

PostExilicProphets 21-12-29b

We're ready now to pick up our study here in the wonderful book of Zechariah. Remember his name, Zechar. There are at last count over 25 men in the Old Testament named Zechariah.

So yeah, it was a popular name because it means the Lord remembers. Zechar is the verb for remembering and that is really the theme. And when you think about what God is saying to his people in the prophecy of Zechariah in and through this communication, it is, I remember you.

You are my people. I know your situation. I've made provision for it.

I have a wonderful plan that is going to culminate in glory for God and blessing for his people. That's the overarching truth of it. And it is just as true for us as it was for them.

And there are so many parallels and analogies of God's watch care over his people, even during periods of judgment, even when they are erring and falling short again and again, those who recognize the error of their ways, those who repent, those who look to God, those who claim his promises will be vindicated. Their change of mind will be honored by God with restoration. Now we're going to see that in these upcoming sermons.

We've already seen the first eight visions and we've seen the first two sermons. So we're three quarters of the way through the first section of Zechariah. The second section, of course, being the two burdens.

So when we get to the third sermon, this one is a seven part sermon. This is my kind of sermon, lengthy, full of parts. This is chapter eight, verses one through 17.

So it begins with an affirmation of God's promises. God is going to promise and affirm promises in seven different sections here. There are actually five affirmations by God and then two exhortations that make up this seven part sermon.

So this is again, chapter eight, verses one through 17. And it begins with again, the word of the Lord of hosts came saying, thus says the Lord of hosts. Each of these seven sections begins this way.

You remember, thus says the Lord is the marker. So number one, thus says the Lord of hosts. This is eight two of Zechariah.

I am zealous for Zion with great zeal, with great fervor. I am zealous for her. This is a three fold expression of care, of desire, of concern that God has for Zion, which of course represents his people.

So that's number one, God's zeal for Zion. He leads with this. I care about you, God says.

Number two, thus says the Lord in verse three, I will return to Zion. I will dwell in the midst of

Jerusalem. Remember our excursion into this in the first session, God was dwelling with man in the garden that got interrupted by man's failure.

God reestablishes that presence and opportunity amongst his people with the tabernacle and later the temple. But through disobedience and distraction and all of the failures that we perpetrate, the people of God lost that presence. Ezekiel pictures it when the glory of God rises up from the holy of holies and passes through the holy place and stops at the threshold and then departs heading east and goes out amongst the nations.

The presence of God represented by his glory departed and Ezekiel pictures that in his prophecy. And this is a promise that God cares about his people just because he's left doesn't mean he doesn't care about them and he is going to return. What a wonderful promise for those who are suffering through the consequences of their nation failing.

This promise is a comfort and encouragement. It provides expectation and hope. So that's number two.

Jerusalem shall be called the city of truth. God is going to dwell in truth. What does Jesus tell the woman at the well in Samaria? The day is coming when it's not going to matter what mountain you're on.

Is it Zion or is it Gerizim? Those who worship him will worship him in spirit and in truth. Jerusalem is going to be the city of truth. It's going to be the residence of God.

Number three, verse four of chapter eight. Thus says the Lord of hosts, old men and old women shall sit again in the streets of Jerusalem, each one with his staff in his hand because of great age, the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in his street. Number three, God is going to return and dwell in Zion and everyone, whether they are young, whether they are old, there's a name for this figure of speech where you say, you know, from pillar to post, from top to bottom, from head to foot.

Well, from old to young, that encompasses everyone. Everyone is going to enjoy this wonderful environment in Zion, in the city of Jerusalem. Notice also, this is the millennial kingdom and there still are in the resurrection of Israel, people who are old and people who are young.

How many times have we seen in the millennial kingdom there will be children and there will be those who grow old because this is not the full blown resurrection body like the Lord Jesus has and that we will immediately receive at the rapture. This is the, this is the valley of dry bones, resurrection, physical bodies, much restored, much like the pre flood types who lived 900 years and more. I remember, uh, one of your little Bible trivia questions, how long did Methuselah live? Man who's lived longer than anybody else.

Remember how long he lived? 969 years, almost a millennium. These people will be able to live all through the millennium, but they'll get old and some of them are going to start out as children. I see no mention of childbirth in the millennium, but I do see many examples of

children playing near the snake, uh, dens, um, leading formerly ferocious animals playing in the streets.

That is number three, young and old and, and by implication, everyone in between are going to enjoy peace and happiness playing in the streets. The old people watching, if you've ever seen old people watching little kids, I had a whole church full of people doing this for a while. Uh, they were just fascinated by our two toddler daughters.

Couldn't get enough of it. Grandparents love to see grandkids. Great grandparents love to see great grandkids.

And so the old people are going to sit in the street and watch the young children playing. And it's going to be wonderfully gratifying. There is no threat.

There's no danger. There's no, uh, problem at all. They're just sitting there enjoying this wonderful, uh, prosperity.

Number four, thus says the Lord of hosts in verse six, if this is too hard, if this is impossible in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, is it going to be too hard or impossible in my eyes, disbelief, lack of credulity on the part of the people isn't going to stop God from doing this. This is going to happen. This is one of those non-negotiable non-conditional prophecies.

This is an absolute certainty. The uncertainty is who of God's people will be there to enjoy it. Who is going to be inside, who will pass under the rod, who is going to be kept out.

I do not know you, where you are from depart from me, you workers of iniquity. You did not change your mind. You did not cleanse your heart.

You didn't learn the lessons of the fathers who went into captivity and lost all of this because of their disobedience and failure to hear the word of God that we saw in the earlier sermon. And because of that, they won't be in there to enjoy this. If it's too hard for the remnant, that doesn't mean it's too hard for God.

So disbelief will not prevent the fulfillment, but it will prevent the enjoyment of it on the part of some. It's going to happen. Question is, will you be there? Number five, thus says the Lord of hosts in verse seven, behold, I will deliver my people from the land of the East and from the land of the West.

I will bring them back. They will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. They shall be my people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness.

Truth, truth. Do you hear the truth? Do you heed the truth? Do you live in the truth? Do you honor the truth? Do you love the truth? If you don't love the truth, you don't love God. If you love God, you love the truth.

That is going to result in deliverance from scattering. You may have been scattered to the West,

may have been scattered to the East. You will be gathered in truth.

You'll be gathered because of appreciation for the truth into the place of truth. It's all about the truth and the deliverance that God mentions in verse seven. I will deliver my people from where they have been scattered.

You can't be scattered so far. Think about Psalm 139, where David says, where can I go from your presence? I could go to the deepest sea. I could go to the farthest corners.

You are there. You see my inward parts. You saw me when I was formed in my mother's womb.

Psalm 139, there is no place the people of God can go that he is not intimately aware of everything about them. And if they go to the West or to the East, God can easily bring them back. It is conditioned on, can you handle the truth? Do you appreciate and love the truth? People who don't, why would God bring them in there to be vibrating and reacting against the truth? That is number five.

Now those five promises and affirmations lead to two applications, two exhortations. And so number six and number seven in this seven part sermon is the application. This is what you want to do in any good sermon, any good Bible class, turn the corner into application.

We observe and we interpret. Now we need to apply. So application number one, number six is in verse nine.

Thus says the Lord of hosts, let your hands be strong. You who have been hearing in these days, these words by the mouth of the prophets, remember the in doubt indictment on the previous page, your fathers didn't hear. They didn't heed.

They didn't respond. God says, I've given you the status report of what's going on in the present and my plans and purposes to resolve it. I have given you my promises and affirmations here in the first five sections of this sermon.

Here's what you need to do. Let your hands be strong. If you've been listening and you're paying attention, it's like God said to Joshua, be strong and have a good courage.

Be not afraid. The Lord, your God is with you wherever you go. Even if you're not gathered from the East or from the West yet, you're going to be, make your hands strong.

God is going to resolve. God is going to establish. God is going to vindicate.

God is going to come to Zion and he's going to put the young and the old who respond and who heed into that environment. So be strong. Make your hands strong.

Let your hands be strong. Why? Because you hear these words, these prophets who spoke in the day the foundation was laid for the house of the Lord of hosts. That's Haggai and Zechariah.

This is our prophecy right here. That the temple might be built for before these days, there was no wages for man or any higher for beast. There was no peace from the enemy for whoever went in or came out.

I set all men everywhere against his neighbor. And you can look back. We saw this in Haggai 2.14. God stirred them up and said, Hey, you're not paying attention to me.

Don't you realize that you're only here by my grace. And it might be Heston through my deliverance. You're not paying attention to me.

You want me to start letting these people back in? You want me to let you have problem? Notice verse 11. But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days, says the Lord of hosts. The seed shall be prosperous.

The vine will give its fruit. The ground will give its increase and the heaven shall give their due. You go back to Haggai chapter one, verse six.

I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all of these affirmation promise. Make your hands strong. I just gave you these promises.

Let me tell you again, it shall come to pass verse 13, that just as you were a curse among the nations, Oh, house of Judah and house of Israel, 10 lost tribes. Nobody knows where they are. God says, look, you're somewhere.

I know where you are. Even if others don't house of Judah and house of Israel been gone since seven 21 BC, but God speaks to them. God says, I'm going to unite you.

And of course, a lot of this is going to be by way of resurrection, resuscitation, bringing them back into the kingdom house of Judah and house of Israel. So I will save you and you shall be a blessing. Do not fear.

Let your hands be strong. The beginning and ending exhortation. What do you do with strong hands? You do good work.

You do good work with strong hands. Let your hands be strong. Let your hands be strong.

Beautiful symmetry there. That is exhortation one of two, which is the sixth. And now the seventh section of this sermon, sermon number three, the final exhortation, the seventh section of this sermon is in verses 14 through 17, thus says the Lord of hosts.

You've got the clear marker there. This is the seventh section, just as I determined to punish you when your father's provoked me to wrath, says the Lord of hosts. And I would not relent.

So again, in these days, I am determined to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Do not fear. And the implication is just as I did not relent in judgment, I will not relent in blessing for those who qualify for those who are, are you Dokia well-disposed toward God's goodness.

These things are going to happen. And God will not relent in his blessing any more than he relented in his judgment. He is consistent again in these days, verse 15, I'm determined to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.

Do not fear. These are things you shall do. Once again, this is the exhortation, speak each man, the truth to his neighbor.

Do we need to point out that God is emphatically pointing out the value of truth, his truth, truth from him, truth about him, truth about his plan and purpose, truth about his coming Messiah. Speak each man, the truth to his neighbor, give judgments, give judgment in your gates for truth, justice, and peace judgment in the gates. This is the legal system.

This is trials. This is adjudications of civil matters. This is not person to person mano a mano judgment in the gates.

This is the court system. Ensure that your judges and your courts, the decisions rendered by your elders and so on are fair and right. Person to person speak truth, each man to his neighbor.

This is the interpersonal level and truth should rise to the level of judgment in the gates, truth, justice, and peace. Let none of you think evil in his heart against your neighbor and do not love a false oath. I value the truth for all.

These are things that I hate, says the Lord. All these are things that I hate and you should hate them just as much as I do. And by hating a thing, you don't want to see others practice it.

And you certainly do not want to practice it yourself. Keep your finger here and turn quickly back to Psalm 139, Psalm 139. We only just have a second to look at this.

This is a beautiful, beautiful Psalm. I don't have time to read the whole thing to you, but you remember this one, Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know, my sitting down, my rising up.

You understand my thoughts are far off. You comprehend my path and my lying down. Beautiful expression in the days of David.

This is a Psalm of David. Hundreds of years earlier, these same concepts that God is reaffirming to this returning generation of Israelites. David understood these things.

David was a man after God's own heart. David said, you know all about me. I know your reconnaissance team has searched out and knows the evil that surrounds me and the difficulties that face me, the challenges that I have to overcome.

I know you know these things. And you unfortunately skip all the way down to verse 16. Your eyes saw my substance being yet unformed.

And in your book, they all were written. The days fashioned for me when as yet there were none of them. How precious also are your thoughts to me.

Oh God, how great is the sum of them. If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand. When I awake, I am still with you.

Oh, that you would slay the wicked. Oh God, depart from me. Therefore, you bloodthirsty men, for they speak against you wickedly.

Your enemies take your name in vain. Do I not hate them, oh Lord, who hate you? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you? I hate them with perfect hatred. I count them my enemies.

There are people who cannot abide David's expression of sharing God's hate and that hate is just a bad thing. God is love. God is light and in him is no darkness.

God is love and in him is no hate. Sorry, but you've got a two-dimensional God if you don't recognize that there are things that God hates. What does God hate? What does David say? David knows God as few did in the Old Testament.

Those who rise up against God, David says those who rebel against God, I hate them with a perfect hatred. It's a divine hatred. It is a sinless hatred.

You can have wrath. Don't be characterized by it. Don't let the sun go down on it, but there are things that God hates.

These six things that the Lord hate, yea, seven are an abomination to him, a proud look, a lying tongue, lack of truth, and so on. And then it concludes. There are people who want to slice out verse 19 through 22 and just close up, put 23 and 24 right after 18 and oh, I love this Psalm.

Just please don't read those four verses. I just can't take the hate. These are the thoughts of God.

Back to Zechariah. I set all men against. I will not treat as it was before.

Let your hands be strong. Just as I determined in section seven here to punish your fathers when they provoked me to wrath. God is not a God of wrath.

He was provoked to wrath by people who did not abide in his truth. I would not relent. So again, in these days, I'm determined to do good to Jerusalem and to Judah.

Do not fear. Speak truth to your neighbor. Give truth, justice, and peace in the gates.

Let none of you think evil in your heart against your neighbor. Do not love a false oath for all these are things that I hate, says the Lord. Hate the things I hate.

Love the things I love. Well, that's the conclusion of sermon number three. Beautiful, succinct

expression of so many basic truths that should guide the people of God, Old Testament or new.

Well, then we come to sermon number four. This is going to finish chapter eight, beginning at verse 18. The word of the Lord of hosts came to me saying, thus says the Lord of hosts.

Now he's going to return to this question of the fasts. And he says the fast of the fourth month, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh and the fast of the 10th. These are God's feasts.

These are the ones outlined in the law of Moses, not the ones they had made up mourning their judgment. These are God's feasts. The fourth, the fifth, the seventh, the 10th shall be joy and gladness and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah.

Therefore, love, truth and peace. Is God repeating himself a few times here about the importance of truth for peace? That's the first section of the sermon, thus says the Lord of hosts. This is the second section.

It's got three sections. This is number two. Thus says the Lord of hosts, people shall yet come inhabitants of many cities.

The inhabitants of one shall go to another saying, let us continue to go and pray before the Lord and seek the Lord of hosts. I myself will go also. Yes, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and to pray before the Lord promise confirmation, affirmation of future blessing of the lofty status, the admired status, the desirable environment that will prevail in Jerusalem.

And then the third section here in verse 23, thus says the Lord of hosts in those days, 10 men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man saying, let us go with you for we have heard Emmanuel. We have heard that God is with you. That's sermon number four.

That brings us to chapter nine through 14, which is the second section of the book. It's two burdens. Uh, chapter nine, 10 and 11 is the first burden chapter 12, 13 and 14 is the second burden.

And in the middle of those burdens, we're going to have a set piece. Just as we saw the crowning of high priest Joshua in between the visions and the sermons, we're going to see that there is a similar centerpiece between these burdens. So this is where we find ourselves now is in chapter nine through 11, and we're finishing chapter 11 and fixing to go into the final section of the burden in chapters 12 through 14.

So in burden number one, which began in chapter nine, the burden of the word of the Lord against the land of Hadrach and Damascus against Hamath and against Tyre and Sidon. We, you remember this, this is recent. I'm not going to belabor the review.

God is going to judge the nations chapter nine, verses one through eight. And at the same

time, he is going to honor and protect his people. He is going to honor and protect his people.

He is going to judge the nations. God loves his people. God hates the nations.

You remember love and hate in the sense of policy. Jacob, have I loved Esau? Have I hated not an emotional bitter wrath, a policy of preservation, blessing, lifting up, providing peace and an environment of truth to the nations. It is going to be judgment.

He will judge the nations. So there is a, an application now for in the, in the first part of this burden, verse nine, because God is going to camp around his house because he is going to prevent oppressors from passing through anymore. Rejoice greatly.

Verse nine, O daughter of Zion, shout O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your King is coming to you. He is just, he is a delivered one.

Remember we corrected that Psalm 33, 16 and 17 lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. This is the, this is the suffering servant entrance. This is the non-ostentatious non-conquering invitation interest entrance.

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 end of the earth. So you can return and receive double restoration. If you suffered under God's judgment, if you return, if you turn and return, you will be restored double.

Look at verse 12, return. Number one, rejoice. Verse nine, number two, return.

Verse 12 and number three, chapter 10, verse one request. This is my, my nod to Dallas seminary. I'm giving you an alliterating response to God's communication of this burden.

When he says, he's going to judge the nation's honor and protect his people. The response should be rejoicing in verse nine, returning in verse 12 and requesting in chapter 10, verse one, ask the Lord for rain in the time of the laddering, which is the spring. The Lord will make flashing clouds.

He will give them showers of rain grass in the field for everyone by request. Then starting in verse two, you have God's indictment, God's condemnation of bad leadership. Idols speak delusions.

Diviners envision lies and tell false dreams. They comfort in vain. Therefore the people wander in their way like sheep.

They are in trouble because there's no genuine shepherd instead of a caring shepherd. They have Tara theme. They have diviners.

They have, uh, bad leadership who comfort in vain. So verse three, my anger is kindled against these false shepherds and I will punish the goat herds. The Lord of hosts will visit his flock, the house of Judah, and we'll make them as his Royal horse in the battle.

From him comes the cornerstone from him, the tent peg from him, the battle bow from him, every ruler together. They should be like mighty men who tread down enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle. They shall fight because the Lord is with them and the writers on horses shall be put to shame.

Notice there is your King coming riding on a full, the Colt of a donkey. That's one picture. That's one aspect.

That's one side of the coin. That is the suffering servant aspect of Jesus coming in humility. There's no, no former comeliness that we should desire him.

He doesn't come by force. He doesn't force himself upon anyone he's riding in. You can accept him or not, but to those who reject him, he is not coming along on a donkey saying, Hey, please follow me.

Don't you see how humble I am? He is coming as Yahweh Sabaoth Lord of the armies. He is on a horse and he's going to use his people as an army to crush and tread down these enemies in the streets. This is also the coming King within the space of one page here.

You have both pictures looking only at conquest. Only at dominance is a mistake. Looking only at humility and only at service and only at suffering in the service of mankind is also a grievous shortcoming in Bible understanding.

It is both. And this, what there are contentions and debates about authorship, especially in the latter section of Zachariah. They're willing to allow that, that a prophet named Zachariah wrote the visions and the sermons.

But when you get to the burdens, they say, well, I don't know, maybe this was done by somebody else. What they don't say is that chapter nine and chapter 10 are not linked. Nobody says that because they very manifestly are, they are structurally linked.

They are linked by vocabulary. They're linked by symmetry. Nobody argues that nine and 10 don't belong together.

Well, look at the picture of the coming King in chapter nine and in chapter 10, he is both. So you have the deceivers and false shepherds are going to be judged. And the foundation of this promise is in the house of Judah.

This is where the horse is going to come from. This is where this cornerstone, the tent peg, the battle bow, and every ruler are going to come from Judah. The tribe of Judah goes back to the prophecy of Jacob about Judah with the teeth that are white as milk and the donkey tied to the

vine and a ruler will not depart from between his feet until Shiloh comes.

Right? So God's word is a consistent, un-terrible, un-separable, inseparable fabric. The foundation of the promise is the house of Judah, but it is also going to extend blessing to the house of Ephraim. So in verses four through six, you see Judah, uh, actually verses three through six.

Then in verses seven through 11, you see Ephraim. Ephraim is going to be like a mighty man. Their heart shall rejoice as if with wine.

Their children shall see it and be glad. I will sow them among the peoples. Verse nine, they're going to be in far countries, but they will remember the Lord.

They will live together with their children and they shall return. Verse nine, Ephraim shall return just as Judah is going to return. That's why God's new covenant in the latter days, God says, I will make a new covenant with the house of Judah and the house of Israel, Ephraim.

They're all coming back. I will also, verse 10, bring them back from the land of Egypt and gather them from Assyria. That's the South and the North.

I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon. This was the traditional haunts of the 10 Northern tribes. Remember two and a half tribes stayed in, in Gilead.

Didn't come across the Jordan. All the depths of the river shall dry up. The pride of Assyria shall be brought down.

The scepter of Egypt shall depart. He talked about gathering from the East and from the West. Now he's talking about gathering from the North and from the South.

That brings us to our chapter, chapter 11. Open your doors. Oh, Lebanon.

This again, chapter 11, verses one through 17, uh, is judgment on the bad shepherds. He returns to that theme that he introduced in chapter 10 and chapter 11. Here is what's going to happen to the shepherds.

I dismissed the shepherds. I break the staffs and so on. Well, that pretty much catches us up to where we are.

I want to close with a quick trip to Jeremiah chapter 32. Now, as you're turning there, listen to me, talk Zachariah. What timeframe is he relative to the captivity? He's immediately after the return from the captivity, right? He's immediately after it.

Jeremiah, where does, where is he time-wise relative to the captivity? He's the last prophet before the captivity. Remember people were saying, Jeremiah, come with us, flee. We're going to go to Egypt.

Uh, we we've got to leave. And, and it's suspected that Jeremiah did something to squirrel away the ark of the covenant and the other, uh, accouterments that remained in the temple before it was destroyed. Jeremiah, right before Zachariah, right after, right? The last warnings to Judah to repent and to not repeat the mistakes of their fathers were delivered by Jeremiah.

The first reminders of that after they come back from Babylon and from Persia are in the, on the lips of Jeremiah of Zachariah, right? So Jeremiah chapter 32, I marked it with my \$3 bill chapter two and chapter 32 and chapter 33, the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the 10th year of Zedekiah. I remembered him when I was going through seminary because Zedekiah, he's Z, he's the last King before they go out, uh, which was the 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar. King of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem.

Jeremiah, the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the King of Judah's house. Zedekiah King of Judah had shut him up. Why do you prophesy and say, let's says the Lord behold, I will give this city into the hand of the King of Babylon and he shall take it.

I don't like hearing a message of judgment from you, Jeremiah. So I'm going to imprison you. God's a God of love.

God's the God of Israel. He's going to lift us up. He's going to give us victory.

He's, he's a God of promise and he loves us. We're his people. He's our God.

Don't talk about these negative things. So he imprisoned him. Thus says the Lord in verse three, I will give this city into the hand of the King of Babylon.

He shall take it. Zedekiah King of Judah shall not escape from the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the King of Babylon shall speak with him face to face and see him eye to eye. Then he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon and there he shall be until I visited him, says the Lord, though you fight with the Chaldeans, you shall not succeed.

Jeremiah said, verse six, the word of Lord came to me, Hanumel, the son of Shalom, your uncle will come to you and say, buy my field, which is in Anathoth. The rest of chapter 32 is the record of Jeremiah buying this field at the word of the Lord for 17 pieces of silver in verse nine and 10, 17 shekels of silver. I signed the deed and sealed it, took witnesses, weighed the money in the scales.

So in this situation, right before Zedekiah goes out, God tells Jeremiah, buy a field in the presence of witnesses, pay silver for it, and then take the deed and seal it up. Look at verse 14, take these deeds, both the purchase deed, which is sealed and this deed, which is open, put them in an earthen vessel that they may last many days. For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.

So Jeremiah invests in this land, which is about to be overrun and taken by the Babylonians. God says, buy it anyway. And your title deed, there's one that's open and one that's shut.

We'll do this part of Jeremiah one of these days. It's so fascinating, but God says, put it in a jar and tuck it away. One of these days, this deed is going to work again.

It's going to be valid again, but it's a long time. It's many days. Well, I'll have to leave you to read the rest of this, but remember when Zechariah, as we were reviewing, God is speaking and he says, is this too marvelous for the people to understand? Does the remnant find my words too marvelous? And if they do, is it too marvelous for me? Remember that it's not, it's not too hard for me.

They may think it's too hard. They may think, well, gosh, that's really stretches my faith to believe that. Look at verse 26 here in Jeremiah 32, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah saying, behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh.

Is there anything too hard for me? Therefore, that says the Lord, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. He'll take it. Chaldeans who fight against this city will come and sit on fire and burn it houses on whose roofs they have offered incense to bail and poured out drink offerings to other gods to provoke me to anger because the children of Israel and the children of Judah had done only evil before me from their youth.

The children of Israel have provoked me only to anger with the work of their hands, says the Lord. Remember our review, let your hands be strong, pursue truth. Let your hands be strong, be people of truth, speak truth to your neighbor.

Let there be truth and justice in your gates. Truth. They provoke me only to anger with the works of their hands.

This city has been a provocation of my anger and my fury. Verse 31 from the day they built it, even to this day. So I will remove it from before my face because of all the evil of the children of Israel and the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to get the idea that God is provoked.

How many times does he say, provoke to anger, provoke to anger, provoke to anger? Why do you think judgment comes? Not because God is God of wrath and he needs all kinds of, of, uh, blood to, to make him happy. He is trying to be merciful. He's trying to be gracious.

He's trying to preserve and protect and defend. He is ultimately desirous of dwelling with people, but all they do is provoke him with their thoughts, with their deeds, with the works of their hands. He says, I'm a little bit provoked here.

This is why your city is going to be burned. Not because I'm a God of wrath because you are a people of evil. They turned to me the back and not the face.

Verse 33, though I taught them rising up early in teaching, they have not listened to receive instruction. You remember in our review, your fathers, I gave them truth. I gave them the word.

I sent them prophet after prophet, but they did not listen. They did not hear. They did not hear.

The same message after the captivity as before the captivity, maybe now with this smack down 70 years worth of captivity, plus maybe now they will listen. And Zachariah is repeating the message of Jeremiah. I'm out of time for tonight.

Please, at your first opportunity, continue reading Jeremiah 32 and 33 in the light of what we have just reviewed in Zachariah, you will see that they are a matched set of bookends with the captivity in the middle. They match exactly. It's the same God speaking through Jeremiah that speaks through Zachariah.

And by the way, the same God who speaks to us. Jesus said, I am the truth. You don't come to the father, but by me, it is all about not being deceived nor partaking of or participating in or perpetrating deceit.

Those who love the truth are going to find God. Those who don't love God will not find the truth. Those who don't love the truth will not find God.

You see Jesus telling the Pharisees, if you had listened to my father, you would listen to me. You rejected his truth. That's why you're rejecting mine.

You search the scriptures thinking that there's eternal life in them. They testify of me, but you've actually rejected those scriptures. And that's why you're rejecting me.

Even as you hold up the scriptures, you're rejecting them. Even as you claim to know God, you don't know him at all. If you knew him, you would know me.

Very clear, very poignant, very convicting for us. If we hope to go forward, if we hope to participate in this beautiful, wonderful future kingdom and the kingdom beyond that, where God is going to dwell with man, we have to be people of truth. There is no other way.

Jesus is the only way. I used to sing a Good News Club song, Jesus is the only way because he is God's truth incarnate. He is the word made flesh.

And if we're not invested in him, we're not invested in God. And we're going to be in the darkness, which is outside. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

We're going to pick up in Zechariah a week from today, Lord willing, and we haven't all, when I say Lord willing, and the saints don't rise. We'll see you next Wednesday night. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for how powerfully your Old Testament scriptures speak to us about the wonderful grace you express through the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that as we reflect and meditate on these things, that your Holy Spirit will minister them to our hearts so that we can see clearly, to get any debris out of our eyes as we view ourselves and others, and seek to shine his lights in the midst of an ever-darkening generation. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.