

PostExilicProphets 21-09-09b

Let's resume our study now, we're in Zechariah chapter nine, looking at this very fascinating change of pace, change of style, change of delivery, but not a change of subject. The same theme that was introduced in the eight visions where God is aware of what's going on in the world and God is aware of the status of his people is still quite in the foreground, but the means of making that point has radically changed. So God gives Zechariah this burden that goes back into history.

We are encouraged even in the modern day to think about history and the lessons of history in looking at the forward movement of socialism in this country, recognizing its roots all the way back and its failures in a couple of dozen countries in the last few hundred years, every place socialism has been tried, it has failed, and not just failed a little, it has failed catastrophically, destructively, hopelessly, and yet there are people who think, well, they just didn't do it right, I'll do it right this time. And you have the New Deal under FDR and the Green New Deal that they're trying to push now and the printing of unlimited quantities of money has already been tried in the past and it has crashed every economy that tried it, but if you don't learn from history, you're doomed to repeat it. And that's what many in our leadership are currently doing, just blinding themselves to reality.

There is a narrative that is appealing and I will reject your reality and substitute my own. And so in the same way, people in Israel are beginning to repeat the mistakes their fathers made. We saw this in the earlier part of the book and God says, look, let me try giving you some history.

Do you remember what the source of victory was over the Philistines? And you say, well, David, but who enabled David? Who blessed David with victory? How did David accomplish his great work as King in Israel? Unlike Saul, he did it the same way he defeated Goliath and it was in God's strength, with God's guidance, with God's blessing. And ultimately the destruction of the nations that surround Israel, the threat, both internal and external is going to be dealt with by God. Any commentary on this portion of Zechariah, we'll talk about Tyre in verse three and say, well, this is a prediction of Alexander the Great.

He's going to come along and Tyre has resisted all previous attacks. They're impregnable. They've got their city sitting out there with a great gulf fixed between it and the shore.

So they'll never be defeated. And then of course, Alexander does. And once he builds his great ramp there and lays siege to the city and takes it and then burns it with fire.

And they say, well, that's what God said here. Tyre built herself a tower, heaped up silver like the dust. But take a look at Tyre.

Keep your finger here and turn back to Ezekiel chapter 28. One of the most recent prophetic revelations in the minds of Zechariah's audience, his original audience. When did Ezekiel prophesy? We've been through Ezekiel.

Where is the river Kabar? It's in Babylon. And Ezekiel delivers and gives out with these prophecies and the word of the Lord that came to him. These proclamations in Ezekiel came in Babylon.

Take a look at the beginning of chapter 28. Proclamation against the King of Tyre. The word of the Lord came to me again, saying, son of man, say to the Prince of Tyre, thus says the Lord God.

Because your heart is lifted up and you say, I am a God. I sit in the seat of God's in the midst of the seas. Yet you are a man and not a God.

Though you set your heart as the heart of a God. Notice, using Tyre with its situation in the sea to represent Satan as in the midst of the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, the home of Leviathan and so on. It's an apt metaphor.

And so is God talking about the Prince of Tyre? Yes, he is. But is he talking in a larger sense, really formally about the adversary? And if you remember, when we went through Ezekiel, it's not just this woe song that is about Satan. All of these entities address different aspects of the satanic plan and program.

This one certainly most directly. But, and you remember 28 very well. We refer to it quite often.

The lifting up of Satan's heart and being the guardian cherub that covers and becoming filled with violence and all of his beauty and being perfect until the day that iniquity was found in him. But look at the preceding chapter. Turn back to Ezekiel 27, far less often visited.

Go back even further to chapter 26. Chapter 26, chapter 27, chapter 28. Three entire chapters in Ezekiel dedicated to Tyre.

Came to pass, this is 26 of Ezekiel, in the 11th month, the 11th year on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me saying, son of man, because Tyre has said against Jerusalem, aha, she is broken who was the gateway of the peoples. Now she has turned over to me. I shall be filled.

She has laid waste. And that sets the tone for the whole chapter. Because Tyre had ambitions against Jerusalem, taking advantage of the judgment of Jerusalem, Tyre is going to be judged.

And this was an immediate prediction of what Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian army is going to do to Tyre. You come to verse 19 of Ezekiel 26. Thus says the Lord God, when I make you a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited, when I bring the deep upon you and great waters cover you, then I will bring you down with those who descend into the pit to the people of old.

And I will make you dwell in the lowest part of the earth in places desolate from antiquity with those who go down to the pit so that you may never be inhabited. And I shall establish glory in

the land of the living. I will make you a terror and you shall be no more.

Though you are sought for, you will never be found again, says the Lord God. This is directed at first blush at Tyre, but it is really talking about Satan and the satanic program. And where is Satan gonna be all during the millennial kingdom? Where is he locked up? Not in the lake of fire, but in the bottomless pit.

The pit. Chapter 27, the word of the Lord came again to me, saying, son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyre and say to Tyre, you who are situated at the entrance of the sea, merchant of the peoples on many coastlands, thus says the Lord God. Oh Tyre, you have said, I am perfect in beauty.

Your borders are in the midst of the seas. Remember Damascus, sitting at rest in the land of Hadrach. I keep getting Hamath and Hadrach mixed in my mind.

In the land of Hadrach, Hadrach, Hadrach, Meshach and Abednego. It's in the midst of that land. Here, your border is in the midst of the seas.

You're surrounded by that, which protects you and supports you. Your builders have perfected your beauty. They made all your planks of fir trees from Sinir.

They took cedar from Lebanon to make you a mast. Oaks from Bashan, they made your oars. Company of Asherites have inlaid your planks.

These were great craftsmen. Ivory from the coast of Cyprus, fine embroidered linen from Egypt. Notice all of these surrounding nations have contributed their skills and their materials to the greatness of Tyre.

It has amalgamated and assembled all of these things. Inhabitants of Sidon and Arvad were your oarsmen. Your wise men, O Tyre, were in you.

Notice, Tyre over and over again is associated with wisdom and beauty. Wisdom, beauty, and wealth. Wisdom, beauty, and wealth.

Then in verse 10, those from Persia, Lydia, and Libya were in your army as men of war. They hung shield and helmet in you. They gave splendor to you, et cetera.

Goes on to talk about Tarshish in verse 12. Verse 13, Javan, Tubal, and Meshach were your traders. Bartered human lives in vessels of bronze for your merchandise.

Human lives for your merchandise. You think about sweat shop labor. You think about the things that are done, all of the outcry for human rights and civil decent treatment in other countries with which we trade and how that is compromised and ignored in many cases when there is profit to be made.

Togarmah in verse 14, Dedan in verse 15, Syria in verse 16, Judah and the land of Israel are your

traders in verse 17. Traded for your merchandise, wheat of minneth, millet, honey, oil, and balm. Damascus is your merchant.

Abundance of goods you made because of your many luxury items. There's wine and white wool. Dan and Javan paid for your wares.

You get the idea that Tyre is much like the Scarlet Harlot, that the merchandisers stand afar off and bewail its destruction, its symbolic value here. And over and over, all of these different nations, these many nations and many cities and many regions are mentioned as contributing. Tyre profits from them in trade, avails itself of their materials.

These were your merchants, verse 24. We're in Ezekiel 27, 24. These were your merchants in choice items, purple clothes, embroidered garments, chests of multicolored apparel, sturdy woven cords, which were in your marketplace.

The ships of Tarshish were carriers of your merchandise. You were filled and very glorious in the midst of the seas. Your oarsmen brought you into many waters, but the east wind broke you in the midst of the seas.

Your riches, wares, and merchandise, your mariners and pilots, your caulkers and merchandisers, all your men of war who are in you and the entire company which is in your midst will fall into the midst of the seas in the day of your ruin. The common land will shake at the sound of the cry of your pilots. All who handle the oar, the mariners, the pilots of the sea will come down from their ships and stand on the shore.

They will make their voices heard because of you. They will cry bitterly and cast dust on their heads. They will roll about in ashes, shave themselves completely bald because of you, gird themselves with sackcloth and weep for you with bitterness of heart and bitter wailing.

Now, you can think about Tyre. You can think about the Scarlet Harlot. You can think about destruction, people weeping and wailing at the loss of their profitable trade and their business and so on, but don't get lost in the analogy.

Don't get lost in the metaphor. What does Tyre represent? Who is controlling all of these subsidiary nations and regions and cities? Who's got their thumb on these and who is making the most and leveraging its Tyre, which represents Satan and the kingdom of darkness. We have been transferred out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the son of his love.

So when people are wailing at the loss of Tyre, is this simple materialistic disappointment? What's going to happen all during the millennial kingdom while the Prince of Tyre is in the pit? Those who liked the old ways, those who yearn for the days when they were not subject to the Davidic King, to the rule of Jesus Christ, are going to chafe and long for the days when there was a kingdom of darkness because men love darkness rather than light when their deeds are evil, right? So this temporary embarrassment of a thousand years is only going to further solidify the hardness of heart and the rejection and the necessity to take overt rebellious action

that God is going to unleash when he lets Satan out of the pit for the Gog Magog rebellion. Tyre equals the principality of Satan. It's his capital.

It represents him. The Prince of Tyre represents him in the next chapter. The wares that are sent out by sea, and of course you can see earlier parallels in the actual fate of Tyre.

You can see parallels in the actual fate of this country. As we mentioned before, looking at Revelation chapter 17, verse 34, you are of 27 of Ezekiel. Ezekiel 27, 34.

You are broken by the seas and the depth of the waters. Your merchandise and the entire company will fall in your midst. All the inhabitants of the isles will be astonished at you.

Their kings will be greatly afraid. Notice the observing kings are suddenly struck with fear because the big cheese on whom they depended has been broken. And it's only a matter of time before they're rolled up.

The merchants among the people will hiss at you. You'll become a horror and be no more forever. Then in the third chapter in Ezekiel about Tyre, there's a reason why the prophecy in Zechariah leads off with Tyre.

Son of man, say to the Prince of Tyre, thus says the Lord God, because your heart is lifted up and you say, I am a God. I sit in the seat of God's in the midst of the seas. You're a man and not a God, though you set your heart as the heart of a God.

Many times scripture refers to angels as men. Jacob wrestles with a man until dawn. Abraham saw three men approaching, but they are angels.

And they're referred to as angels later in the story of Lot. And one of them is the Lord God himself in a human form. So you are a man and not a God.

You're a not God individual. And he may be a super man, but he is an individual. He is not God.

Notice you are wiser than Daniel. No secret can be hidden from you. Wisdom, beauty, and wealth associated with Tyre and associated with its leader, its King, its Prince.

With your wisdom and your understanding, you have gained riches, gathered gold and silver into your treasuries. Remember in chapter nine, it's gonna talk about Tyre making silver like dust and gold like trash in the streets. It's so common.

There's so much of it. By your great wisdom and trade, you have increased your riches. Your heart is lifted up because of your riches.

I wanna take a moment here to point out that if you have ever been in a discussion with someone who is agnostic or atheistic, and they begin to talk about how God is a myth to help uninformed people explain where things came from. And now science has explained where spiders came from and where birds came from and where human beings came from. Science

has explained where planet earth came from and where the solar system came from, where the galaxy came from, where the universe itself came from.

Science with its great wisdom has figured all of this out. And we know that these scientific explanations are valid. Why? Because science works.

Airplanes fly, cell phones communicate, microwaves heat water and cook food, cars go down the highway, internal combustion, all of the amenities, all of the advances, all of the medical and quality of life advances that have been made in the last few hundred years. It's the wisdom of science. It's the knowledge of science.

There is an arrogance in this that says, man by man's efforts is going to build the tower to the stars. We've already screwed up this planet. Now we're gonna get in spaceships and go elsewhere and screw those places up.

We're gonna go to Mars and we're gonna go to the moon and we're gonna colonize the moons of Jupiter and Saturn. And we're gonna, you look at the planet, we're like termites. You look at the untold billions of square miles of concrete that have permanently disfigured the planet.

All of our hives, all of our production, all of our trash buried in the ground, floating in the sea. I saw a weird term and I looked it up and discovered that there are giant floating islands of trash in the sea. They're huge.

And there's nothing that can be done about them. They're too big. They can't haul them away.

They can't sink them. It's made up of plastic and all kinds of detritus of human manufacture. They say, well, eventually plastic in the sun, it breaks down.

But what they discovered now is in the environment, there are microbeads. If you want an interesting read, Google plastic microbeads. They are everywhere and they are unremovable.

They are indestructible and they are wrecking the environment. So even when you think, well, biodegradable plastic, what a great idea. It degrades down to pebble size and then it's everywhere.

It's in the intestinal tracts of animals. You just can't believe the nightmare destruction that this stuff is causing. These floating islands of trash, the stuff getting into groundwater, the poison.

You know that I am not an environmental activist, but anybody with two eyes in their head can see that the human presence has forever and negatively changed the planet. The normal ecosystem, everything is organic. You can't tell that mastodons roamed this ground or any number of other animals, the buffalo and the rest of it.

The trees and the animals and the things that they built, their nests, their shelters, everything goes back to nature. It's a wonderful system that God designed where everything recycles. It's 100% recycling.

It's a few bones that turn into stone, but even that is geological. We make stuff that never goes away. It's poisonous.

It radiates, it infiltrates, it screws up and forever disfigures and scars the planet. And we're just happy as clams. We've done it here.

We want to go do it in other places. We are shot through with corruption and the reason the earth groans, creation groans, waiting for redemption is because of us. Our just going through life, we kill countless things.

We kill animals wantonly. So, and superfluously, you know, predators kill so that they can eat and feed their young. We kill because we're putting in a mall.

By your great wisdom, verse five of Ezekiel 28, you have increased your riches and your heart is lifted up because of your riches. Our hearts as human beings is lifted up because they like to picture, well, the universe is dumb and stupid and doesn't know anything, but we as human beings have raised our consciousness and looked around the universe is now self-aware because of us. We are the brain and the eyes of the universe.

It's so arrogant. You read people that write this way. We're unique, we're special, we are everything Carl Sagan thought of and more.

But look at what the Lord God says in verse six. Because you have set your heart as the heart of a God. What does James 4.6 say? God resists the proud.

God gives grace to the humble. We get grace when we acknowledge how messed up we are, that we are sinful, that we're broken and corrupt and incapable of anything that is intrinsically good. Because you've set your heart as the heart of a God, behold, therefore, I will bring strangers against you, the most terrible of the nations.

They shall draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom and defile your splendor. These nations, and the reason you have to read the first two chapters ahead of this is because these are the nations that are your fans. They're gonna bemoan your loss even while they're contributing to your destruction.

They will draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom and defile your splendor. They will throw you down into the pit and you shall die the death of the slain in the midst of the seas. This is one of the reasons I think that there is a possibility that the lake of fire is a permanent destruction and loss of all conscious life at the point that anything gets thrown into it.

It is a lake of fire. Its smoke is going to ascend, but I think what gets thrown into there is eternally destroyed. This says, you shall die the death of the slain in the midst of the seas.

Will you still say before him who slays you, I am a God? You shall be a man and not a God in the hand of him who slays you. We, by living a life of faith, laying hold of righteousness by faith,

reflecting the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ are a part of the strategic defeat and the tactical defeat of Satan. Our choices for God, trusting him, believing him, resting in his promise, defeats Satan.

We effectively seal his fate by proving that his case is false. That free will is not an inevitable factor that will cause there to be those who reject God. There can be free will individuals who start out corrupt and fallen, who will choose for God, just as he uncorrupted and unfallen chose against God.

Moreover, the word of the Lord came to me saying, son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre and say to him, thus says the Lord God, you were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom, perfect in beauty. Notice the appeal that this individual made in the garden to Eve was the fruit is desirable for what? It's beautiful to look upon and desirable to make one wise. Beauty and wisdom, beauty and wisdom.

You were in Eden, the garden of God. Every precious stone was your covering. The sardius, topaz, and diamond barrel, onyx, jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold.

The work of admitting and denying, that's what that last part of verse 13 actually says. Your work, the timbrels and pipes, this is the guardian of the throne room, admitting some, denying access to others, was prepared for you on the day you were created. He was created and designed for the purpose of being God's highest and best.

Second only to God himself. You were the anointed cherub who covers, who is a shield for the glory of God in his throne room. I established you.

You were on the holy mountain of God. You walked back and forth in the midst of the fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created until iniquity was found in you.

And he created that iniquity of his own free choice. When we are guilty of iniquity, we do it of our own free will. By the abundance of your trading, you became filled with violence within and you sinned, began working deals, began brokering influence.

This is the same thing that the judges in Genesis six were doing, the angelic judges that intermarried, they traded influence with the men whose daughters they then married. And this would elevate these guys and give them status and standing and give them advantages when they had a case in court and so on. Therefore, I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God.

And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty. You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.

I cast you to the ground. I laid you before kings that they might gaze at you. Laid you before kings, the kings of the earth are gonna see Satan laid low, see him in prison in the pit for a

thousand years.

The question is, will they learn the lesson? Will they observe and learn? Will we observe and learn? What happens when we start over estimating our own wisdom? You defile your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading. This is work in the horizontal plane. This is like insider trading.

This is like corruption in business. It's like Enron. Therefore, I brought fire from your midst.

It devoured you and I turned you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you. All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you. You have become a horror and shall be no more.

La'olam, you shall be no more. Then it goes on to talk about Sidon. Son of man, set your face towards Sidon, prophesy against her and say, with us says the Lord God, I am against you, O Sidon.

I will be glorified in your midst and they shall know that I am the Lord when I execute judgments in her and am hallowed in her. I will send pestilence upon her, blood in her streets. The wounded shall be judged in her midst by the sword against her on every side.

Then they shall know that I am the Lord. Notice the difference in the fate of Sidon vis-a-vis Tyre. Tyre is utterly destroyed, utterly brought low, made no more, sunk into the midst of the sea, perishes by the sword of the nations.

But in Sidon, God is going to be hallowed in her and they will know that I am the Lord. There shall no longer be a pricking briar or a painful thorn for the house of Israel from among all who are around them who despise them. Then they shall know that I am the Lord God.

It goes on to talk about Israel's future blessing. Well, all of this impinges on our understanding because this prophecy was in existence. It had been delivered just a relatively few decades before the time of Zechariah.

This is, the ink is hardly dry on the prophecies of Ezekiel. So when Zechariah mentions Tyre in his prophecy, you can't help but think back. There are a big section.

There's a big section in Ezekiel about Tyre. So now we come back to chapter nine. The burden of the word of the Lord against Hadrach and Damascus, also Hamath, which borders on it, and Tyre and Sidon, though they are very wise.

And it just takes you back to the repeated references to wisdom and to Tyre and Sidon in Ezekiel. Tyre built herself a tower, heaped up silver like the dust and gold like the mire of the streets. Behold, the Lord will cast her out.

He will destroy her power in the sea and she will be devoured by fire. It's a summary of those three chapters of Ezekiel. And it is a reminder.

Now notice we started out with Hadrach and Damascus and Hamath, which is up there near Damascus, then Tyre and Sidon. These are recent memories. This is recent from the pen of Ezekiel.

Then we're gonna go back to verse five, Ashkelon and Gaza and Ekron. And Gaza and Ashkelon again, and you can see the symmetry there. Starts with Ashkelon, ends with Ashkelon.

Gaza comes second, Gaza is second to last. Ekron, dried up her expectation right in the middle. We'll see this next time.

But what is the message here? Why does God put such emphasis on this? Why does he excavate the past to talk in the present, to Zechariah's audience and talk to everyone from that day to this in these terms? What is the message? When the last shall be first and the first shall be last, it isn't because the last climbed over everybody in between to get to the top. The meek who inherit the earth don't inherit it by force. They don't inherit it by effort.

They don't inherit it by human wisdom, human beauty or human riches. It is not wealth, beauty or wisdom. These are the things that Tyre relied on.

These are the things that Satan corrupted himself with. The last thing we wanna do is unconsciously fall into that trap of beginning to rely on our wisdom, on our attributes, on our attainments for deliverance. It is God who is aware.

God who has his eyes on humanity in general and his people in particular, all of his people, all of the 12 tribes of Israel. If there's not a sparrow that falls to the ground without God knowing about it, do you think God knows our situation, our challenges? Of course he does. The ultimate outcome is in God's hands, not in ours, not in the hands of our enemies, not in the hands of those who oppose us despite their seemingly unconquerable wisdom and wealth and beauty.

Beauty, they say, is in the eye of the beholder. What goes on in social media today? Things that are approved, things that are accepted, things that are politically correct, that's beautiful. Oh, it's beautiful that you have diversity.

It's beautiful that you're accepting of all forms of gender thinking and all forms of health thinking and all forms of whatever kind of thinking. There is a mass opinion that defines beauty in ideas, beauty in economy, beauty in social and political form. When we say it is beautiful, it's beautiful.

This is why you've got modern art. People say modern art is beautiful. Most of us look at it and think, you know, there was an accident at the paint factory, but beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

And so the mass defines what beauty is. The masses contribute to wealth and the masses constitute power. When you can lead them by the nose, when you can influence their opinions.

You know, now there are people, and when you look at their title, they are a social influencer. Have you seen this? They're gonna interview somebody and they're like, well, who is this? Well, they're a social influencer. That means they've got a YouTube channel that a lot of people watch.

And unknown people have become icons of beauty and fashion and style and culture and so on. Because, you know, all voices are equal on the internet. So anybody that catches on for whatever weird reason, they're suddenly powerful and powerful.

And the people who follow them make them powerful. So if you skip down to the end of this, now I have seen with my eyes. This starts and ends with the eyes of the Lord.

The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous. The eyes of the Lord are on the world. If we are not yet vindicated, if we are not yet lifted up, if we are not yet delivered, not yet justified, not yet ruling and reigning with Christ, not yet raised in our resurrection bodies, there is a reason.

God has a plan and a purpose. There is timing, there is sequence, there is priority. There is allowance given to the enemy to maximize his efforts.

God uses it to educate his people. Assyria is the rod of my anger and the staff of my indignation. I mentioned this earlier.

You know, the same rod and staff are mentioned in Psalm 23 as comforting. God's rod and staff, they comfort me, David says, but Assyria is a rod and staff of judgment. The same rod, just as the same hand of the Lord, the same arm of the Lord is mighty to save and to deliver.

And it is also the arm and the hand that wields judgment. God knows what he's doing. When we don't know what we're doing, it is a great actual wisdom to look to the Lord, to resist, like the song says, the arm of flesh will fail you, you dare not trust your own.

It is better to wait on the Lord, rise up with wings like eagles, run and not be weary, walk and not faint, waiting on the Lord. We are so impatient. We want solutions now.

We want answers now. We want vindication now. We want resolution now.

We want the country straightened out now. We want evil put in its place now. We see all of these hydra-headed corruption manifestations, and we want it stopped.

God is in his heaven. His eyes are on men in general and on his people in particular. We rest in that.

God says, look, I have seen with my eyes, look at this description in these seven verses. I know what's going on in Tyre and Sidon and Ashdod and Ashkelon and Gaza, Hamath. I know what's going on in all of these places.

Leave it to me. That's where the faith rubber hits the road and it's our encouragement. Well,

he's going to go on and verse nine gives you the outcome.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Waiting and resting while God deals with history in his own way and in his own time is going to result in our rejoicing and result in our blessing and opportunity in the future. Well, we'll pick up here.

We have a few more things to see in these first nine verses, first eight verses, and then we'll pick up at verse nine next time. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the comfort and encouragement that it supplies to us.

Thank you for the comforting presence of your Holy Spirit, the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and now is seated at your right hand where he lives to make intercession for us. We pray that as we look around at the world disintegrating before our eyes, that your word will comfort and encourage us, give us stability and strength, and prepare us to seize righteousness by faith, even in these dark times. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.