

PostExilicProphets 21-09-16a

Good evening, welcome to the Thursday night Bible class at Grace and Truth Bible Church. No coincidence there. We're in the book of Zechariah, the prophecy of Zechariah, and we're in chapter nine.

We saw the first portion last time, which was verses one through eight. And the study this evening, we'll pick up at verse nine, verses nine and 10, a very well-known, oft-quoted passage. It's quoted two or three times in the New Testament, particularly by Matthew and John.

Has an interesting conundrum associated with it in that regard, which we'll look at here in a little bit. But let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our study and on our fellowship tonight, and we'll get started. Father, we are always grateful for these times of gathering as the members of the body of Christ, where we benefit from the spiritual gifts that you've distributed to each one of us, and they operate to bless and to benefit one another.

We're thankful for your word and for the truth that it contains and for the effect that it has on us to strengthen and empower us in ways that are unlike any other in life. We have no other recourse but you. We have no other strength or grace or provision for living our lives in a meaningful way, except what you have given us through the Lord Jesus Christ, with the presence and power of your word and your spirit in our souls.

So we pray that tonight, as we look at this portion of your word, that the Holy Spirit will manifestly impress it on our hearts, minister it to our souls, so that we will come away more committed and more faithful and more motivated to lay hold of that for which we were laid hold of, and all to the glory of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We pray these in his name. Amen.

Just by way of quick context, I'm going to summarize the first eight verses of chapter 9. We saw the word of the Lord against the land of Hadrach and Damascus, Hamath, Tyre, Sidon, and then we saw Tyre brought to the fore. You're kind of circling these northern areas, and Tyre is the more or less metaphorical or symbolic capital of those, and that immediately took us back to the Prince of Tyre. When you go to Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 and you see these thinly veiled references to Satan, this puts us up above the battlefield where we get the bird's eye view of what God is doing in history, in and through Israel specifically.

In allowing the enemy to advance, in allowing judgment to take place, in allowing reverses and losses to take place among his people, God demonstrates the integrity of his covenant promises, both when conditions are satisfied and he responds in blessing and prosperity, and when the conditions are broken, and he responds in discipline and judgment. We would not know about these. We wouldn't see them in their visible manifest forms if not for the example of Old Testament Israel, particularly minus the ubiquitous presence in ministry of the Holy Spirit.

We are in a different age. God is making a different point. He is establishing and moving towards some of the same goals with us, but we have personal access to his word.

We're not relying on a prophet or on the occasional manifestation of the truth of God's word in a feast or in a sacrifice. The day-to-day Israelite didn't have anywhere near the access to God's truth that we have. He didn't have the day-to-day access to God's spirit that we are blessed with.

So in this phase of God's plan, he is demonstrating and forever writing the eternal testament that we will continue to learn and grow from in the ages to come. But this is Israel. This is the Old Testament.

This is God working with his people, both in good times and in bad. They have completed a bad time. They have come out of judgment and they've returned to the land.

It is the opportunity to learn from those mistakes, the mistakes of their fathers, the failings of their fathers, just as we should be able to look at our scriptures and learn from the experiences of the people detailed therein. Shame on us if we don't. There is an aphorism about what happens to people who are failing to learn from history and are doomed to repeat it.

Pay no attention while I grab this power cord, but much like our lives as believers, your computer will not operate for long if it's just not plugged into power. Neither do we. It is God's power that we are seeing in this passage and whether or not these returning Israelites are going to avail themselves of it.

So Tyre built herself a tower, heaped up silver like the dust. This is the world's standard of accomplishment, security, and success. A tower, fortification, silver, wealth, and riches.

Gold is like the mire of the streets. It's so common it's where we might be shoveling up, cleaning up after dogs that have been walking down the street, the mire in the streets. Well, gold is that commonplace, that replete.

The Lord will cast her out. He will destroy her power in the sea and she will be devoured by fire. That kind of accomplishment, that kind of defense, that kind of security cannot last because it does not reside in God.

It is not built on the foundation of eternal truth and it is doomed to fail. So he goes on to talk about what's going to happen in Ashkelon and Gaza and Ekron and these are cities of the Philistines, long gone, long dead. But he is reminding his people, God is reminding his people through the prophet Zechariah that if you do not learn from what God has revealed in times past, graphically, manifestly, miraculously in a lot of cases, nothing but sorrow, heartache and loss can follow.

So the takeover of these former strongholds of the enemies of Israel, Ashdod will be settled by a mixed race. Ashkelon is going to see it in fear. Gaza will be sorrowful.

Ekron is going to be wasted because the expectation is dried up. There is no long-term hope. It will take away blood and abominations.

One of the premier regulations in the law of Moses is you do not eat the flesh with the blood. The life of the flesh is in the blood and eating blood or drinking blood or making any kind of blood pudding or any of the rest of it in Israel was one of the strongest prohibitions in the dietary code. These people are distinct in that it is what they do.

And God says, I am going to eliminate their presence and their ability to practice these abominations. He who remains, he shall be for our God. He shall be like a leader in Judah, Ekron, like a Jebusite.

And you remember the Jebusites, those that were defeated by Joab and David when David turned their capital city into the city of David and it became Jerusalem. The Jebusites who surrendered became hewers of wood and haulers of water and so on. So I will camp around my house because of the army, because of him who passes by and him who returns.

No more shall an oppressor pass through them for now I have seen with my eyes. And you remember that beautiful chiastic structure where there is the eyes of men and the tribes of Israel that we saw back in verse one. And that was an incorrect translation.

These are the eyes of the Lord on Israel and on all men. And this chiasm helps us straighten out that troubled text. Well, now we pick up tonight in verse nine.

So what is the context? God is continuing to work with his people. They have been up and then they were down, down so far as to go into captivity. Now they have come back.

And what is the appeal in Haggai and Zechariah? Build the temple of the Lord, not just a building, but welcome the presence of God. This is in anticipation. What is the promise of the new covenant, which they already have in their hands.

They've already got Jeremiah and Ezekiel. They've got the completed prophecies. What is the new covenant promise? I will pour out my spirit on all flesh.

This is the presence of God, such as we enjoy it individually, ubiquitously. How can Israel get ready for that? Well, God's not going to come and fill a temple that does not exist. There has to be preparation.

There has to be invitation. There has to be qualification, right? Same thing is true for us. God says, how am I going to come and dwell among you? How is Emmanuel going to take place? If you're not ready when Jesus does come, what happens? Does the kingdom come in and the new covenant to Israel and Judah? Is it fulfilled? It is not.

Why they weren't ready? How is it that we managed to avoid laying hold of righteousness by faith and enjoying blessing now and inheritance and prosperity in the future kingdom of God?

How is it that we miss that by making the very same mistake these people are making? So the mistake they made is not learning from their fathers. We do not want to make the mistake of failing to learn from these people. So we're studying Zechariah and we're learning from it.

Well, that's the context. So now what is all of this in preparation for? Why does God want his temple built? Why does he want his people ready? Why does he want them to shift their focus and restack their priorities and rejudge their values and reestablish good goals? Why does he want them to do this? Well, it begins in verse nine. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion.

Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king is coming to you. Behold, look, the king is coming.

Shouldn't you ought to get ready? It reminds you of the parable of the wise and foolish virgins that Jesus told. The groom is coming. Are you going to be ready or not? You're going to be wise.

You're going to be foolish. Behold, your king is coming to you. He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the full of a donkey.

I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem. The battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations.

His dominion shall be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. Wonderful poetic section here. This section of chapter nine, this section of the Zechariah prophecy, this section of this oracle here is poetry.

The first eight verses were poetry. There is there is meter and it helps us with with textual issues. And there are some in this chapter, as with, you know, many other things we've seen in the Old Testament.

But this section right here is a different meter. It's a shorter, more accelerated meter. Nine and 10 are set off.

And I think the new King James and any other Bibles that do this has done a good job in setting this off. Nine and 10 are their own section. My new King James says the coming king.

Well, the meter in Hebrew has been stepping along. It's like, you know, your iambic pentameter or, you know, but dump, but dump, but dump, but dump, but dump, but dump, but dump, but dump, but dump, but dump, but dump, but dump, but dump, but dump. We get used to that in a lot of kind of tacky English poetry.

Well, you're going along with a meter all the way through those first eight verses. And when you hit verse nine and 10, this stands out. It's like a plateau and it moves more quickly and more emphatically.

So rejoice greatly. Oh, daughter of Zion shout. Oh, daughter of Jerusalem.

Notice that Zion in general and Jerusalem in particular are addressed as a feminine entity. All of the people that say the Bible is patriarchal. It's down on women.

It's, it needs to be abandoned because it's, you know, women don't get their place. Who are these people? Have they ever actually read the Bible? Do you know how many times God pictures those who are favored? Those who are the targets and objects of his love and his grace and his favor are put in the feminine form. Jerusalem often, often, often pictured in feminine form.

Why? Not just for, you know, equity or equal treatment of women or whatever. There's a reason. What did daughters symbolize? What happened when they grew up and became of marriageable age? Someone came, you know, this is the bride waiting for her groom as it were.

And what should have happened when you go over to revelation and the latter part of chapter 19, you know, Jerusalem has made herself ready like a bride adorning herself for her husband. Preparation readiness. If the bridesmaids ought to be ready, the virgins with their lamps, how much more so the bride ought to be ready when the groom comes to get her and take her into this entirely new realm of relationship, right? So there is the idea of preparation and hope, expectation, and a positive, uh, anticipation of the coming of the King.

The King here is received the way a groom would be received. He is the new security. He is the new provider.

He is the new protector. He is the new confidant and closest relationship. So for the daughter of Zion and the daughter of Jerusalem, your King is coming to you.

Remember when we did recently the song of Solomon, which I like to call the song of the Shunammite because it's her song. And what was her beef with Solomon? All hat and no cattle. He, he approaches her and she's got all these wonderful hopes and expectations.

And he's a big, massive disappointment because he can't keep his mind on her or on their marriage. He's, he's off riding the hills and he's away. And now he comes and says all these wonderful words.

And then he's off. He's, he's like a shallow, um, capricious, uh, lover who just wants to take advantage of her with, with, uh, you know, words and so on. So the feminine here emphasizes that this is a worthy King who is coming and she needs to be ready.

Your King is coming to you. He is described as just and having salvation lowly. These three qualities, just having salvation and humble.

Basically the middle one there is wrongly translated. This is from the word for save or deliver the, the root from which you get, uh, Yeshua, Joshua, the, the Lord Jesus name in Hebrew and later Aramaic. But this is a Nifal stem.

Cal Q A L is the active Nifal is the passive. What happens in a passive voice? You receive the action of the verb. And this is a clear Nifal, no runs, no hits, no errors, no men left on base.

It's a Nifal. So it can't be. That's why they tried to say having salvation, but it doesn't mean having salvation.

It means he has, he has received deliverance. He is, he is righteous. He is delivered.

Now this has tremendous portent. When you think about who this King is, who is this King? This is the Lord Jesus Christ in his messianic role, right? Is he just, what does the new Testament say about our great high priest tested? Like as we are yet without sin, there was no guile found in his mouth. He is righteous.

He is the standard of righteousness, human compliance with the plan and purpose of God, right? And he is delivered. What is he delivered from? He wasn't sinful. So he hasn't been delivered from sin.

What does he delivered from? Well, I could give you several verses from Paul. He has been delivered from the power of death. God raised him from the dead.

He is delivered. And this is a clue. This would have been kind of a stumbling block in the day that it was delivered.

And for the years after people would say, well, the, the expected Messiah, I understand that he would be righteous. He's, he's God's King coming the way David was a man after God's own heart. This, this son of David is going to be the same thing, but he's delivered.

Well, was he delivered in battle? Was he delivered from enemies? Was he delivered from a, what, what does he delivered from? And there would be a question mark there until educated, biblically knowledgeable, faithful, hopeful believers in Israel saw the Lord Jesus Christ raised from the dead, heard that he had been raised from the dead because the power of death could not hold him. Remember Peter's first speech in Acts, you crucified him, but death could not hold him. He's been delivered from the power of death.

Anybody who fought back on this passage would say, you know what? Now this first makes sense. He's delivered. He's the Messiah.

And he is humble. Jesus didn't put on airs. He wasn't, he didn't come born into a rich family wearing fine robes and partying with the Pharisees and hobnobbing with the scribes and the chief priests and elders of the people.

He was from Nazareth. He was, he was cut from the common cloth. The blue collar workers were his neighbors and friends and disciples almost without exception.

Riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. Now when you read the quote unquote triumphal entry description in the gospel of Matthew, it is at pains to tell us that there was a

mother donkey and a colt and that both of them are brought and Jesus rides on the colt, but the colt follows the road because his mother is there beside him. There, there is some wonderful symbolism there.

We'll, we'll see that when we get there. Uh, and I think we've seen it before when we've done some of our resurrection Sunday specials, resurrection week, but in John, John only talks about the colt and based on this passage from which the colt imagery has its source and foundation, uh, this is the donkey colt foal. These are three descriptions of the same animal.

The, the mother colt is not in view here. So how many adjectives describe the king who is coming? He is just, he is delivered and he is lowly. The donkey that he rides is a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.

So you've got a wonderful symmetry there, three and three and three speaks of the divine perfection. This is a part of the plan and purpose of God. He will come in God's time.

He will come in God's way. He will come with God's righteousness. But having that righteousness, he still is dependent upon God for his deliverance.

It is God who delivers this king and his humility is in light of his dependence upon God. He's not doing these things in his own strength. It's another line of reasoning for why the Lord Jesus did not invoke his own deity when he was here in his earthly ministry.

He operated in the power of the Holy Spirit, not his own, because in humility, his reliance was on the rest of the Trinity, not, not his own attributes. So now in verse 10, it says, I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim. This appearance of the king is in line with countless old Testament prophecies.

The, you know, it's a bad thing for me to wave my hands because I hit my touch pad and everything goes away. Give me a second to re-find my, my place. Cause I am, I am back in chapter six now.

And we've, you don't think you want me to go back to chapter six. There we go. Now I'm back because I've got references here.

Um, this is, uh, far different than say the, uh, coming of Absalom to Jerusalem. You remember that, uh, he didn't come riding on the foal of a donkey. Uh, he came, if you look at second Samuel chapter 15, verse one, uh, Absalom came riding in after he driven his father out riding on a stallion.

And he had 50 men running in front of him and he was all pomp and splendor. He's the false king foreshadowing the antichrist in some ways. Um, you will know him when you see him because he does not comport with, uh, humility with justice or righteousness.

And he is not dependent on God. He does not have that humility. Uh, he's going to look a lot

more like Absalom than like David and Absalom tried to come in and suborn and appropriate to himself the accomplishments of his father, David.

Absalom never won a battle. Absalom never conquered an enemy, never took spoils, but he whittles the people. Remember him sitting at the gate and suborning people's good opinion and saying, just like Lucifer did at the gate of God's throne room and stopping the angels who were going in for God's justice and saying, look, I can handle this for you.

And he began to make merchandise of his wisdom. And he began to broker power and denied entrance into the throne room to these angels. He said, look, I can, I can do what God does.

I can judge this. I'm the smartest thing God ever made. Absalom does the very same thing.

Lucifer never created anything, never accomplished anything, never won a battle. And it will never win a battle. When he goes to war with Michael and God's angels, he's going to lose just like Absalom is going to lose, but there's, he's all horse and no victories, all horse, no victory.

So when it says in verse 10, I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem, the people who dwell there are going to understand these principles. You and I, if we have any hope of dwelling in the new Jerusalem will understand these ideas. Where have we heard it? Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit saith the Lord.

Does it sound familiar? You can flip back a few pages and find it not by might nor by power. It's God's spirit. It's God's work.

It's God's provision. So does that have application for us? There is a lot of talk about what man's ingenuity is going to accomplish for us, about what technology will do, about what policy will do, about what economic redistribution will do, about what modified behaviors will do, and new institutions and new standards and new priorities and new goals and new values is going to accomplish. If you look at the people who are pushing these ideas, do they have any victories under their belt? Are they relying on God? Do they have humility? Are they righteous? Do they understand the righteousness of God which is by faith? If they don't, guess who they are? They are in the line that began with Lucifer and in the tribulation is going to culminate with the Antichrist.

As they say in Texas, all hat, no cattle, no deliverance from God. The battle is the Lord's, David before Goliath, that's not the pattern for these people. Even before David went to face Goliath, did he have some victories under his belt? What did he tell Saul? Your servant essentially delivered his sheep from a lion and from a bear and I can deal with this Philistine.

I have faced the charge of the lion. I have faced the charge of the bear. I can face the charge of the giant.

He was delivered, not because he was exceptionally skillful, but because he was humble, because he was all three of these things. He was delivered because he was righteous and

humble and right in the middle of righteousness and humility, God's deliverance. That's the kind of people we want to be.

That's how we turn out when we do Romans 12, one and two, when we follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is going to be this King and the exemplar, the model in the true sense for what Old Testament people should be and New Testament people should be. Well, we have more to say about this, but we're going to pause here and take our break. When we come back, we will be doing well to cover verse 10 before the end of the second session.

This is a fascinating verse and we have some corollary and some illustration to go along with it. We'll see it when we return.