

PostExilicProphets 21-11-03a

Good evening, this is the 3rd of November 2021. Welcome to the Wednesday night study at Grace and Truth Bible Church. We are in the book of Zechariah.

There are some fascinating things we are going to see tonight in this section. I endeavor to kind of speed up and move along because I'd like to eventually get to Malachi, but it is just so fraught. There is so much rich food for thought here and it is pertinent and applicable for us.

And so we're just going to excavate as we go and let the chips fall where they may. So we are picking up tonight in Zechariah chapter 10. And we will pick up here in verse 6 and verse 7 this evening.

So Zechariah 10 verses 6 and 7, this is where we resume. We'll see how far we get. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our study, on our dining, on the wonderful nourishing bread of the word.

And then we'll begin. Father, we are grateful as we thank you for our physical food before each meal. We thank you for what you have provided to sustain and nourish our souls and to give voice for your Holy Spirit to speak in our hearts, to lead and to guide, to enable us to evaluate circumstances and situations, to review and pursue our priorities and our goals in this life.

We pray that as we look at this portion of your word together that the Holy Spirit will illuminate it for us, help us to see the ways that it can affect the way we think and decide and act in the days that remain to us in this life. We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.

Let's read our passage. That's always a good place to start. We'll back up just a little bit.

We saw the former and latter reign. Let's pick up in verse 3. My anger is kindled against the shepherds, which is interesting because he just got through saying in verse 2, there is no shepherd. So how can his anger be kindled against the shepherds when there is no shepherd? God says, my anger is kindled against the shepherds.

These are those who pretend to be shepherds, who step into a shepherding role for which they are not qualified. The Bible has a lot to say about kings as shepherds and rulers as shepherds. You can see the role that this has, particularly and most obviously in Psalm 23, but this was true throughout the ancient world.

You've heard of Enlil and some of these other ancient figures like Ipuwer. There was an Egyptian writer named Ipuwer back before Abraham's time. And Ipuwer described the ideal Pharaoh, the ideal king, who would be called the herdsman of all men.

Evil is not in his heart, though his herds may be small, still he has spent the day caring for them. And all pastors of small churches can resonate with that idea. It doesn't matter how big the flock is, your desire is to do your best to discharge your responsibility to care for them, to

ensure that they are fed and so on.

But that's Ipuwer before 2000 BC. Hammurabi identified himself in, you remember the laws of Hammurabi, there were people who tried to claim that they were the source of the law of Moses, when in fact, if you straighten out the chronology, Hammurabi is after Moses. And if anything is derivative, it's Hammurabi's laws.

Anyway, Hammurabi in the prologue to his laws called himself the shepherd commissioned by Enlil, who's one of the gods of Egypt. This is really fascinating. This first passage in our Bible, back in the blessing of Jacob on his 12 sons in Genesis chapter 49.

And before we turn there, I want to read just a little bit further. Remember, my anger is kindled against the shepherds and I will punish the goats. For the Lord of hosts will visit his flock.

See who the true shepherd is. There are false shepherds and his anger is kindled against them. It's God's flock.

God is the shepherd and he will make them as his Royal horse in the battle. He will promote them from sheep to war horses. But look at verse four, from him comes what? The cornerstone, the tent peg, the battle bow, and every ruler together.

Every leader together. God commissions who is going to be the source of this ruling stability. God is the shepherd.

He will appoint intermediary authorities that will serve as the cornerstone, as the battle bow, as the tent peg, and so on. Now, keep your finger here and turn back to Genesis chapter 49. Genesis chapter 49.

We have two things to look at in this chapter that are directly and indirectly referenced in our passage. Genesis 49. You know, there's only 50 chapters in Genesis, so you're getting close to the end.

And if you look at this superscription here in my Bible, it says Jacob's last words to his sons. Jacob called his sons gather together that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days. In the last days, not in the near term days, not in the upcoming few months, last days.

Gather together and hear you sons of Jacob and listen Israel to your father. Listen to Israel, your father. Then he's going to talk about Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah.

Judah picks up in verse eight. You remember in verse 10, the scepter shall not depart from Judah nor a lawgiver from between his feet until tribute is brought to him. And to him is the obedience of the peoples, plural.

Shiloh comes, we've straightened that out in past studies, until tribute is brought to him. Binding his donkey to the vine, his donkey's colt to the choice vine, donkey and donkey's colt. This image we saw in 9-9 and have seen in our recent study in Matthew with the parade down

the slopes of the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem, goes all the way back to this prophetic scripture, the donkey and the donkey's colt.

He washed his garments in wine and his clothes in the blood of grapes, his eyes darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk. But we want to skip down to verse 24. You're going to go past Dan and Gad and Naphtali and get to Joseph in verse 22.

Joseph is a fruitful branch, a fruitful bar, a fruitful bar by a well. Notice the fruitful bar is mentioned twice. Why is that? Joseph gets the double portion.

It goes all the way down, should have been Reuben's. Reuben disqualifies himself, then it should have been Simeon's or Levi's. They both disqualify themselves in the Dinah incident.

Could have been Judah's. And Judah gets the rulership piece, but the double portion ratchets all the way down past all of the other brothers, the sons of Leah and the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah down to the first son of Rachel, and that's Joseph. Joseph is a kind of firstborn, but he's a stealth firstborn.

He's the firstborn of Jacob with Rachel. So he gets the double portion. So he's a fruitful bar, a fruitful bar by a well.

His branches run over the wall. The wall is designed to keep the vegetation to one side, but he surpasses it. This is like the cup that runs over, branches going over the wall.

We had a neighbor when we lived in Plano who had a couple of trees in her backyard, but the branches of these trees came over the fence and hung down and created all kinds of interesting effects on our side of the fence because these things were just so prolific. You couldn't keep them trimmed back, couldn't keep the effects on one side. But look at verse 23 and following.

This is still talking about Joseph now. Joseph. I say again, Joseph.

One of the most prodigious foreshadowings of the Lord Jesus in the entire Old Testament. Joseph. The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot at him and hated him.

But his bow remained in strength and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty of Jacob. Notice God is in italics there. The mighty one of Jacob.

From there is the shepherd, the stone of Israel. Now, how many concepts that we just read about in Zechariah do you find in this passage? There was a battle bow mentioned, right? And here we have the bow remaining in strength. There was a stone, a cornerstone mentioned.

Here we have the stone of Israel. The only thing you don't find, and you have the shepherd mentioned. Curiously, we do not have a tent or a tent peg mentioned, but everything else is here, isn't it? And it goes all the way back to not the predictions for Judah, but the predictions for Joseph.

What is the difference if you compare Judah and Joseph, what two things do you remember about their both being antecedents and foreshadowings of the Lord Jesus? What kind of foreshadowing is Judah? What's his blessing? And what is his role? And what do all of his descendants do in the kingdom of Judah, the Southern kingdom? What do they do? They are the kings. They are the rulers. They've got the choice vine and the white teeth and the strength and the power, right? What aspect of the Lord Jesus does Joseph foreshadow? He suffers.

He suffers at the hands of his brothers. And yet in an unlikely turn of events, the very act of inflicting suffering and harm and shooting arrows at him results in Joseph becoming second only to Pharaoh in ruling, but he rules the land of Egypt. Joseph is not the king of Israel, but he rules the people of Israel in the land of Egypt in a seemingly non-Jacob descended people group.

And you see foreshadowings of the church and Israel being blessed through the church and through the Lord Jesus as the head of his body. But ultimately Jesus as both the suffering servant and the coming king, our gospel of Matthew study is focused on Jesus as the Messiah to Israel, the coming king. So wonderful interweaving of themes and concepts in Zechariah that thread back through the old Testament, particularly here to Jacob's blessing in Genesis 49, which was intimately familiar to all of Zechariah's hearers.

Now, what was the one thing we didn't see? If you flip back to Zechariah chapter 10, my anger is kindled against the shepherds who are interposing themselves between the sheep and God as Israel's shepherd, bad rulership in the days of the monarchy and so on that led to captivity. And now that they have come back out, God has not reestablished the Davidic monarchy. God is basically presenting himself once again as their shepherd.

So the Lord of hosts will visit his flock, the house of Judah, and will make them as his Royal horse in the battle. From him comes the cornerstone. Now, this notice of the cornerstone is one of three figures here.

You've got the cornerstone, the tent peg and the battle bow. If you look at the cornerstone, this occurs in Isaiah chapter 28 and in Psalm 118 to refer to rulers. You can just make a note here, we're not going to look this up, but this idea of cornerstone is actually translated in the New King James Version in Isaiah 28, 13, but it's the same word that we have here.

And in Psalm 118, 22, the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone, which of course is quoted in the New Testament with direct reference to the Lord Jesus. So the idea that a good ruler and good leadership creates cohesion, isn't this an issue in our current modern political heyday and all the dust and smoke that's being kicked up in the current time? Somebody runs as a uniter, but he becomes a divider. And are you promoting unity? Are you promoting division by your policies and by your words and by your actions? A good leader and good leadership unites the people being led.

This is true whether it's military, civil, political, or spiritual. There should be unity and not

division. You can put in the margin here, Ephesians 2, 20, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.

And both in Ephesians 2 and in Ephesians 4, you have the notion of the body of Christ built up, edified, unified, directed in positive ways by the leadership that God provides. In 1 Peter 2, verses 5 through 8, you also as living stones are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Peter and Paul are one in this idea.

Whether you go to Romans 12, 1 and 2, or you go to 1 Peter 2, we are priests and we offer ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service. So you, living stones, built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is also contained in the scripture, behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious.

And he who believes on him, who trusts in him, will by no means be put to shame. Therefore, to you who believe he is precious, but to those who are disobedient, the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone, back to Psalm 118. And a stone of stumbling, a rock of offense, what is he going to be? Is he the cornerstone on which we are built, founded, stabilized, secured for eternal blessing and reward and opportunity? Or is he the stone of stumbling and the rock of offense? Scandalizo, scandalon, scandalous, the opposite of those concepts of stability and permanence.

So that's the cornerstone. You have the second idea and that stone of stumbling and a rock of offense is also a quote in Peter from Isaiah chapter 8, verses 14 and 15. He will be as a sanctuary, as a refuge, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel and a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

A trap and a snare. What happens with a trap and a snare? How does it enable people to acquire the prey that they are looking for? They are tripped up and their freedom is taken away, right? Their freedom of action, their freedom of movement is taken away by traps and snares. They are taken unawares.

No animal, no person knowingly walks into a trap unless they've got a grander gambit strategy of some kind, but you're taken unawares. You think you're on solid ground. You think you're in good shape and you find out you're not and you lose.

Isaiah 8, verse 15 goes on to say, Many among them shall stumble, they shall fall and be broken, be snared and taken. The same He who is a sanctuary, who is a foundation stone, a cornerstone, a uniter and a builder up, sorts his building materials. Anybody that's ever gone to Lowe's for lumber knows that when you get to the aisle that's got the two by fours, you had better pick them up one at a time and sight down them and see if they are straight or if they are warped.

Examine them to see if they are cracked or if they have too many knots. You do not build a good structure with inferior materials. So any builder examines the materials, keeps what is good and discards what is not.

Does anybody in their right mind think that the Lord Jesus is not doing the same with His spiritual house and His spiritual priesthood? He is looking at you and He's looking at me. Is this a straight board? Has it got cracks or chips or damage? Is it made of poor quality pine, too many knots, too many flaws, too many points of weakness where this thing could break under pressure? Can't use it. God did this with His Old Testament people in Israel.

The Lord Jesus is doing it with His New Testament church, His New Testament body. Don't think He's not examining and sorting the materials. He absolutely is.

That's Isaiah chapter 8 verses 14 and 15. Peter combines all three references, Isaiah 28, 16, Psalm 118, 22, and Isaiah 8, 14, and 15 to distill this truth of how important it is to be found faithful, to be found worthy of inclusion in the project. To those who are trusters, to those who are faithful, the Lord Jesus is precious.

We value Him because He values us. We sacrifice for Him because He sacrificed for us. We love because He first loved us.

Anybody that gets their eyes off Christ is immediately going to step off the narrow road and is immediately going to be diverted away from the narrow gate that leads to life. The guide that keeps us on that path, headed for that gate, is the Lord Jesus Himself. Eyes on Christ.

Not subjectivity, not eyes on self, not eyes on people, not eyes on society, not eyes on politics. It's fun to watch, but for our daily actions and decisions, pursuing our priorities, going after our goals, making sure our values are straight, it is eyes on Christ. To those who believe He is precious, but to those who do not believe, the head of the corner, instead of being the key to the arch that creates stability and permanence, it is going to be the stone that crushes and grinds to powder.

We're either sheep or we're goats. We are either included in the building or we are cast aside as useless. Jesus, in addition to Peter, quotes Psalm 118.22. When you get to Mark chapter 12, verse 10, have you not even read this scripture? The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

We just saw that in our study this past Sunday, going through Matthew. When the children cry out, have you never read this scripture? Do you not understand that that which you are rejecting is God's cornerstone? Paul, in Romans 9.32 and 33, puts Isaiah 8.14 and 15 with Isaiah 28.16. Romans 9.32, why is Israel in trouble? They did not seek righteousness by faith, but as it were by the law. They stumbled at that stumbling stone, and yet they were seeking righteousness.

This ought to scare us. Be afraid. We want to be righteous, but there's a way that seems right,

seems righteous, and the ends thereof are the ways of death.

We can think we're ready for solid food and we're really just babies and we need to go back to the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. Why did Israel fail at achieving righteousness? Because they didn't do it by faith, they did it by works. In their case, the works of the law.

Nothing wrong with the works that are detailed in the law that characterize righteous people, but you can't get there without faith. You can't throw a fist without an arm. You can't shoot an arrow without a bow.

You can't achieve results with bullets when you've got no gun. And the results all come by faith. They did not seek it by faith, but instead by the works of the law.

They stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written, behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, but whoever believes on him will not be put to shame. It's counterintuitive.

It's strangely irrational at the superficial glance that humility leads to victory, that submission leads to exaltation, that faith produces righteousness instead of elbows and knees and efforts producing righteousness. It doesn't comport with what our instinctive fallen human heart tells us. And we've got to get over that.

We can only get over it by the power of the Word and the power of the Spirit. That's why we're doing what we're doing tonight. But you notice the Lord Jesus and Peter and Paul all come back to this stone of stumbling and rock of offense.

The stone of Israel way back in Genesis chapter 28 verse 12. God is a stone. Stones can be good, stones can be bad, but he is the true shepherd.

From him comes the cornerstone, Zechariah 4:10. From him comes the tent peg. Can't find a tent or a tent peg anywhere pertinent in Genesis 28, but a very recent prophet and a very recent prophetic utterance that was fresh in the minds of Zechariah's audience is Amos. You can leave Genesis now and head for Amos chapter 9. Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah.

Amos chapter 9. Remember Amos is the shepherd of Tekoa. You find out in 1:1. Shepherd. This is the shepherd talking.

He's from among the shepherds in Tekoa. Amos chapter 9. I saw the Lord standing by the altar and he said, strike the doorposts that thresholds may shake and break them on the heads of them all. I will slay the last of them with the sword.

He who flees shall not get away. He who escapes shall not be delivered. Though they dig into Sheol, from there my hand shall take them.

Though they climb up to heaven, up the steps of the tower of Babel, from there I will bring them down. Though they hide themselves on top of Carmel, from there I will search and take them. Though they hide from my sight at the bottom of the sea, from there I will command the

sea serpent and it shall bite them.

Though they go into captivity before their enemies, from there I will command the sword and it shall slay them. I will set my eyes on them for harm and not for good. Why? This is a condemnation, a judgment on God's people.

You look at your superscription there. I don't have time to go back and review chapter 8, but remember the famine for the word of life? A famine for the words of the Lord back in 8.11? I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. This is God's land.

These are God's people that are going to be chased down and judged. They cannot escape. Look at verse 5 of chapter 9 in Amos.

The Lord God of hosts, he who touches the earth and it melts, and all who dwell there mourn, all of it shall swell like the river and subside like the river of Egypt. He who builds his layers in the sky and has founded his strata in the earth. It's where you get your granite and your marble.

And it's just such a beautiful three-dimensional mosaic. Only God can see it. We can slice into it and see one little surface at a time.

God can see the beauty of the whole thing. I would so love to see granite in 3D, be able to just somehow observe it. All we can see is the two-dimensional slice.

Pours them on the face of the earth. The Lord is his name. Verse 7, Are you not like the people of Ethiopia to me, O children of Israel? Says the Lord.

Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt, the Philistines from Caphter, and the Syrians from Kir? Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are on the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from the face of the earth. Yet I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, says the Lord. For surely I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, as grain is sifted in a sieve.

Not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground. It's mostly chaff, but I'm going to sift it. And if there's even one faithful grain, it won't fall to the ground.

I will find it. In the same way that he's going to canvas the earth and the heavens and the bottom of the sea to find those that are ripe for judgment, he is going to sift the nations. Even though his people are scattered throughout the entire planet, not a single faithful grain is going to fall to the ground.

Look at verse 10. All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, who say calamity shall not overtake nor confront us. But on that day, verse 11, I will raise up the tent of David which has fallen down.

Tabernacle is tent. The tent of David which has fallen down, I will repair its damage. I will raise

up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old, that they may possess the remnant of man and all the Gentiles who are called by my name.

Edom is not Edom, it's Adam. This is millennial ruling with the rod of iron the entire world. They, the sons of David, will possess the remnant of man and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord who does this thing.

The days are coming, says the Lord. The plowman shall overtake the reaper. The treader of grapes, him who sows seeds.

The mountain shall drip with sweet wine and the hills shall overflow with it. I will bring back the captives of my people, Israel. They shall build the waste cities and inhabit.

They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them. Drink wine from them. Remember the double repetition of wine for Judah.

This is going to be the blessing of the risen and restored tent of David. Tent pegs, hold that tent up. It is restored.

It is repaired. It is dominant for 10 centuries in the millennial kingdom. Plant vineyards and drink wine from them.

They will make gardens and eat fruit from them. I will plant them in their land. No longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them, says the Lord your God.

This is a fresh prophecy. This is like Peter saying that these opponents twist the writings of Paul as they do the other scriptures. When Zechariah is talking, the ink is hardly dry on Amos' prophecy.

So these are well-known words. The tent peg, the cornerstone. Well, we've got something else to say about the battle bow, but it's time for us to pause here and take our break.

But listen, think about that fallen tent. The tent is fallen, but it's not gone. And God is going to raise it up.

There are people who think, well, there's going to be fulfillment of the Old Testament covenant promises in and through the church. We're the new Israel and so on. Nonsense.

When you see the dry bones in Ezekiel's valley and he prophesies, and they are covered with flesh and sinew and skin, and then he prophesies again and they stand up and they draw breath and they're a mighty army. That is resurrection. When you see this tent of David that has fallen down, he doesn't build David a new tent.

He doesn't build him a house of cedar and gold and silver. He raises the same tent. The tents are going to be raised.

They are going to be resuscitated. The language is so clear. This is resuscitation for the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

I will pour out my spirit on all flesh is the new covenant to Israel and to Judah. They're going to be raised. Not a single one will be missed.

The same God that will find the smallest grain, no matter how far scattered or where it got planted in the ground. In the days of captivity, in the days of scattering, in the days of judgment of the rest of the nation, God will find every single grain. Not one grain falls to the ground.

That is the level of attention, the level of care, the level of detail that God has in his plan and his purpose for you and for me. Don't think we're all facing the crowd. We're lost in the confusion.

Not a grain falls to the ground. Not a sparrow falls to the ground. The very hairs on our heads are numbered.

It's just unfathomable when you look around at how many people there are crawling around on the planet. It's ants. It's termites.

You think, oh my gosh, how could God possibly keep track? That's how great our God is. He knows everything about us individually. It's individual grains.

He's not talking about bushel baskets and big fields. Individual grains. This promise to Israel, the same God and the same Lord Jesus Christ that is the cornerstone and the stone is stumbling and the rock of offense for them is our rock, our shepherd, our savior, the head of all things to us as members of his body.

And he doesn't lose track of a single part of his body. That's us. So if God before us, who can be against us? If the world is going to Sheol in a handbasket, that's not anything that's going to determine our ultimate fate.

We may have an adventuresome ride. We may get the chance to display our faith in endurance and under stress and in tribulation, but the testing of our faith produces patience. Patience is going to have its perfect work and we will be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Wonderful, exciting times in which we live. And we're going to look at some specifics about those times when we come back from the break.