

PostExilicProphets 21-08-05b

Let's resume our study now in Zechariah chapter 6. We are looking at the sign action here. This is a sign oracle. It's an oracle or a message from God that is acted out.

You remember we've seen this before. Remember Isaiah walking around almost naked in Jerusalem as a sign. Different prophets have had to act out with girdles and burying things and taking pieces of their beard and burning stuff and acting things out in sign fashion.

Now, if you remember our studies in Isaiah in particular, Jeremiah wearing the yoke around his neck, you remember that? Why does God use sign oracles where the prophet walks around with a physical yoke or buries a garment and then digs it up or cuts pieces out of his beard and then sets them on fire and divides some of it into one piece and some of it into another and does one thing? Why are these acted out messages given? Why isn't there a wonderfully well-coiffed and dressed prophet standing up on a small soapbox delivering sonorous words of God to the people? Why does God use sign oracles? Do you remember? It's because the people's hearts are so hard, they can't just listen to words and have it make a dent. Sign oracles are given to people who are absolutely incoherently unable to understand the word of the Lord directly. It has to be acted out.

This is one of the reasons Jesus had a healing ministry in his life on earth, because these miraculous acts signified, signified something to the people. This is why there were plagues in Egypt, to make it clear to the Egyptians and clear to the nascent, soon-to-be-born nation of Israel that God was in their midst. Do you remember when we studied these, when we studied Jesus' miracles, we studied the 9 plus 1 plagues in Egypt? These signs, when we studied Jeremiah, we studied Isaiah, and these sign actions, when a king would get ready to do something with an altar, and God would crumble the altar and wither his arm and so on.

This is a mode of visual communication when people are at the spiritual basement level. They're not even at ground level. They're in the basement.

So here's what's significant about this sign oracle. It's given for the same reason. It is unsurprising that they couldn't make heads or tails out of Zechariah's visions.

So God says, let me simplify this for you. You didn't understand the myrtle grove. You didn't understand the artisans.

You didn't understand the flying scroll. You didn't understand Joshua. You didn't understand Zerubbabel.

You didn't get any of those visions. The lady in the basket just completely left you confused. That basket thing is so amazingly packed with information.

Evil is in the basket, but the basket's not transparent. When you put the lid on, you can't see it,

but it's still there. One of these days, the lid is going to come off and it's going to pop out like a jack-in-the-box.

I don't know if they even make those anymore. It probably has the wrong name. There's probably something wrong with it.

It's probably the puppet in the container or some innocuous thing. Why are jack-in-the-boxes all male? Why don't we have a girl jumping out of the box? Why don't men jump out of cakes? I don't know what. I've lost touch with the whole movement here to make things right.

But the woman in the basket and going to the plain of Shinar, and there's going to be a house built, and the woman's not let out of the basket until the house is built. This whole construction project is going on, but there are two winged figures who keep this basket off the earth, off of the plain. That's where it's going to go, but she's not going to be let out until the house is finished.

Building a house is a process. Picture the millennial kingdom, Satan in the bottomless pit. His evil is going to be contained under a lead lid.

It's going to still exist, but it's going to be veiled. It's in a basket. You can't see it.

You don't know what it's doing. You don't know what it's planning. You don't know its machinations.

Can somebody talk out of a basket still? They can't. You can't see them, but you can hear them. This is not a soundproof basket.

It's just a basket the lady can't get out of until she's released to dwell in her house that is built where the Tower of Babel was built. Man by man's efforts, Satan by Satan's efforts, trying to supersede and replace God. It's happened all down through history.

It is happening right now as we speak. How worried should we be about it? God's got the lead lid. God's got the winged gals.

He'll take that basket where he wants it, when he wants it, and when God's time is right, why does God ever let Satan out of the bottomless pit at the end of the millennium? Why would he do that? Same reason he lets his faithful witnesses prophesy for a while and then be overcome and slain. Why does God allow good guys to be defeated? Why does God allow bad things to happen in my life? It is part of a larger plan that works together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose, to those who, in the last verse in chapter six here, diligently obey the voice of the Lord their God. Don't have to understand it.

It's not by might, not by power. It's by my spirit. Don't even have to fully understand the visions.

Just get the big picture. God's got this. He's in charge.

Satan is the most powerful, crafty creature ever created, and God's winning that match no matter what. We saw that in Isaiah chapter 14 in the first session. So, what is the big idea here? Let's start with this crown and the priest.

We've seen a hat on the priest before, didn't we? In vision form, when Joshua's got the dirty robes and Satan is at his side accusing him, when the dirty robes leave, so does Satan. Satan's argument, Satan's opportunity to accuse leaves when the dirty robes leave and Joshua is dressed in the new clean garments. You remember that back in chapter two.

Actually, it's chapter three. Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. The Lord rebuke you, Satan.

The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you. This is a brand plucked from the fire. Interesting thing about a brand plucked from the fire.

If you've got a bunch of wood in a fire, what's your purpose for that wood? I'm not heating it up. I'm not trying to render it more picturesque. I put things in a fire.

I pile things and set them on fire because I want them destroyed. They're going to turn into smoke and heat and ash. If you pluck a brand from the fire, why would you do that? If I start to burn a thing and now I'm taking something out of the fire, why would I do that? Well, did you ever look in the fire and see something that wasn't supposed to be burned? Did you ever have a use for taking a stick? And this really applies in the ancient world and all the way up until a couple hundred years ago.

You keep a fire going. You've got coals. You bank a fire.

And if you want to carry fire from one place to another, how do you do that? You've either got to put some coals in a shovel, and that's a long-term thing. They knew how to bank. They knew how to travel with coals.

They could go a great distance with coals and keep them alive with a limited amount of oxygen and then start a new fire with coals. So carrying coals is a long-term transportation of fire. What do you do with a stick that's on fire and you pull it out of the fire? What are you going to do with that typically? I'm going to go light another fire, right? This one has been in a judgment of fire.

It is going to be plucked from the fire. And what are you going to do with it? I'm going to light another fire with a different kind of situation. This brand that has been in or part of a judgment over here is going to be plucked out and used to move that fire in the short term to a new thing.

So why would Joshua be a brand plucked from the fire? The dirty robes, bearing those dirty robes, enduring the shame and the disqualification for his office that those robes entail, that is removed and Satan as the accuser is also removed. And the justification is this is a brand plucked from the fire. He was in the fire.

He's endured the fire. Now I've taken him out of the fire because he doesn't deserve to be fully consumed by this judgment. I'm going to use him to start a new fire.

That's what I get out of it. Is this not a brand plucked from the fire? These visions in one way or another, all direct our attention back to the coming priest King for Israel, who is in fact the Savior for Israel. You shall call his name Joshua, Yeshua.

Why? What did Gabriel tell Joseph and Mary? You will call his name Jesus. Why? He will save his people from their sin when they are delivered from their sin. What has Satan got to argue with? Nothing.

Now the issue is not sin and failure. What is the issue? Do you hearken to the voice of the Lord? This is why I've said many times the issue for Israel in the Millennial Kingdom is not sin, and it's not even faith. What's the issue? Obedience.

Faith is what you can't see. You've got a visible throne of David with visible kings and the visible Lord Jesus. You've got the visible presence of God on earth, the visible fulfillment of the Old Testament promises.

What's to faith for in the future? You've got some opportunities in the kingdom of the Father, but basically everything that God has said and promised, and the Messiah is on earth visible. The issue in daily life in the Millennium is not do you trust God, it's do you obey? What's the end of Zechariah chapter 6 say? If you diligently obey. You've got the spirit, you've got the visible word, you've got the fulfillment of all of God's promises.

It's not a matter of faith, it's a matter of obedience, and this is the basis of the sheep and goats judgment. What is the basis of that sheep and goats judgment? What did you do when I was hungry? Did you feed me? When I was naked, did you clothe me? When I was sick and in prison, did you visit me? Because if you've done it to the least of these, my brethren, you've done it unto me. What does the law command for those who are your brother, who is less fortunate, the one who needs food, the one who needs clothing, the one who needs encouragement.

And if you are hard hearted, that lack of love, that lack of obedience directed toward your fellow brother is a reflection of how you feel about God himself, the way you treat somebody, and those two things are inextricably linked. So brand plucked from the fire, there is going to be a fresh judgment, and those black and white horse drawn chariots have not arrived in the sides of the north until the end of the millennial kingdom. When that dappled horse that has gone to the south and is looking at the kingdom, that's the final evaluation.

When that's done, judgment in the sides of the north. It's black and white. You either are or you aren't qualified for God's kingdom, God's new Jerusalem, or are you out amongst the nations waiting for a creaking wagon with leaves from the tree of life to come out there for the healing? Heard some interesting ideas and questions about that last time.

That was an interesting thought. I'm still percolating. Can you calculate how long that's going to

take based on the value of a talent and so on? But here's the thing.

In the center of this vision, the command to crown Joshua, it centers on taking silver and gold and making a crown. What we saw back in chapter three was Zechariah pointing out, where's his hat? He's got the clean robes, but he doesn't have the priestly hat, the priestly crown. What kind of crown does the priest wear? It's a turban.

It's made of the same material as his white garment. It's a cloth hat, so to speak. And Joshua has it there.

Here, the emphasis, this is something new. Having seen all eight visions centering on the Joshua Zerubbabel identity, things about Joshua, things about Zerubbabel. Now we come to this summary concluding sign oracle where these guys are to physically travel to the house, take physical silver, physical gold.

That is, are the spoils. It reminds you of the spoils that Israel brought out of Egypt and carried out of captivity. These guys are mentioned as having come from captivity, coming from Babylon, take the silver and gold that they bring and construct this elaborate crown.

This is a kingly crown. This is the crown for a guy sitting on a throne, not a priest officiating before the most high God and serving as an intermediary. That is a white turban.

This is a gold and silver crown. So this same Joshua that was seen in vision form, wearing the priestly turban, is now to be actually crowned with a gold and silver crown. Now it's a sign oracle.

We said this is for the spiritually obtuse, those who aren't listening to the word of the Lord and it's got to be pantomimed. It's got to be acted out on their behalf. So onlookers who hear about this or see it, then I suspect that this was something of a public performance.

This is performance prophecy. So they go to the house of Josiah. Now, every word is important.

Why are we giving these guys names? Well, what do they mean? That's always a good place to start. Heldi, the first guy, his name comes from the verb, it's an unused word in Hebrew, cheled, C-H-E-L-E-D, and it means mole. It means weasel.

So would somebody look down in the newborn swaddling clothes of their son and say, let's call him weasel. What does this actually probably mean? Well, the verb has the idea also of a hollow or a tunnel and weasels and moles. The derivatives of this root are used talking about, you know, animals that you can't eat like bats and moles and mice and things like that.

But they are tunnelers. They work beneath the surface. They do their work below ground.

They are not seen. So Heldi, the idea is maybe he's, it could mean tunneler, it could mean something below the surface. A tunnel is something that's done below the surface.

So it could mean something hidden, something that's not, you know, it's buried. It's in a hole in the ground. That's where moles and weasels were found is in caves and holes in the ground.

It puts me in mind of the latter part of Hebrews chapter 11, where these faithful men, the roster of the faithful, it says they lived in caves and holes in the ground. They were unappreciated. Their faith and their obedience went unnoticed and unrecognized and even vilified.

They were driven out from normal places. So if I had, this is an educated guess. Nobody knows.

I can't find anybody who even talks about these names. Nobody even hazards a guess. But I think this is the unsung hero, the hero of the faith that's not seen and not heard.

They lived in caves and holes in the ground, far from humanity. It's the result of oppression. It's the result of rejection.

And they are willing to live there because they've got their eyes on that city whose founder and builder is God. Just like earlier in Hebrews, that's why Abraham lived in tents. Well, some of these guys don't even have a tent.

You're not even, you know, Abraham had tents because he was wealthy. If you're not wealthy enough for a tent, where do you live? You find a cave. You find a hole in the ground.

That's where you take shelter. Well, Heldai here, it's a hard CH in Hebrew. It comes across as Heldai.

He's an unsung hero. He's a hole dweller. And he wasn't recognized.

You don't find him in the lists of returnees and all of that. But what did he do? He knew they were going to need resources to complete the worship of God. And he brought some of these resources with him.

And so he's got some gold and he's got some silver. And he is going to be willing to contribute it to this sign oracle. This is not even furniture for the temple under construction.

He's not going to be able to put his name on it. He can't put a plaque on the pew and say, Heldai paid for this seat. This is the memorial wing of the antechambers of the temple.

Heldai paid for it. He's going to bring gold and silver because Zechariah says, God has told me we need to act out this message. Heldai is going to say, okay, fine.

Tell me where and when I'll be there. Show up at Josiah's house tomorrow morning. Heldai does it.

This is the guy's only mentioned in scripture. And it's for something obscure, but he does it because he's not in it for the fame. He's not in it for recognition.

He's like those who lived in caves and holes in the ground. That's his name. His name is Tunnel Man.

Can't see him unless he comes out. So that's the first guy. The second one is Tobiah or Tobijah.

Now you can parse this name for yourself. You know the last part, J-A-H. What is that? That's the divine name, Yahweh.

That's God's covenant name with his people. This is not El or Elohim. This is the name that was revealed.

This is the I am name. When the people ask Moses, who sent you and whose name do you come? You tell them, I am sent you. Jesus claims this name in the New Testament.

I am. That's the Yah part. The first part, T-O-B.

What does that remind you of? If I turn the B into a V, what is that? Tov. Boker Tov. Good morning.

Lila Tov. Good evening. Tov means good.

And to get from Tov to Yah, you need a little I in there. Tov Yah. So, what does it mean? God is good.

I can even say it in Swahili. Mungu Yumwe Ma. I learned it in summer camp.

We had a wonderful African missionary who came and taught us a Swahili song. We had an English song of it. Oh, God is good.

God is good. God is good to me. He said, this is how you sing it in Swahili.

Mungu Yumwe Ma. Yumwe Ma Kwangu. God is good to me.

This is Tov Yah. God is good. The third guy is Jediah.

What's the last part of that name? Same thing as Tov Yah. This is Jed Yah. The first part of that basically comes from a verb that means to lay a foundation, to establish, to found something.

We talked about Abraham looking for a city whose founder and builder is God. Well, this is the found idea, to establish, to lay a foundation for something. So, God is good.

God is the one who lays the foundation. He is the bedrock. The Lord Jesus is the rock we build our house on and the storm comes and it doesn't wash away.

So, you've got someone who is in an obscure place under the ground. God is good. God is going to establish.

And whose house are we supposed to go to? Well, this is the house of Josiah. This is the house

of Josiah. So, his name is, of course, it's the same as the king of Israel by that name.

And whom Jehovah heals, Yahweh heals, is the meaning. So, the Lord heals. Remember, Rapha, Jehovah, the God who heals us, that's another Hebrew word that means the same thing.

So, you've got this guy living in a hole in the ground. What is God going to do? God is good. God is going to establish and God is going to heal.

That's what these four names mean. And remember that Josiah is the son of Zephaniah. You know the end of that is Yah again.

All of these names end in God's divine covenant name. And the Zephan part, the first part of that, Zephaniah, Zephan is to treasure, to value. So, here's Keldi who leads the parade here.

This is us without God. Caves and holes in the ground. You got nothing.

You don't even have a tent, much less a city. You've got no foundation. Instead of being on the surface of the ground, you're in a hole in the ground.

You're just taking shelter in a cave. Remember Psalm 91, dwelling in the shadow of the Almighty and so on. So, you take refuge in the cleft of the rock, in the shelter.

God does everything else. God is good. So, God establishes, God heals, and God treasures those who come to Him.

All of these are words of encouragement, comforting words, like we saw earlier in the vision. And what is the objective? What are all of these men associated with? They're associated with bringing the material and constructing the crown. Now, why doesn't the crown come floating down out of heaven? Why doesn't an angel deliver this crown? Why doesn't Joshua make his own crown? You could argue theologically that any of these things might have symbolic value.

But these guys brought the gold and silver out of captivity. And it sounds as though there's been speculation that maybe Josiah was a metal worker. And so, they bring the materials to Josiah's house so that he can construct the crown.

You know, you all together make this crown and then go find Joshua and put it on. But it's interesting to me that these individuals make the crown and hands don't reach down out of heaven and crown Yeshua as king. The people do.

What did Jesus say? How soon is Israel going to see him again? You're not going to see me again until you do what? Until you say from the heart, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. The people of Israel are going to acknowledge the first time he came unto his own and his own received him not. The next time, they will recognize him as king.

They will acknowledge him as king. They will, in effect, crown him with this multi-ringed crown. This is, I think, where you get the idea of crowning him with many crowns.

This is a multifaceted crown. Why is it both gold and silver? Two different materials? Why isn't it just a crown of gold? Because it represents kingship, not only over the immediate kingdom, but also rulership over the world. That's what I think it means.

Gold and silver. Probably encrusted with precious stones, although they are not mentioned. But you have to think that treasure that was brought back from Babylon included all of these materials.

But the gold and silver form the crown. The adornment could be any number of things, particularly gemstones and such. But they are to make it and they are to crown him.

And these are those who recognize God's goodness, God's foundation. And remember, Zerubbabel is associated with the foundation and with God's healing and restoring and treasuring the people who are obedient, those who listen to his word and heed it. So there's this collection of individuals acting this out.

And when the story is told in the streets, they're going to mention these names. And these names are like Native American names here. I was telling Patty I passed a sign on the way back from up north over at Spavinaw, and somebody is running for tribal council for the Cherokee Nation in which we live, and his name is Shotpouch.

His last name is Shotpouch. Six-killer, ten-killer, man-killer. The names in the Native American community mean things.

And as soon as you hear them, you say, well, I know what that means. The funniest one that I know is my good friend over in Salina, Robert Backward. I thought it must be backwood or blackwood or when the first time I heard it on the phone.

No, it's backward. And he gave me the Cherokee equivalent, which is usinena in Cherokee. But you translate usinena into English, and it's backward.

And I said, so what does that literally mean in Cherokee? And he got up out of his chair, and he just started walking backward. He wasn't quite moonwalking, but it was close. And he's older than me, so it was really funny.

It made us both smile because he said usinena in Cherokee means I'm walking backward. But they mean things. These names had significance like that, like Shotpouch or man-killer or yellow tail or whatever.

They had meaning. And so when people would tell the story, what's going on at the house of Josiah? What's going on at the house of the Lord heals? And here you go. Here's this play acting because Joshua and listen, this was politically incorrect.

This was theologically incorrect. It was lawfully incorrect. Priests such as Joshua, who is a Levite, don't get crowned with metal crowns and then sit on a throne.

But God says here, he shall be a priest on his throne in verse 13. So what does this mean? God is going to do a new thing. There is going to be a priest sitting on a throne with a crown of rulership, not a white turban of priesthood.

So for everything to work out, what does this mean? Well, since Levites cannot sit on the throne of Israel, this, anybody who sits on the throne of Israel must be according to the word of God from what tribe? The tribe of Judah. So if he is also a priest, is he a Levitical priest? Evidently not because Levites can't sit on a throne. But is there such a thing as a priest sitting on a throne anywhere in the word of God? Like maybe the book of Genesis, like maybe somebody that Abraham visited after he defeated the five kings and went and shared bread and wine with a guy named Melchizedek, king of righteousness, priest of the Most High God, king of righteousness, priest of the Most High God.

Does the Bible tell you that there can be such a thing as a king priest? Yes. And the way we picture this is we bring a guy named Yeshua in here who is a priest, but we crown him with human hands to indicate that God is going to do something new and then deliver this oracle. Isn't it wonderful that when we are curious, when we are hungry for manna that feeds our souls, nourishes our spiritual strength, gives the Holy Spirit something with which to renew us, equip us and enable us, it's here.

Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord. It's true for the Old Testament people. They're going to find their fulfillment in the millennial kingdom.

It is true for the New Testament people, which is us. It is true now. I don't have to understand everything.

I don't have to know everything. I just have to know whom I have believed and be persuaded that He is able and be so persuaded and have belief of such an extent in this age that I will diligently obey the voice of the Lord my God. If I am diligent to obey, if I ask and seek and knock, God will give me what I need to know when I need to know it.

God will reveal to us His purposes centering on the Lord Jesus Christ, our priest, our Redeemer, the King to Israel, ultimately the Lamb seated on the throne in the kingdom of the Father, where we hope to not only dwell and live, not just to see it, but to enter it and to live in it and to be a part of it. And that's a wonderful, bright hope. So this command to crown Joshua goes to the center of that chiastic collection of eight visions and brings it into the real world.

These are real guys with real silver and gold, laying a real crown on a real guy. And with this oracle, he shall be a priest on his throne and the council of peace shall be between them both, not between Zerubbabel and Joshua, but between the government of man and the government of God. God is not going to look down and say, I don't like the fact that these people are at peace.

I don't like the fact that my people claim my name, but their heart's not in it. There will be a

council of peace between earthly government and heavenly government. Priest function is reconciliation and mediatorship between heaven and earth.

Kingly function is rulership on earth. There will be a council of peace between them both. God won't have to come in and overcome nations on the earth, not until Satan is released, not until the lead lid comes off the basket and evil pops out in the plane of Shinar.

But during the reign of this king priest, there is a council of peace between these two functions, these two identities, and it's in the person of Jesus Christ. What an amazing Old Testament testimony to the Savior that we know and love and appreciate and have so much more information about in hindsight and in the forward progress of God's unfolding revelation than they did. But this is a preview of good things to come, and it was designed to encourage those people who would diligently obey the voice of the Lord.

Now, why does he say, you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me and this shall come to pass. If this shall come to pass, if what will come to pass, the council of peace living in a kingdom where God is not coming in for judgment, as he has recently done, where this king is going to rule and you're going to receive the benefits of association and of the function and exercise of authority, both heavenly and earthly of this king priest, this will come to pass for you if you diligently heed. For whom is this going to be a bad deal when Jesus is on the throne of his father, David, ruling the nations with a rod of iron? Who's going to be in bad shape and not enjoy the council of peace? Those who do not diligently listen and hearken and obey.

So this once again is the dappled horse. This is going to polarize people. Magnets only got two poles.

It doesn't have three. It's either the North pole or the South pole. And you are either attracted to God's North pole or you are repelled because you are a South pole.

Actually like poles repel, don't they? So you want to be the hole in the ground that God's going to fill and make a foundation and build on and not go the opposite direction. People will be polarized by the Lord Jesus in his second advent, just as they were in the first advent when he said, I have not come to bring peace, but a sword to divide households, to separate mothers and daughters and fathers and sons and all of these different members of the household. It forces people to choose.

You're either white or you're black. That's what's going to happen in the millennial kingdom. And that black and white judgment will happen in the sides of the North at the end.

He is the King priest. So which side do you fall on? And when we put our faith in Jesus Christ, when we trust him, when we commit our current lives and our future destiny to him, that's peace. Don't have to worry.

It's not by might nor by power. I don't have to worry about my strength, my abilities. I put all of that in Jesus hands and through him come to the father.

God's got this. If God be for us, who can be against us? Why should I fear what man can do unto me? God has made every provision. He, I love that thing where David says, you know, he remembers our frame.

God knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust. His expectations are not high.

We just need to choose. We just need to repose our faith in him. He knows we're made out of mud.

We are of the dust and unto dust we shall return. But when it comes to our spiritual life, he's made every provision. It is just a matter of choosing.

It is a matter of deciding. It is a matter of diligently obeying. God will handle everything else just as he did with our salvation.

So he will with our life here and in the ages to come. Let's close here in a word of prayer. We're going to pick up a chapter seven next time.

Father, thank you for your grace, your faithfulness. Thank you for your son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the bodily expression of your love toward us. We pray that as we reflect on these things that the Holy Spirit will use them to encourage and motivate us, help us to see clearly the path that we should follow, that narrow path that leads to the straight gate of life.

And as a result, we will reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus and your own glory, both now and in those times to come. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.