

PostExilicProphets 21-07-08b

We're back now from the break and ready for our second session here in Zachariah. And we saw this fascinating idea of the North. And once you become sensitized to that, it's amazing how many different passages gain some additional weight and freight when you think about the significance of both the earthly chess pieces that God is maneuvering and the presence of God Himself.

It is as though He is sitting on the north side of a chess board doing things both for the benefit and for the judgment, which of course can also be a benefit for His people. But that brings us now to the central section in chapter 4. And we saw the word of the Lord to the image of the lamp stand fed by the oil. And in large terms, here we have this single tree, this olive tree that is feeding the, I'm sorry, it's a single lamp stand with seven pipes and there are two olive trees feeding into it.

One on the right hand and the other on the left. So what are these, my Lord? And in verse 5 of chapter 4, the angel says, do you not know what these are? You remember very significantly that Zachariah had been asleep and now he has awakened. And this is right in the center of the chiasm.

It's after vision 4 and at the beginning of verse 5. And it speaks to me of the resurrection of the Old Testament saints, so that now what you see in here is in the millennial kingdom. And there are those who should be paying attention, who should have known from their earthly life, have learned and grown in grace and knowledge, but they're having to ask the question just like Nicodemus did in John chapter 3. You know, these are things you should know. You and I do not want to get to the eternal future into the resurrection and have angels or particularly the Lord Jesus.

He's handing us a little piece of the hidden manna, hopefully, or he's doing some teaching and we're walking with him in robes of white and he says something and we have to ask questions because we do not yet understand. We're endeavoring to grasp these things now so that we can be useful and of service in the ages to come. So, do you not know what these are is a mild expression of disappointment, at least.

What is this? What is this picture? This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel. And from now on, from this point forward, the whole last half of the chiasm, we have the Spirit of God represented as eyes inscribed on stones and as not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit here in verse 6. And the Spirit is going to be in evidence from now on. And the one who laid the foundation of the temple is the one that is going to set its capstone.

And this speaks of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Other foundation can no man lay, but that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. His work on the cross is the foundation for genuine relationship with God, worship of God, qualification to come into his presence, entering into his

gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise.

This is all in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. You go to Hebrews chapter 10, new and living way through the veil, by which we have grace to come boldly and ask for help when we need it. Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain.

And this anticipates the millennial coming of the Lord Jesus when every mountain and hill shall be made low, the crooked is made straight, the rough place is plain, the valleys are exalted. And the Lord Jesus is going to crown the building of this spiritual temple when he returns. That is going to be the fulfillment of all of the potential that was brought forth specifically here for Jerusalem, but actually for everyone in his work on the cross.

From the foundation to the pinnacle, from the alpha to the omega, from the beginning to the end. And then in verse 8, the hands of Zerubbabel that laid this foundation, his hands shall finish it. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you.

And it's a very interesting interchange of pronouns here from third person to second person to first person. Who has despised the day of small things? And this, I think, there's been no end of speculation on what exactly this means. And it's tough.

This is one of the toughest things in the whole section. Who has despised the day of small things? What are the small things and why are they being despised? If you remember the timing of this prophecy, the people, the faithful under Zerubbabel had been trying to get this foundation finished. They got the foundation started.

They built the altar on it. Then they got stymied and stopped. And the irascibility and the opposition of the people in the land slowed the thing down, which anticipates the rejection of those to whom Jesus comes.

He came unto his own and his own received him not. And it delays the fulfillment of the kingdom promises to Israel with that same attitude and for that same reason. And there are those who would look at Jesus coming out of Galilee with his humble, uneducated disciples, preaching and teaching without ostentation, without pomp and ceremony.

And they would say, this Jesus is a small thing. And the scribes, Pharisees, chief priests and elders looked down on the Lord of glory, the second person of the Trinity as a small thing. And they despised the day of what they considered to be small things.

Well, I think that's what this is talking about here. When the hands of Zerubbabel laid the foundation of this house, that seemed like a small thing. And people said, what are you doing? You can never rebuild Solomon's Temple and all of its glory.

Look at the mean dimensions and composition of this foundation. We remember Solomon's Temple. You know, it's kind of like that debate where the vice presidential candidates were talking and the senator from Texas was talking to Dan Quayle.

And Dan Quayle made some mention of trying to follow in the footsteps of John Kennedy. And this guy looks down at him and says, I knew John Kennedy. John Kennedy was a friend of mine.

You are no John Kennedy. And that was the only thing anybody remembers out of that entire debate, the entire election. You know, the Bush-Quayle ticket won anyway, but it wasn't helped any by that answer.

But it was, you're no John Kennedy. You're a small thing. You're a pale echo.

You're a wallflower and a wimp and a panty waste and whatever else. I probably can't say half those things in the politically correct environment, but they have small things. We can look at ourselves and say, I'm a small thing.

You know, I'm saved and I'm grateful, but I'm not shaking the earth. I'm not winning souls to Christ. I'm not involved in a ministry full-time or even part-time.

I'm just here. I'm mowing lawns and doing laundry and doing a job and trying to stay afloat and do the immediate daily tasks that are assigned to me. And as much as I can, I'm trying to cultivate my walk with the Lord, my understanding of scripture, the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in my life.

But those are small things. God says here, don't underestimate, don't despise small things or the day, the time of small things. Even our afflictions here, you know, we haven't suffered to the point of blood.

We haven't been dragged into a Roman Coliseum and fed to the lions. We haven't been crucified. We haven't been oppressed and persecuted as some Christians down through the centuries have.

We're not necessarily in the Smyrna category when it comes to the church. But don't think that God is uninterested, that God's not paying attention or that careful books are not being kept. Don't despise the day of small things.

He who underestimates and disregards these small things, what did Jesus say? He who is faithful in that which is least, small things, will be faithful also in that which is much. We train ourselves on small things. We learn to trust.

We learn to exercise faith. We learn to think scripturally. We learn to pray scripturally.

We learn to analyze. We learn to look outward and put the interests of others ahead of our own in small ways, in small things. Do not despise the day of small things.

The world thought Jesus was a small thing. Many of them still do. Who is it that does that? Watch out.

You will know the Lord of Hosts has sent me to you. It's as though they don't know it yet. Why

do they not know it? Because it looked like a small thing.

This can't be the Messiah. He has no form or comeliness that we should desire Him. He didn't come from Jerusalem in glory.

He's not well off. He doesn't wear fine robes. He doesn't speak in magnificent articulation and with intellectual aplomb.

He's a man of the common people. He mingles with the common people. He eats with tax collectors and sinners.

He's something small. Because of that, they overlooked the Lord of Glory. He lays the foundation and that may look like a small thing.

But when He comes back and sets that capstone, that's the biggest and best temple there ever was dedicated to the God of the universe. These seven, these eyes that have been inscribed on the stone rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. Notice, we started out with a young man having the plumb line back in the third vision.

Remember that? And our attention is distracted away from him. The city is not going to be built according to a young man going out with a plumb line and doing it in the traditional fashion. This city is going to be measured in a different way.

Well, who's got the plumb line now? It's not this anonymous young man. Zechariah would have said, behold, I saw Zerubbabel going out with a plumb line. In his third vision, it wasn't Zerubbabel.

It was a young man, somebody of the earth, somebody with conventional thinking and traditional wisdom and a conventional understanding. Now, Zerubbabel has got the plumb line in his hand, and his measure is going to be different than what the young man would have done. So the plumb line is in the hand of Zerubbabel, and here are the eyes of the Lord.

You remember the stone that's got the seven eyes inscribed in it, and they represent the sevenfold Spirit of God. Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord to Zerubbabel. So when Zerubbabel's got this plumb line in his hand, is he going to measure according to the usual, according to the way it's always been done, the traditional? These eyes of the Holy Spirit are associated with his use of this plumb line.

This is going to be a spiritual measure, not an earthly, physical measure. The eyes are the eyes of the Lord, scanning to and fro throughout the whole earth, not just the land, not just Israel. This temple is going to accommodate people from all nations.

We're going to see this coming up. But notice how we've been transported, as I said in the introduction. The first three visions and the fourth vision, the first three visions anticipate.

They say, here's the sorry state of God's people. Here are those who have worn them down and

scattered them. But God has a plan.

He has detailed workmen that are going to take care of these horns. He is going to take care of the seeming peace and rest that the world has achieved for itself by worldly means and at the expense of God's people. And the earthly Jerusalem has been sacked and demolished, but the new Jerusalem is going to be a completely different city.

And then here comes Joshua, the high priest. His filthy robes are taken off, his good robes are put on, and his high priestly turban is put on him because Zechariah knows it belongs there. That was the inception.

Now we're in the future. We're in the prophetic future. And Zerubbabel is finishing this temple and laying its capstone and measuring the city with a spiritual plumb line.

And the eyes of the Spirit are not just looking in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem. They're scanning to and fro throughout the whole earth. What does this mean for us by way of application? It's kind of like it says in the Psalms when David was writing and he said, where can I go and hide from God? There's no place I can go where God's not present.

Well, the eyes of the Holy Spirit, the presence of the Holy Spirit should be everywhere in our lives. Everything we do, everything we think, remember, let your moderation be known unto all. The Lord is at hand.

The Holy Spirit is near. And these sevenfold eyes, it's not one eye. It's not like that little Egyptian eye that is in the, it's okay, is not the little third eye that goes in the middle of your forehead.

God's got seven eyes. And even if they're blinking, there's always at least one of them open. There's never a place, there's never a time that God doesn't know exactly what's going on, exactly what's happening.

Scanning to and fro throughout the whole earth. So Zechariah says, well, what are these two olive trees at the right of the lampstand and at its left? What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes? Now, here's where, this is why we did so much prep. This is why I talked about what the first four visions address and what the last four visions address.

Because remember how we've always thought that in the Old Testament you never see the church? Well, I'm about to change my mind on that because this vision of the lampstand and the two olive trees, one of those olive trees is Israel and one of them is the church. Remember now, we're in the millennial future and the church is history. The church has already happened.

There were those in the age of Israel to whom God granted his spirit and they did spectacular things. There are those in the age of the church who have been imbued and filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit and have done amazing things. These feed into the lampstand which generates and reflects the light, i.e. the glory of God is manifest and shining forth from

this and that glory is brought forth by the work of the Spirit coming out of both of those trees.

That's why in the New Jerusalem it's got 24 gates, 12 for the apostles, 12 for the tribes. The two olive trees, the two peoples of God united together in the common interest of the glory of God. I would submit that these trees, one is Israel, one is the church and the people within those entities who have exploited the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

We want that to be us. You remember Paul talks about the olive tree over in Romans 11. He talks about the branches that should have been producing and being useful for God's service and because they were dried up and dead, God snapped them out and grafted in branches from the wild olive tree.

You might almost think that one of these is a domestic olive tree and one is a wild olive tree. But in Paul's metaphor, the branches are grafted into the single tree that Israel's branches were snapped out so that he can talk about, don't boast about the branches because they've been snapped out from lack of faith but they can be grafted back in again because that tree is not salvation, that tree is production, fruitfulness, usefulness for God's glory. And so it's represented here in a slightly different way.

You have the two trees, tree of Israel, the domestic olive tree and probably the wild olive tree representing those Gentiles who come to faith and come to God and of course in this age, Jews and Gentiles together form this tree and that's why you have a different dimension of it in Romans chapter 11. Solid gold lampstand. Now there's a single lampstand here because in this vision, the lampstand of God's glory is unified and we're interested in the trees and the branches and the oil that flows in from them both.

When you come to Revelation chapter 1 and the seven lampstands, now the Lord Jesus is not talking to Israel, Israel is not in view, they've been set aside and he's only talking about the church. And so you have a seven-fold lamp configuration. You've got the Holy Spirit imbuing each of those lamps and in other places in Revelation, you have the seven-fold Spirit of God, the seven spirits who are before the throne.

And you get the idea that this is the presence of the Holy Spirit uniquely and specifically in each of the different kinds of situations that people in the church can find themselves in. In the same way that you may not spend your whole life in one church, we can go through different phases. We might be in Smyrna and suffering abysmally in some cases.

We might be the Philadelphian church. We might be the Ephesian church. We might be the Laodicean church.

It depends at different times in our life on what the situation is. We don't want to lose our first love. We don't want to fade in the stretch when persecution comes.

We don't want to be complacent when the synagogue of Satan and the and so on. So fascinating, fascinating vision. Now looking back at both of the ages, the age of Israel and the

age of the church here with Zerubbabel.

And once again, do we not know what these olive branches and the oil dripping into the receptacles represents? And in verse 13, do you not know what these are? He said, these are the two anointed ones who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth. And these anointed ones, these trees, you can look at them as Joshua and Zerubbabel, many people do. Let's say that that were the case.

Would they not also represent the kingdom of priests and those who are going to rule and reign on the earth from both Israel and the church? Even if these trees are the two anointed ones, it doesn't really say that Joshua is anointed. It doesn't say that Zerubbabel is anointed. When it says they are anointed ones, anointed with what? If it's a spiritual vision, they're anointed with the Spirit.

And the Spirit is flowing forth out of them. Their anointing doesn't just benefit them, doesn't just commission them, doesn't just authorize them to be a priest or a king, but it flows out and benefits others and shines that light of glory from it. Well, that brings us to chapter 5. I turned and raised my eyes and saw there a flying scroll.

He said to me, what do you see? I said, I see a flying scroll. Its length is 20 cubits, its width is 10 cubits. He said to me, and he doesn't wait for Zechariah to ask, what is this? He says, this is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth.

Every thief shall be expelled according to this side of the scroll. Every perjurer shall be expelled according to that side of it. I will send out, says the Lord of hosts.

It says the curse, you can scratch that out. It just says, I will send out, says the Lord of hosts. It shall enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by my name.

It shall remain in the midst of his house, consume it with its timber and stones. What on earth does this mean? Well, you may recall when we went through this a few years ago in the Kings and Prophets study, that the curse, what does the scripture say specifically about the curse? The first curse we have is in Genesis chapter 3. What was that curse? The ground is cursed, right? Cursed is the ground for your sake. Thorns and thistles that were bare in sweat, you'll earn your bread and so on.

But what does Paul have to say when it comes to curse? What curse have we been redeemed from? Have we been redeemed from the curse on the earth yet? No, we still have to earn our bread by the sweat of our brow. What curse have we been redeemed from? Christ has redeemed us from the curse of what? The law. From the curse of the law.

By the law comes the knowledge of sin. So, redeeming us from the curse of the law implies we are no more slaves to sin. We've been redeemed.

Slavery to sin was part of the curse of the law. By the law comes the knowledge of sin. I was

alive once apart from the law, Paul says, representing Israel specifically and humanity in general.

I was alive once apart from the law, but when the law came, sin came alive and I died. Sin should no longer have the mastery over you because we have died to the law, therefore we have died to sin. And if we died to sin, why should we any longer live in it? It's a wonderful section of Romans.

We've covered it in detail in years past. So, this curse is twice as long as it is high, implying that it's a double. It's like a two-page folder.

Have you ever done this? I just did this this morning. I got a thing and it had an unfolding flyer that is the instructions. And so, the first page is the cover page and the second page is the instructions in English.

Then you've got Spanish, Deutsch, French, Japanese, Chinese, Swahili, all of these other languages. And whenever I get a big thick booklet stapled or I get a flyer, I pull all those foreign language pages off so that when I file the booklet, it's not so fat. I don't need the Japanese.

I know Japanese people are going to be visiting me and need to read my manual. So, I took this thing that started out being a fan fold affair and tore off the last four folding pages. And now, it's just twice as wide as it is high.

It's got one page here and one page here. Here's what the device is. Here are the instructions.

And the instructions say, we're trying to save paper. So, download the manual here, you know, made in USA, copyright, whatever, and it's over. But it's twice as wide as it is high.

Two pages are the idea or two tablets. And in the center of one, you have the curse that every thief shall be expelled on this side. And on the other side, every perjurer shall be expelled, right? And the perjurer is one who swears falsely by the Lord's name.

You remember the tables of the law in the first five commandments? You remember the one that says, thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain? It's the third one, right? Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

It's right there in the middle, right? Vain invoking of God as your witness. On the second scroll, remember that? Thou shalt not this. Thou shalt not that.

Thou shalt not steal. It's right in the middle. So you've got the perjurer in the middle of the left tablet.

You've got the thief in the middle of the right tablet. And so with a single command, we are told what the curse is. A single command from each of those two tablets of the law.

And God says, I will send out, and this flying scroll, i.e. the law of God, is going to go into households, remain in the midst of his house, and consume it with its timber and stones. If there is no redemption, if there is no atonement, if the sin has not been removed by the work of the high priest and the taking away into unknown realms by removal of the dirty clothes, that law is going to come in to the midst of that house and it's going to destroy it. There will be nothing left of that life.

Possessions, accomplishments, awards hanging on the wall, trophies, teraphim, whatever might have been in that house, it's all going to be destroyed by the word of God, which is alive and powerful, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and joints and marrow, judge of the thoughts and intents of the heart. It's going to come in and destroy everything that violates God's law. Now remember, this is specifically looking at the judgment on Israel.

Israel will be judged by the law. All the law and the prophets can be summed up, Jesus said, you remember that. But here, the judgment that comes by failing to keep the law, every thief and every perjurer, these are those who are guilty under the law because they have not been cleansed, they have not been purged, they have not been washed, and their guilt remains.

Remember Jesus said to the Pharisees after he talked about those who were blind, they said, are we blind also? And he said, if you were blind, you would have no sin. If you acknowledged your blindness, if you came to God and said, I'm blind, give me sight, you would have no sin. But because you say we see, your sin remains.

You refuse to acknowledge, your sin remains. That's these people. And the flying scroll, the standard of God's judgment is going to come in and wipe everything out.

Makes beautiful sense, doesn't it? And it's talking about the judgment at the beginning of the millennial kingdom and probably again at the end. Well, that brings us to vision seven, which is the flying basket. And that's as far as we can make it for tonight.

But what is our application from this? A, God is present. Do you not know that you are the temple of the Holy Spirit? Do you not know that you are God's dwelling place? Do you not know that God wants the opportunity for those who have his words and keep them to come and make his home with us, to dwell in us and with us, for us to be a part of that tree that feeds the lampstand of God's glory by the work of the Holy Spirit, not by our might, not by our power. It's by God's spirit.

That's how it is done. And that oil that flows from the tree doesn't have to clench its teeth or exert itself. That oil is present intrinsically.

It's a part of God's design. And yet it flows and is used for illumination, representing, of course, the presence and power of God himself. So this is our goal.

We shouldn't be overly troubled when oppression, when difficulty, when hard circumstances

come up and we say, well, has the blessing of God left me? Am I doing something wrong? We need to do the necessary checks. If we are doing something wrong, fix it. But many times, just think of those two witnesses in Revelation.

God is doing what he does. He sometimes allows great difficulty and victory by the enemy for his own glory. He works it together for good.

And that momentary light affliction is working glory. God's law is going to be the standard of judgment, Old Testament and new. Are we measuring up or not? By the power of the spirit, producing the fruit of the spirit, we will pass with flying colors.

We will sail through. Sins that we commit are washed in the blood of the Lamb. Read Revelation chapter 5 and the song that the redeemed sing.

He has washed us in his own blood. And it's a strange metaphor when you think about blood stains on white cloth. And yet when we are washed in the blood of the Lamb, we come out snow white because it's not literal blood.

It is the spiritual application of the work of Christ on our behalf and the appropriation of it by faith. Many things to think about here. Wonderful truths to contemplate.

So we'll close here for tonight in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for revealing to us the sweep and the scope of your work in human history in its broad strokes and then the individual detailed operation of your power, your spirit, and your word in our individual personal lives, in our hearts, in the invisible secret chambers of the heart. We pray that as we reflect on what we've seen tonight that your Holy Spirit will illuminate it, help us to understand it, put it into practice both individually and collectively so that when the Lord Jesus returns, we will join in the shout and welcome him and be welcomed by him and brought before you to be presented faultless before the throne of grace.

We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.