is true and we will dwell in the new Jerusalem with the father and the son or not. One goes with the other. That brings us to chapter three and the fourth vision.

Now remember, four and five are at the center. This is the most important thing for the people of God is what we see in these next two visions. He showed me Yeshua, the high priest.

That's as far as you need to go to understand what should be central and most important for us. Yeshua, our high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, Yeshua, the high priest here in vision. This is Zechariah recognizing the actual Joshua who was a man who lived at this time.

Joshua and Zerubbabel are mere men, but as symbols, they do not represent themselves. We saw this in our study four years ago. This Yeshua, the high priest, is not the living, breathing Joshua who worked to help get the temple built, who was a partner of Zerubbabel, who was the descendant of priests from before the captivity and so on.

He looks like him, but he is a symbol here. This is not a promise or an experience for the literal earthly Joshua, the high priest. This is put forth.

It is a prophetic picture of the actual Yeshua, high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. So this is an anticipatory vision. He is standing before the angel of the Lord.

What does that tell you about the identity of the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament? It's not the pre-incarnate Christ. It's not Jesus before Jesus. Read Hebrews 1, 1 and 2. It makes it clear.

Angel of the Lord, Old Testament, not Jesus. Jesus doesn't stand in front of himself. Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him.

Of course. Who is the primary enemy of the Lord Jesus and all those who belong to him? The devil roams the earth like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Jesus told Peter, Satan desires to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith will not fail.

Afterward, strengthen your brethren. The Lord said to Satan, the Lord rebuke you, Satan. The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you.

Is this not a brand plucked from the fire? Now, this is going to require some time. We're going to spend a little time on these two central visions because they are the big deal. So we're going to move past a few things that we're going to talk about next time.

This brand plucked from the fire is really interesting. What is a brand? Why is it on fire? And so on. So hold your thoughts and questions on that.

We're coming back to it. This is our big idea session on these first four visions. Okay, so bear with me.

Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and was standing before the angel. This angel is mentioned three times. He's mentioned in verse 1. Joshua is standing before him.

He's mentioned here in verse 3. Joshua standing before the angel of the Lord clothed in these filthy garments. And the angel of the Lord is standing by at the end of verse 5, down at the

bottom. So what happens between verse 3 and verse 5? He, the angel of the Lord, and you've got a capital H in the New King James, but you can't control these people.

They just capitalize everything. He, the angel of the Lord, spoke. Now, what is the angel of the Lord? What is his function? Throughout the Old Testament scripture, what does the angel of the Lord do? He speaks, often in the first person, for God in heaven.

He expresses the words and the will of God himself. He's kind of like the Holy Spirit in our day. He does not speak from himself.

He takes of the things of the Father and expresses them to Old Testament parties. So, when the angel of the Lord speaks here, he is speaking the words of, on behalf of, God the Father. Make sense? So, the angel answered and spoke to those who stood before him.

Who stands before him? Who do we know is standing before the angel of the Lord in the details given to us in the first few verses here? Joshua, the high priest, is standing in front of him. Satan is standing in front of him at the right hand. The Lord says to Satan, The Lord rebuke you, Satan.

And this, I think, is the Lord speaking through the angel of the Lord. Joshua is silent throughout this whole vision. So, the Lord says, through the angel, I would surmise, The Lord rebuke you, Satan.

The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you. Is this not a brand plucked from the fire? If you go to the first few chapters of Job, God asks Satan questions. And God asks Satan a question here.

This is a question to Satan. Satan, is this not a brand? Well, we'll cover this next time. I don't have time.

If I do it now, I'm going to run out of time. So, we're going to save it for next time. Just think about this.

This question is for Satan. Think about fire. Think about brands.

Think about something that is on fire. If you don't pull it out, see, I'm doing it anyway. I'm like a compulsive person.

Anyway, think about this. I've given you plenty of food for thought here. So, Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, standing before the angel.

So, the angel answered and spoke to those who stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. The angel of the Lord has those who stand before him. Now, this is not Joshua, and it's not Satan.

When you have people who stand before you, these are servants. These are your factotai.

These are your minions, your helpers.

Those who stand before you stand there to serve. They also serve who only stand and wait, and that kind of thing. So, the angel of the Lord, we did not get this detail previously in the vision, but the angel of the Lord has got other angels who are his immediate helpers.

The angel of the Lord does not do this, because it's not his job. The angel of the Lord doesn't go around doing menial tasks. He's got other angels to carry out these menial tasks.

Satan is not going to take off the clothes and put others on. Joshua is not going to do it for himself. The angel of the Lord speaks to those who stand by, and this is our first clue that there are other angels standing near, behind, at the side of the angel of the Lord.

The angel of the Lord's job is to speak for God, to speak the words of the Lord. And he'll do it either in the first person or the third person, just depending. So, the angel of the Lord spoke to those who stood before him, saying, and stand before, this is a standard stock phrase that means to his servants, to his helpers, take away the filthy garments from him.

And to him he said, see, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes. This is the voice of God the Father speaking through the angel of the Lord. I, this is not the power that the angel of the Lord has.

This is God the Father speaking through the angel. Now, why is it done in this way? We'll talk about that next time. It's very fascinating.

But just, I'm just telling you how it is. I'll explain how I know that later. I have removed, I the Father have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes.

I, Zechariah, said, let them put a clean turban on his head. So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him, and the angel of the Lord stood by. Very important.

Now, our goal in reviewing these first four visions is to say, how should we then live? What is the application for me? You understand the first vision. Do not be dismayed when it seems like evil people prosper. Why? Second vision.

God has a time, a plan, a way, and a purpose, and he's going to deal with it for his own glory. Third vision, measuring line. What should I be thinking about? Instead of being subjective and worrying about, oh, woe is me, why am I crushed like myrtle leaves, I should concentrate on giving forth the fragrance of hope.

God is going to wait to measure the city until he sees what I choose, what we choose. So what are we going to choose? I want to be like Abraham. I'm going to wait for that city whose founder and builder is God.

God's not going to found and build the walls of that city until he sees how many of us are willing to live there. That city is going to be populated the way wall of cities are populated. It's

by desire, by choice, by sympathy with the purposes for which that place exists.

So God is watching me. A line is being stretched out over the city, but the length and breadth of that city are going to be based on the line that is stretched over me. We will be measured.

And when God takes our measure, he'll know how big to make the city. Fourth vision, final vision in this first half, we're going to be working our way back out to chiasm. What should my focus be? The high priest.

Why? In the old testament and in the new, what is the high priest's function? What does he do? What is his job? We've talked about the job of the angel of the Lord. What's the job of the high priest? He is the only individual who can enter the holy of holies and represent me before the holy presence of God. He can enter in there and with blood of atonement, he can reconcile me to God.

He can atone for my sins. He can make me acceptable and blessable and resurrectable in God's sight. Only the high priest can do that.

No one else. This high priest isn't qualified to stand in God's presence. I told you I would explain why it's the angel of the Lord standing here.

Why is the angel of the Lord speaking instead of God? Look at the clothes. This high priest can't go into the holy of holies and be in the actual presence of the holy God. He's covered in dirty garments.

So in the same way that God couldn't come down and directly speak to people in the old testament, what did God do? God graciously sent an angel who is the telephone. He's the speaker box conveying the actual words, voice, intention and purpose of God without frying the people who receive that information. In the same way, at this particular point, this high priest cannot be addressed directly by God.

He's got to be addressed through the intermediate agency of the angel of the Lord because he's got these dirty garments on. These dirty garments have to be exchanged before he is qualified to be in that presence. Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended.

Jesus is going to tell a lady in the garden. I've not yet ascended to the presence of the Father with this work of bearing. Notice the high priest himself is not dirty.

He's not been wallowing in the pigmyre. It's his clothing. He is bearing the iniquity that has been smeared onto his clothing by outside agency.

He has borne it, but he is not responsible for it and he's not a part of it. Take off these clothes which you have borne, you have suffered the judgment associated with this filth. Now that you've done so, take that off, put clean garments on him.

It's a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ bearing the iniquities that do not belong to him and of

which he is not a part. It's taken from him. Notice he doesn't have to wash, he doesn't have to be sanctified, he doesn't have to go for cleansing, he's not sprinkled with blood, he's not dipped in a laver.

Joshua isn't a part of the problem. The clothes are the problem. He has worn the clothes.

He has taken them upon himself. He has borne our iniquities and carried our transgressions. Having done so, they are now removed.

And God says, I will... See, I have removed your iniquity that's on these clothes from you and I will clothe you with rich robes. Now Zechariah is going to speak. And this is a study unto itself.

Why does Zechariah say give him a clean hat? It's a wonderful thing that we'll look at next time. But what's our fourth point of application? How do we not fail when we realize that we are the myrtle leaves being crushed and that the horns of power external to us have scattered us and decimated us and disheartened us and caused us all kinds of problems? How do we keep the vision of the new Jerusalem and the opportunities for the future and that God has not yet determined the dimension of the city because he has yet to see how many people want to live there. And we are some of those people when you look at the new Jerusalem by extension.

This central vision is just like our special music. Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in his wonderful face.

And the things of this world will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace. It is focusing on this incredible, wonderful, loving and gracious high priest who was willing to bear our iniquities and suffer a judgment beyond our comprehension on our behalf. We can be subjective and have eyes on self, eyes on people, eyes on circumstances, or we can be objective and turn our eyes to our faithful high priest who isn't so heavenly that he can't sympathize with our weaknesses.

He was in all points tested like as we are. This is the heart of the book of Hebrews. Our high priest knows what it is like to be us.

He has been crushed. He has been tested. He has been tempted.

He has been tried. He has been hungry and cold and tired. He has been misunderstood.

He has been scorned and vilified. He has been falsely accused. He has suffered every indignity imaginable as the Lord of glory.

He knows exactly what it is like to be us. But for the joy that was set before him, he endured all of that. Despising the shame, now he is seated at the right hand of the Father and he wants to bring us where he is.

If we want to follow him, we've got to do what he did. Not worry about these subjective things. That's the picture that we find right here.

This is our motivation. This is the hope that is set before us is to walk in white with the Lord Jesus Christ. No iniquitous robes.

No shame and separation. To him who overcomes, Jesus said, I will grant to walk with me in white. He's in white.

We will be in white. If we want to be there, it's our choice. So these first four visions, think about them.

There is tremendous power of application in our daily, hour by hour, waking moments. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the wonderful truth of your word and how the Old Testament scriptures resonate with so much power and meaning for us.

We pray that as we reflect on these truths, your Holy Spirit will impress them on us, motivate us with them, sanctify and cleanse us with the washing of water by the word, and enable us to bear that fruit of the spirit that qualifies us and prepares us for service and function in this life and in the ages to come. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.