

PostExilicProphets 21-10-07a

Good evening. Welcome to Grace and Truth Bible Church on this Thursday evening. This is the 7th of October, 2021.

Continuing our study, this fascinating study about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ based in Zechariah chapter nine. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem.

Behold, your King is coming to you. He is just. He is delivered.

He is lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. And that foal of the donkey is in my mind a oblique and somewhat obscure reference to the church. Israel is the firstborn and to them were originally delivered God's promises, God's law, God's revelation.

But in the reversal motif, the church came along afterward and we are beholden to the Old Testament people of God for so many things as Paul is at pains to point out in Romans chapter nine. And yet we end up coming first. We, and the Lord Jesus through his headship to the church is going to reveal his glory to the original people of God.

And so this foal of the donkey on which Jesus rides in my mind at least suggests the unforeseen role that the church plays in God's plan and purpose and ultimately bringing the Lord Jesus Christ to those Old Testament saints in Israel. So it's a fascinating passage. And in that regard, we have gone to look at Isaiah chapter 11 and looking specifically at the role that the Holy Spirit plays in this revelation.

Because the third verse in Isaiah chapter 11 talking about the effect of the spirit of the Lord resting on him in verse two, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord is something that pertains to us. So we're going to pick up that study tonight. Let's ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our scriptural investigations.

And we will begin. Father, we are ever more fully aware of how important the gift of your Holy Spirit is to us in every aspect of our lives, enhancing our fellowship, enabling our understanding and application of your word, comforting us, encouraging us, guiding us in the right path, rebuking, correcting, and convicting us when we are in the wrong. We truly have no power in the spiritual realm without his presence in his ministry.

We pray tonight that as we look more closely at that ministry and at the way the Holy Spirit exercises his power in our lives, that we will come to a better understanding. We will be more motivated, more greatly encouraged, and have fuel for our hope that the soon return of the Lord Jesus will find us ready, thoroughly equipped for every good work, both now and in those future times when we have such wonderful potential through the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray it in his name.

Amen. Amen. If you have turned to Zechariah 9, you can freely turn back to Isaiah 11.

This is such a critical component of the returning king. When he returns to rule Israel, he is going to do so as the son of God and son of man. He is the unique person of the universe in being both divine and human.

His humanity is not sustained by his divinity as the second person of the Trinity. Jesus Christ in his human existence is sustained fully by the third person of the Trinity, God, the Holy Spirit. Now, why is that? Couldn't Jesus have just come in his own power? Is his power not sufficient for the task? Of course it is.

But how could the Lord Jesus be our example? How could he be the author and the finisher of our faith if he was functioning in a divine strength to which we have no access? Well, the answer is he would not be our example. He wouldn't be the pioneer. He wouldn't be the example.

We wouldn't appreciate him the way we do because in his humanity, he emptied his own divinity out and was fully sustained, guided into the word of God. Every word that proceeds from the mouth of God came to the mind and the heart and the lips of the Lord Jesus, enabling him to do supernatural things in faith, faith in his father, faith in the word and promise of God through the ongoing fullness and presence of the Holy Spirit. And that is our example.

Jesus said, the things you've seen me do, you all will do greater things than these. Not necessarily greater in the spectacular obviating of the laws of physics or the impressive victories over disease and death and so on. The greater things are the daily spiritual victories that you and I can achieve through the strength that the Lord Jesus provided to us through the word of God and the spirit of God.

That's how it is done. And he is the example. He is our role model.

He is truly the author and finisher of our faith. And our appreciation for him should achieve astronomical levels because of that. He has shown us how to live in the strength, in the provision, in the power and the grace of God.

So as we go to Isaiah chapter 11 and see that even when he returns in his glorified state to sit on the throne of his glory, as he calls it, in Matthew chapter 24 and 25, you have the outline of future prophetic history culminating in the return of the Lord Jesus to sit on that throne. It says in Isaiah 11 too, the spirit of the Lord will rest on him at that time and for that purpose. This is the spirit of wisdom and understanding.

It is not enough to have knowledge. It is not enough to have facts. This, in my humble opinion, is the problem with the world today.

We have got more information than any collection of people in the history of the human race. We've got information at our fingertips. You can get onto a browser and ask any question that

comes to your mind.

There's a commercial running right now where some guy is returning with some gal and they're sitting in the driveway and the little kid's looking out the window and they're just getting ready to have a little parting kiss or something, but the kid is watching and so they say, Alexa, turn on the living room lights. And of course, Alexa is listening and responds and turns on the light. The little kid gets startled and leaves the window.

And the man says to Alexa in the car, Alexa, can you pause time? And Alexa's got an answer to that question. You can get confused and think that the woman who's driving the car is answering the question. This commercial, by the way, is just fraught with meaning for me, but I'm just focusing on the one thing that if you've got Samsung Bixby or you've got Alexa or you've got Siri, the thing's listening all the time and you can ask any question.

And even abstract questions like, Siri, what is the meaning of life? Try that. There is an answer, actually a collection of answers. You can ask the same question more than once and you get these clever ripostes from the semi-artificial, semi-intelligence behind these programmed response givers.

But type your question into Google or DuckDuckGo if you take my recommendation, get a little bit more privacy. And the world of information is at our fingertips as never before. Long gone are the days when if you had a question, then you would go to the library and dig through the encyclopedias or the reference section trying to find what does this medical term mean? The doctor used it.

What does it mean? Well, now you get your phone and with a couple of thumb strokes, you've got the answer. We live in a world fraught, overladen, swimming, drowning in information. But look at the state of the world.

Have we achieved world peace? Have we solved world hunger? Have we addressed our social issues of poverty and homelessness and childcare and workplace issues for women and for men and for people of various backgrounds and ethnicities and so on? How are we doing in those? It seems as though the world is worse off than ever before, possibly because we have more information about how bad off the world is. We're not real sure if it's actually worse off or we just know how much hunger and depression and affliction there is in the world. You think 100 years ago when there was child labor and little kids were working in factories and immigrants were being oppressed and taken advantage of and now you think back a few decades further back and you have the issues of slavery and the post-slavery world where freed slaves were wildly abused and taken advantage of, carpetbaggers and such.

So there has been evil in the world, but not only do we have more information that's supposed to address our problems, but we have more information about our problems. Information, information, information. Is more information solving our problems? What is it we really need? Look at verse two of Isaiah chapter 11.

Wisdom and understanding. Wouldn't it be great if they came out with a browser and you could type in a question like, what should I really think about? Fill in your social issue here. Fill in your political issue here.

Fill in your national or local or international problem. What should I think about this mandate? What should I think about this policy? What should I think about this budgetary decision? What should I think about what's going on in Congress or in the White House or in the judiciary? What should I think about my state folks? Here they're having a local election and these judges are up for reelection. I don't know anything about these judges.

I haven't sat in the courtroom. I don't know what their judicial philosophy is. I don't know how they decide or on what basis they decide or how fair they are or seem to be.

Wouldn't it be great if you had a Google for wisdom and understanding of all of this information? Well, on the one hand, you know, 50% of the doctors think that this is the answer and the other 50% or 30% think that's the answer. And, you know, as the old saw goes, you ask three people their opinion and you get five answers. None of them agree.

This is the role of the Holy Spirit for you. And for me, it is going to be the role of the Holy Spirit for the Lord Jesus Christ himself. In his humanity, the Lord Jesus, and this sounds like blasphemy, but do you realize that in his humanity, the Lord Jesus Christ is not smart enough to rule the world, not smart enough to rule the millennial kingdom? If he was, he wouldn't need the spirit of God upon him, would he? Why does he have this spirit? Because in his humanity, he needs it.

He relies upon it. It is a provision from his father. It is a provision for the Lord Jesus Christ from the heavenly father.

If the Lord Jesus needs him, how much more so do you and I? It is a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel, of the available options, two or three of them seem good, but which one is best? There's good, there's better and best. Well, on the one hand, this might be best for me, but maybe it's not so good for someone else. On the other hand, to what extent should I be sacrificial and put my interests by the wayside? I need counsel.

Even if I have wisdom and even if I have understanding, this is advice. This is insight from God as to the best path. Remember what Paul says that I pray that you may come to understand the difference, that you'll know the difference between one path and another. You go to Romans 12 too.

Having, he says, I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies, delivering sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. This is your reasonable service and be not conformed to this world. The world operates on partial information.

The world operates on those prejudices that we've seen over the last couple of weeks. What did I hear most recently? What did I hear an authority figure say that I respect? What subtle

nuances have come that I'm not even aware of that are influencing my decisions? To what extent am I biased by confirmation or by other factors? We're going to see one more of those tonight that is critically important. It is directly addressed in scripture.

But Paul goes on to say in Romans 12 too, be not conformed to this world, be transformed. How? We have a renewal. We have a regeneration.

We have a recreation of our mind. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. So if we are believers, our mind shouldn't work the way minds in the world work.

We shouldn't be conformed to the thought patterns and the influences that the world is trapped in and mired in and cannot escape from. Why? What does the world lack that we have? The Holy Spirit. He's got at a minimum, a five fold ministry.

He regenerates us. He seals us. He fills us.

He indwells us. He gives us a spiritual gift. And in and through those things, he gives us counsel.

He gives us wisdom. He gives us understanding. And if you look at verse two of Isaiah 11, he gives us strength.

Sometimes we can know what the right thing is. How many people know they shouldn't smoke, but they can't quit? How many people know they shouldn't overeat, but they can't quit? How many people know they shouldn't subject themselves to vile and worldly influences, but they can't quit? There are addictions. There are compulsions.

And what do we lack? Strength. It is not enough to know the right path. It isn't enough to have good advice and godly counsel.

It isn't enough to have the wisdom and the understanding to implement it, to carry out those functions and to stick with those decisions and policies and actions. What do we need? We need strength. Strength does not come from the word of God.

Does that shock you? Where does our strength come from? The spirit of God. Think about the Old Testament believers. Moses carried a whole bunch of the word of God down from Mount Sinai.

How well did they do? Not so hot. Why? Holy spirit was not yet given because Christ was not yet glorified. Old Testament saints lived their life largely with a few exceptions without the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Why? Why was God so mean and cruel to them? Remember I was talking a week and maybe a week and two weeks back about having a sense of need. We were talking about praying for those who are without Christ or without a meaningful spiritual life. And no one is going to come to Christ looking for him, looking for the spirit, looking for this wisdom and counsel and

knowledge and power and so on.

If they don't have a sense of need. What does the Old Testament example of Israel demonstrate in spades? It is not enough to have the presence of God in the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire. It is not enough to have the guidance of God and the plan of God in delivering from bondage and taking to the promised land.

It's not enough to have the word of God coming down from the mountain in the hands of the world's first and perhaps greatest prophet, Moses. Wonderful leadership, great government. What did they need that they didn't have? The spirit.

The spirit was not yet given because the coming of the spirit accompanies the coming of Jesus Christ. And when he leaves, he says, I will send you the promise of my father. Where was that promise? It's the new covenant to Israel.

This is a covenant I will make. The new covenant I will make with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. I will pour out my spirit.

It's the new covenant. He didn't pour. Why didn't he pour out his spirit on Old Testament Israel? Wouldn't that have made their lives a lot easier? He saved that for us by attempting to live in the light of the word of God with the presence of God in the glory cloud and later in the tabernacle and finally in the holy of holies of Solomon's temple.

It wasn't enough, was it? They could not stick. They could not be consistent. They could not live as a light to the Gentiles and fulfill the Old Testament covenants because they did not have the individual presence of God in the person and power of the holy spirit.

The Lord Jesus can't do without it. They certainly couldn't do without it. We can't do without it either.

We are supposed to be the demonstration of the difference. Paul says, I pray that you will come to know the difference. And in Romans 12, two, transform by the renewing of your minds so that you will do what? Understand what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Three paths. One is good. One is acceptable, but there's one that is the path of maturity.

It's perfect. It's the best, good, better, and best. One is, there's nothing bad in it.

It doesn't create any sin. It's good. What's the acceptable one? What is the one that's even better than good? And what is the one that's perfect? When our mind is renewed in the presence and power of the holy spirit, we have the wisdom and understanding.

We have the counsel and the strength to fulfill Romans 12, one and two. This is the oil that is poured on the sacrifice, presenting ourselves a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, because it is truly anointed. There's a lot of people bandying about the notion of an anointing with, or by, or from the spirit.

The sacrifice of ourselves that Paul talks about in Romans 12, that is the anointing. It is saturated with the holy spirit. Our prayers are made acceptable to God by the holy spirit.

Our decisions, our thoughts, our actions are enabled by the spirit of understanding and wisdom, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord. It culminates with doing what we do as unto the Lord, not unto men. His will, his glory, his purpose, his plan, his goals, his values, his priorities, undergird and guide everything that we think and everything that we do.

Have to have the spirit for that. This is why Israel failed. This is how we can succeed and be prepared for life with God, both now and in the kingdoms to come, the kingdom of the son and the kingdom of the father.

How can you rule and reign with Christ if you don't have the same spirit he's got? Don't have the same provision to understand what the will of the Lord is. This is how in Isaiah 11, four, with righteousness, he will judge the afflicted. There will still be afflicted in the millennial kingdom.

Still gonna be sin, still gonna be problems. That's why strong government will be needed. Ruling with the rod of iron, smashing in pieces like a potter's vessel, those who are unruly.

With righteousness, he will judge the afflicted and with equity, he will decide for the humble of the earth. Those who merit justice. Remember the Beatitudes, blessed are the meek, blessed are the humble, blessed are the poor in spirit.

They will inherit, they will see God and so on. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth. This is the judgments, the judicial decisions that will come from the throne.

He will slay the wicked with the breath of his lips. This takes place largely at the beginning of the millennium, but there will be capital punishment. If you're against capital punishment, you'll have to take it up with the Lord because he's in favor of it.

I trust him to do it better than any of us can. But the principle of capital punishment was established in Genesis chapter nine after the flood. If a man sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.

Previous to that, you didn't have capital punishment. Did you ever wonder why Cain didn't die after murdering his brother Abel? Why didn't God convene a court and say, Adam, Eve, all you other brothers and sisters, you notice here that Cain here has murdered his brother with malice of forethought. He had means motive, he had opportunity.

It's a cut and dried case. He murdered his brother. God said, Abel's blood cries out to me from the ground.

Why didn't Cain die? Do not have capital punishment until after the flood. God does the first capital punishment in the flood, wiping out pretty much all of Cain's descendants. There

might've been a wife or two somewhere in the house of Noah, but they are largely wiped out.

And after that, God says, here's the new dispensation. New dispensation's always marked by a change in diet. They were fruititarians in the garden.

They were vegetarians between the expulsion from the garden and the flood. And after the flood, it is now omnivores. God says, you can eat the flesh of animals, but drain out the blood.

The life of the flesh is in the blood. He also establishes capital punishment. This is a new thing.

And he says, it is up to men to have trials. And when they find someone guilty of shedding man's blood, i.e. murder, then capital punishment. This is the divine prescription.

It's repeated in the law of Moses. It is emphasized in the New Testament that the government does not bear the sword in vain and he's not talking about international border keeping or whatnot. He's talking about the sword of capital punishment.

The sword was the means of execution in Rome. So this righteousness with which he will judge the poor in Isaiah 11, four, and with equity, he will decide for the lowly of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth and he will slay the wicked with the breath of his lips.

Righteousness will be the belt around his hips in verse five and faithfulness, the sash around his waist. These are the characteristics future of the Lord Jesus Christ in his role as the Messiah King to the nation of Israel with whom we should aspire to reign. You remember Paul talking to Timothy and saying that in 2 Timothy 2, verse 11, 2 Timothy 2, 11, this is a trustworthy saying.

If we died with him, we will also live with him. This is basic salvation. If we have been identified with Christ in his death, the death he died, he died to sin, the life he lives, he lives to God.

By taking Christ in faith as our savior, we have died with him. We will also live with him. Verse 12 of 2 Timothy 2, if we endure, we will also reign with him.

What percentage of Christians endure? I can tell you from the word of God, it is small. Wide is the way and broad is the gate that leads to destruction. Many there be who go in there at.

Narrow is the way and straight is the gate that leads to life. Few there be that find it. This is not talking about salvation.

Jesus is way past giving the gospel when he gives these words. He's talking to his disciples. He's talking to those who have continued to listen for three or four chapters in Matthew by the time he gets to this.

Narrow is the way and straight is the gate that leads to life. Few there be that find it. If we endure, we will reign with him.

Everybody in the church is not going to be reigning with Christ. Most of us in the church will not

reign with Christ. Why? No experience of wisdom, understanding, counsel, and strength.

Not qualified. Would you, I remember in Dallas, they used to advertise on the radio all the time, this laser keratotomy or whatever it is, where they go in and fix your vision so you don't have to wear glasses or contacts. And they go in with a laser and burn little slots into your eye to change the shape of the lens.

Now, let me ask you, I'm pretty sure I know the answer to this question. Do you want somebody fresh out of laser keratotomy school doing this surgery on your eyes? Or do you want the guy that on the radio says, I have done 50,000 laser keratotomy or whatever it is, surgeries in the Dallas area over the last 20 years. I'm going with the guy that has done it so many times he can do it in his sleep.

I don't want a rookie who is still trying to figure out where the on switch is on the laser, right? Do you think the Lord Jesus is going to turn loose neonatal believers who never got past the milk stage to help him rule in the millennial kingdom or anything else? There is a nursery back just over the horizon where you can try to grow. The rebuke in Hebrews for those who ought to be teachers and have need that one teach them again the first principles of the doctrine of Christ ought to scare us to death. Having need of milk and not solid food, shame on us.

If we endure, we will reign with him. So how do you endure? Well, this is a skill set. Endure what? Got to endure temptation and come out on the right side of it.

Got to endure lack of appreciation. Got to endure the ham-fisted behavior of other believers in our midst. And of course they have to endure ours.

We should all be bearing with one another, be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another. Why? Even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us. You hear people say as an expletive, oh, for Christ's sake.

That's where that comes from. God, because of the Lord Jesus has forgiven us. Not because he's really enamored with us, really wants us on the team.

He forgives us for Christ's sake. We don't forgive each other because there's a sufficient level of contrition or apology or regret or recognition of failure. Why do we forgive each other? Same reason God forgives us.

We just did that parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew. Remember that back in chapter 19 or so? We've been forgiven an enormous debt for Christ's sake. Can we not overlook, forget, bury the hatchet, not expect apology, remuneration, any other form of comeuppance when we are wronged, when things don't go the way we wish they did or think they should have.

If we endure, you have need of endurance, Paul says, so that after you have suffered a while, you inherit the promises. Peter says the same thing. Paul and Peter are united in this.

Suffering is necessary to our inheritance. Sharing in the sufferings of Christ, undeserved suffering. The Lord Jesus should never have suffered a thing.

Shouldn't have been mocked. Shouldn't have been rejected. Shouldn't have been insulted.

Shouldn't have been questioned. Shouldn't have been talked against by the quote unquote religious leadership of his day. He endured all of those things.

And we saw the scriptures was mocked, scourged, unjustly tried and convicted and ultimately crucified by Gentiles at the behest of his own people. Came into his own and his own received him not. He didn't deserve any of that.

But he endured the cross, despising the shame and is now seated at the right hand of the father. For this reason, God has highly exalted him. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you immediately.

We humble ourselves that we may be exalted in due time. How many believers are actually humble? Where do we get the strength to be humble? I haven't got it. Sad to say, you haven't got it.

The spirit of strength gives us that ability. If we do not cultivate his presence, if we do not value his power, it is not gonna be operative. We will not be humble.

You cannot be humble, cannot humble ourselves. The Bible says, humble yourself. Can't do it.

But the Holy Spirit, if he can convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment and create the sense of need, how much more should he be able to do it in our hearts? That's why he's there. That's why the Lord Jesus left us a better gift than his own personal presence. The Lord Jesus in his humanity could only be one place at a time.

He could only minister to a limited circle of people in a personal way. God, the Holy Spirit does not have those limitations. He can minister to each one of us personally and individual 24 seven.

He doesn't sleep. He doesn't get arrested. He doesn't go off to a foreign land.

He is always there. What a gift. What a treasure.

This is why Jesus could say, the things that you've seen me do, you're gonna do greater than these because you're gonna have the presence and power of the Spirit in a way that will transcend the presence and power of the Lord Jesus walking by the shore of the Sea of Galilee. It'd be a wonderful thing to see him and walk with him and so on. But the apostles say, we've got something better.

We've got the Spirit. Well, that's the reason this coming of the King to Zion results in shouting and singing from the daughter of Zion and the daughter of Jerusalem because this is

something they've never experienced. When he returns, the fulfillment of the new covenant to Israel and the church comes with him.

I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh. Remember what Peter quoted in Acts after Pentecost? And he said, this is what Joel was talking about in Joel 2, 23 and 24. I will pour out my Spirit on your sons and your daughters.

They're gonna dream. They're gonna prophesy. They're gonna see visions in ways that were impossible in Old Testament days.

Israel is gonna catch up with us. We who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, Paul calls it. We've got the firstfruits.

We're born last, but we inherit first. We're Jacob to Esau. And Jacob is gonna get a taste of his own medicine as it were, when he, his nation as the firstborn ends up being last at the table for the fullness of the Spirit because we got there first.

But what a shame to waste that privilege, to miss that opportunity, to live our lives the way the world lives. Anybody can live a worldly life. Anybody can be blown about by the winds of human information.

Only we are entitled to and enjoy the privileges of the presence and power of this Spirit in Isaiah chapter 11, that the Lord Jesus introduced and that he is gonna culminate human history within the thousand years of the millennial kingdom. We have much more to say about this when we come back from the break, but we'll pause here and have a time of refreshment.