

PostExilicProphets 22-02-02b

We're ready to resume our study now after our wonderful blessing in music, wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. It's a wonderful prayer to pray, a wonderful concept to reflect on that we have that fountain for cleansing available to us even now that is spoken of in Zechariah chapter 13. I did misspeak in the first session when I said Joash instead of Josiah who was killed in his chariot in disguise.

Too many similar letters in those names, maybe Joash and then King Josiah. But it was Josiah and this was 2 Kings 23 verses 29 through 30 and 2 Chronicles 35, 20 through 25. And you remember that there was a great occasion of mourning.

Josiah presided over wonderful celebration, renewal of the Passover and so on. And he was one of these that presided over great hilarity and a great upward pull. And then his tragic and unnecessary death resulted in great sorrow and mourning in Israel.

This brings us to a note in 2 Chronicles 35, 25. Jeremiah composed laments for Josiah. And to this day, all the men and women singers commemorate Josiah in the laments.

These became a tradition in Israel and are written in the laments. That's 2 Chronicles 35, 25. And we're going to be returning to Jeremiah here in a few moments.

The content that we've seen in chapter 13, where unclean spirits and prophecy are going to be eliminated, there's not going to be a call to conviction and change of mind from prophets. There's not going to be any new revelation or new imparting of information from God in that day, nor will there be the pull of evil in the land. These things can and will pertain outside the but not in the land.

And this is one of the benefits, one of the beatitudes of qualifying to pass under the rod and dwell in the land. In the same way, we today, when we pay attention, prioritize our spiritual life, looking unto Jesus, the beginner and the ender of our faith, looking back to his authorship of our salvation in the past, looking forward to the completion of our salvation when he returns for us and takes us to be with himself, present us before his father, if we qualify, make us citizens of the new Jerusalem, if we qualify. Such a wonderful environment, such a wonderful opportunity lies ahead if we are wise enough to invest ourselves in it.

Now, this is the this is the theme. Then it looks back. It looks ahead to the fountain of cleansing.

Why is there going to be a fountain of cleansing? Because the shepherd was stricken and the sheep were scattered. There is a necessary debility. There's a necessary negative.

There is necessary suffering and scattering. There is a necessary striking of the shepherd with the sword. The sword represents national capital punishment.

You remember Paul says in Romans, you know, the government doesn't bear the sword in vain

and it's talking about capital punishment. The shepherd is going to be stricken with a sentence of death by the controlling nation and the sheep will be scattered. If this had not happened, there would not be a fountain for cleansing.

There wouldn't be a spirit of grace and supplication. There wouldn't be one who had been pierced to be mourned. God works these things together for good.

Patty and I were listening to some judges episodes in the last few days and we heard one this morning and it is fascinating to see the career of Samson because he's never a spiritual giant. He is always self-interested. He's a Nazarite from birth but Nazarites are not supposed to partake of strong drink and Samson is getting drunk.

They're supposed to keep themselves from women and he's got wives and girlfriends. He is a man of violence. He's a man of passions.

And God harnesses his loose canon nature and grants him strength to be a thorn in the side of the Philistines and ultimately a great scourge and judgment on the Philistines for afflicting the people of God. But in a way, Samson is the rod of God's anger and the staff of his indignation and like the Assyrians centuries later, God is ultimately going to have to deal with Samson because he doesn't value his gift. He doesn't value his mission.

And in the final scenes, there's one part of his identity of his Nazarite vow that he has always kept and he's never cut his hair. Remember it's in seven braids and he's completely trampled every other part of the Nazarite lifestyle, but he's never cut his hair. A razor has never touched his head.

And at the point that he places his confidence in Delilah instead of in God, things change. He loses that supernatural divinely granted strength. The other false notions of how his strength could be overcome that he gave Delilah, well, if you bind me with green bow strings that have never been dried, I'll be as weak as any other man.

If you bind me with new ropes that have never been used for any work, I will be helpless. These are repeatable and easily tested things. You got bow strings today, if you break them, you can get more bow strings.

If you get new ropes and you break them, you can get more ropes. He says, but he keeps getting closer to the truth and he now starts talking about his hair and he says for the third time, well, if you weave my hair into the warp and woof of a rug on a weaver's loom, I'll be helpless. You know, he's talking about his hair and his hair is so long that it's the width of a standard room size rug.

And so you pull these braids through and you get the idea that maybe Delilah, and how is he so insensate that this can be done to him? He's not aware. He is not alert. He's not focused.

He doesn't treasure and value that which God has entrusted to him. This is such a powerful

lesson for us. It's a lesson for Israel.

This is what the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem are going to mourn over when they receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit, which we already have. So you get the idea that she takes one of his seven braids, runs it through there, and then hits the treadle on the loom and switches the threads so that it's entrapped. And then she puts the second one in there and she hits the foot pedal and traps the second one and weaves all seven of his braids into this rug.

And there's no way they can be pulled free. There's just too much, you know, two are better than one and a three-fold cord is not quickly broken. Well, try all of the carpet threads in a big loom and all seven of his braids entrapped therein.

But when she yells, Samson, the Philistines are upon you, he just tears everything apart. His hair rips through all of these strings and breaks the loom into pieces. She startles him awake three times and he doesn't begin to grasp that she is not on his side.

She is not his friend. She is not one in whom he should confide. He has three wake-up calls.

They're almost literally wake-up calls. Samson, the Philistines are upon you. He's obviously been asleep when she binds him.

Perhaps he's in a drunken stupor or whatever. I don't think the Philistines jumped out. I think they were lying in wait, but they waited to see if he was truly going to be bound because they were basically not willing to take a big drubbing from him.

So they remained in hiding in this large room. And three times he is given a warning that Delilah is not to be trusted. But in the end, because she vexes him just the way his original wife did, he gives to her the secret of his strength.

And so while he is sleeping, she calls in a barber and he clips off those seven braids. And in the same way that we've seen these thematic elements that don't match in a one-for-one analog of a prophetic archetype and then a fulfillment later on, you think about the Lord Jesus, who has voluntarily given up his strength, his deity, and comes in the form of a servant and the likeness of man, and therefore is subject to death, which he wouldn't be if he had retained his divine nature. And this then is realized by Judas, who then goes to the barber, the chief priests and scribes and Pharisees, and they engineer the means by which his life is taken.

And in this case, the means by which Samson is bound and chained to the grinding wheel. But the point here is awareness. We have the spirit.

We can look at our lives and say, is Delilah whispering in my ear? Am I going to set aside the secret of my strength, which is the word of God and the spirit of God, the plan and purpose of God, the wonderful hope, the potential and the opportunity that lies ahead. If someone distracts us from that, if someone tries to enmesh us in the present and get us thinking about social issues and immediate circumstances and momentary hilarity or momentary happiness or

momentary fulfillment, and we sell our birthright, as it were, for a mess of pottage, what a tragedy. But God works Samson together for good, and he's going to end up killing more in his death than he ever did in his life.

The Lord Jesus is going to accomplish more in his death in terms of healing and restoration and salvation than he did in his lifetime of individual works of healing and beneficence. There's wonderful thematic ties from Samson and so many other Old Testament episodes to the Lord Jesus looking forward, anticipating things that will be recognized by those who come to know Christ in his day and ever since. Well, here in chapter 13, we have this.

I want to return to one quick thing. You know how this is. I've done this before.

I apologize in advance. I know it messes up your notes to have to go back and try to write something in the margins. But this thing about the poor of the flock has just been bugging me ever since we did chapter 11.

And I've been whittling away at it, and I think it has finally yielded. I finally think I've made sense of it. And I just wanted to pass this on to you.

Remember the poor of the flock? This this was kind of confusing to me when we went through it. You go back to chapter 11 and verse four. Thus says the Lord, my God, feed the flock for slaughter.

My excuse for talking about this is strike the shepherd and the sheep will scatter. So here's the flock and. The instruction is.

Feed the flock for slaughter, whose owners slaughter them and feel no guilt. Those who sell them say, blessed be the Lord for I am rich. Those who sell them.

This, oddly enough, is the key. Those who sell them. In the ancient day, people who bought and sold merchandise.

Had a name very similar to merchandise. What were they called? If you sell merchandise, what are you? You're a merchant. You're a merchant, one who sells.

So as the flock is fed for slaughter, the merchants say, bless the Lord. This is great. I'm going to be rich.

God says I will no longer pity the inhabitant of the land, says the Lord. Notice in our chapter 13, it is the inhabitants of the land who are going to receive the spirit of grace and supplication. It's going to be the place where unclean spirits and prophets are driven out.

Now, the spirit is concentrated in Jerusalem and in the house of David, but the land benefits by association and false prophets are driven out. Unclean spirits are driven out, right? That's in the land. But notice here, God says, I will no longer pity the inhabitants of the land.

I will give everyone into his neighbor's hand and into the hand of his king. They shall attack the land and I will not deliver them from their hand. This is different than what we've seen more recently, where the city of Jerusalem is going to be surrounded, but it's going to be a cup of drunkenness and a rock on which they are sliced and crushed and so on.

So this is an earlier occasion, right? In 11, five and six. So Zechariah says in verse seven, I fed the flock for slaughter, in particular, the poor of the flock. And you think, wow, this just, I've never been able to make sense out of this.

And you notice in your New King James, there's a note one there where it says the poor of the land, the poor of the flock, rather in verse seven. And it says, this is the Masoretic text, but the, and the Targum and the Vulgate, the Latin translation, but the Septuagint says Canaanites, the Canaanites. Well, I'm going to submit to you that it is neither the poor nor the Canaanites, but just circle the poor of the flock there in verse seven.

You have the two staffs, beauty and bonds. The three shepherds are dismissed, not going to feed what is dying and what is perishing. They can eat each other's flesh.

He breaks the second staff. Then look at verse 11. So after the staff beauty is broken, it was broken on that day.

Thus the poor of the flock circle, the poor of the flock. Again, this is also, you look at note four and your New King James, and it says the Septuagint reads the Canaanites. Now turn over to chapter 14, verse 21, the very last verse in this prophecy.

Chapter 14 is going to mirror and compliment a lot of the material in chapter 12 and even in chapter 13. Notice at the beginning of chapter 14, the day of the Lord is coming. Your spoil will be divided.

I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem. That's just a sample. We've had the nations gathered in chapter 12, right? Well, this continues all the way through.

Then in verse 16, instead of the nations being gathered to destroy Jerusalem and God's going to make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness and a rock, the nations are going to be largely destroyed. We read this part where God said, I'm only going to keep a third of my people and the other two thirds are going to be destroyed. Well, it's going to happen to the nation.

So verse 16 of chapter 14 shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations, which came up against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. Keep the feast of tabernacles. It's the last feast in the feast schedule.

It's after the feast of trumpets. It's after the Rosh Hashanah, the head of the year. It's after the 10th.

It's after the day of atonement. It is starting on the 15th and they dwell in booths. They dwell in temporary dwellings made of branches and so on.

Anybody who doesn't come up, they're going to get no rain. And it talks about that for a couple of verses. We'll get there.

Verse 20 in that day, holiness to the Lord shall be engraved on the bells of the horses. The pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be.

And once again, this should be, you should have like the word engraved in italics there, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be engraved holiness to the Lord of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. Everyone who sacrifices is going to have access.

It is as though they can act as their own priests because only priests could work with these implements that were inscribed holiness to the Lord. They were sanctified and only the priests could use them. But now the horses are going to be sanctified.

The bells on the horses are going to be sanctified. The pots and pans, the cookware, the dishes are all going to be inscribed holiness to the Lord because the people in Jerusalem and the house of David have that spirit of grace and supplication and they are sanctified the way we are sanctified. But look at this closing phrase in that day, there shall no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts, no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts.

You remember the quotation from the old Testament that Jesus uses about the temple. And when Jesus goes to cleanse the temple, what does he say? What does he quote? It is written, my house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves, a house of robbers. You remember this is in Matthew 21, 12 and 13.

We saw this can also find it in Mark 11, 15 through 17, Luke 19, 45 and 46 den of robbers. These robbers are set up as merchants. He's overturning the tables of the money changers and the sellers of sacrifices, right? The sacrificial animals, the doves and the calves and the sheep and the goats and so on.

These are merchants who have turned the temple of God into a house of merchandise and they're ripping people off. It's insane markups and terrible exchange rates to turn the money of the land, Roman money into shekels that can be used for the temple. You remember that, right? So once again, we saw it in Matthew 21, 12 and 13, a couple of chapters back on our Sunday study.

This is quoting Jeremiah. I said, we're going to go back to Jeremiah here in a minute, but here's the thing. In Zachariah chapter 11, verse seven, the first one we looked at, I fed the flock for slaughter, in particular, the poor of the flock.

And it says in particular, the poor of the flock, doesn't that kind of strike your, your eye as odd? How many verses in the Bible do you see in particular? You just never see that. It's really an odd turn of phrase. Well, it turns out the reason it's odd is in my view, it isn't there.

The word for poor is anay, A-N-A-Y. In this form it's A-N-I-Y-E, anay. So there's anay with a suffix there, right? The word that's translated in particular in Zachariah 11, seven, and again, um, is lachen.

So if I read those together, lachenani, the Canaanite, if you mash these words together, you get the word that is translated Canaanite in 1421, canani. So I think this has been a scribal misreading, but it doesn't really mean Canaanite because if you look this up in the lexicon, there is a second meaning assigned to, it's a homonym. It sounds the same, but it doesn't, there have been Canaanites since the days of David, uh, the judges, Joshua judges and the early days of David.

They don't even talk about Canaanites anymore. And here we are half a, half a millennium after that. So what's going on here? Well, what is often translated Canaanite actually means merchant, merchant.

So try this out now in, uh, and you can look this up in Strong's, go to, uh, Zachariah 1421. And if you look at the, at the lexicon, I can give you the Strong's number here. If I can get there, I think the ice may have done in my internet.

Anyway, you can find it. Look at the one that says Canaanite there. And you'll see a second definition in the lexicon that says merchant.

Why is this important? Why am I belaboring this whole thing? What was Jesus mad about? What did he get angry over when he cleansed the temple the first time? And the last time you've made this a house of merchandise, there are merchants in here where it ought to be a place for communion with God. Instead of transacting business with third parties, you should be here looking upward. You see the tie into our theme, the morning of the house of David off by themselves.

What is the single biggest, easiest way to summarize the message of Haggai and Zachariah to their contemporary people when they, when God raised them up in the days of Zerubbabel and Joshua, the high priest, what was the message? Three words. What is the message of Haggai and Zachariah in three words? God says to his people through those prophets build what build the temple, build the temple. What has the burden of Zachariah been? It's not enough to just build the building.

The building can end up getting filled up with merchants who turn it into a business and into a shallow and meaningless activity, build the temple, but build the kind of temple where the Holy Spirit can dwell. When the spirit is poured out, he's going to dwell in the midst of those in Jerusalem and in the house of David. That's going to be the true temple.

The house of Solomon sort of morphs into the house of David. This is where the Holy Spirit is going to reside. This is where the presence of God is going to be.

Jesus makes an issue of the temple, even though the Ark of the Covenant isn't even there. It's Herod's temple, but Jesus uses it as a symbol when he cleanses it and says, this merchandising has to quit. So now back in chapter 11, feed the flock for slaughter, whose owners slaughter them and feel no guilt.

Those who sell them say, this is a good deal. Blessed be the Lord because the flock is making me rich. So Zechariah says in verse seven, I fed the flock for slaughter and you can scratch out in particular the poor and put for the merchants, for the sellers of the flock, the merchants of the flock, those who are making merchandise of the flock.

They're going to be sold. Remember all of our, Hey dad, rim on and the 30 pieces and Jesus is sold further down here. The shepherd himself is, is going to be bought off for 30 pieces of silver.

It's just the price of a slave. The flock is fed for slaughter. And God says, I'm going to let them be slaughtered.

I'm going to let the merchants take them and slaughter them, feed them for slaughter for the merchants, feed them for slaughter for the merchants. Look down at verse 11, when the staff beauty is broken, thus the merchants of the flock who were watching me knew that it was the word of the Lord. There is a sign to them, just like Jesus cleansing the temple at the beginning and at the end of his ministry is assigned to those merchants in the temple.

This is from the Lord. Only the Lord would send somebody in to break up. What seems to be a wonderful lucrative business that, that is put forward as help for the flock when it is in fact fleecing and slaughtering the flock, the merchants should know.

So now when you go to the last verse of chapter 14, everyone is, it is going to be such a time of prosperity. Nobody is going to need to buy a sacrifice. They're not going to need to exchange money for doves or for goats or for lambs or for calves or for oxen in that day.

There shall no longer be a merchant in the house of the Lord. Makes sense. There now shall no longer be making merchandise in the house of the Lord.

Now, the reason I bring this up in our last five minutes here, do you see the connection? Making merchandise of the word of God is condemned in the epistles of Paul. You remember making merchandise. Jesus condemns the merchants bracketing his ministry first few days and last few days.

He cleanses the temple of those who are slaughtering the flock, not just taking advantage of them, not just taking their money, but distracting them and deflecting them from the purpose for which they came, which is prayer. Now the turn with me to Jeremiah chapter seven with all

of that as prelude and as background. What does this mean for us? Jeremiah chapter seven.

Remember, Jeremiah is available. Daniel had the scroll of Jeremiah available to him in captivity. And these people have a copy of Jeremiah in their midst.

Jeremiah chapter seven, the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord saying, stand in the gate of the Lord's house, the temple, proclaim there this word and say, hear the word of the Lord. All you have Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel amend your ways and your doings.

And I will cause you to dwell in this place. Do not trust in lying words, saying the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord. It's not about the temple.

It's not about the merchandise that is sold there. It's not even really about the sacrifices. I desire mercy and not sacrifice and obedience more than the fat of Rams, right? Even as Haggai and Zacharias stand up and encourage the people to build the temple.

God makes it clear through those very same prophets and harking back to Jeremiah himself. It's not just the temple. You're not saved by the presence of the temple.

The temple is standing in its ultimate glory. When Nebuchadnezzar comes and knocks it to the ground, the temple is standing there in glory. When the legions of Titus come and knock it all down in 70 AD, it's not the physical presence of the temple any more than it is the physical accoutrements of worship up to and including sacrificial animals and altars and rituals.

Verse five, Jeremiah seven, if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor, this is another way of saying, love your neighbor as yourself. If you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, you do not shed innocent blood in this place or walk after other gods to your hurt. Then I will cause you to dwell in this place in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever.

This is the fulfillment that we're seeing in Zechariah 12 and Zechariah 13 and Zechariah 14. When Messiah returns, when the kingdom is set up, these promises will be fulfilled. But these are the conditions for dwelling there.

And it has nothing to do with being close to the temple or offering a sacrifice at the temple. It is your ways and your doings. Look at verse eight, you trust in lying words that cannot profit for a thousand years.

God is going to cast out the lying words, no prophets, no unclean spirits in the land. Certainly not in Jerusalem. Certainly not at the temple.

Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to bail and walk after other gods whom you do not know. Then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name and say, we are delivered to do these abominations. You can close the quote after

delivered.

We're saved. I'm saved. And I know that I am close the quote.

And God says, you're going to come here to do these abominations as this house, which is called by my name, become a den of thieves in your eyes. This is what Jesus quotes when he cleanses it. Behold, I, even I have seen it says the Lord.

Remember in Zechariah, when he said the Lord will open his eyes on the house of Judah and on Jerusalem and the surrounding nations will be blinded. Go now to my place, which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at first. See what I did to it because of the wickedness of my people, Israel.

There's nothing left at Shiloh. Now, because you have done all these works, says the Lord, I spoke to you rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear. I called to you, but you did not answer.

I will do to the house, which is called by my name in which you trust and to this place, which I give to you and your fathers as I had done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight as I've cast out all your brethren, the whole posterity of Ephraim. This is what chapter 11 is talking about, where God says, I'm not going to save them.

I'm not going to deliver them, feed the flock for slaughter. Let the merchants have them. Do you not see verse 17, what they do in the cities of Judah, the streets of Jerusalem, the children gather wood fathers, kindle the fire.

Women need dough to make cakes for the queen of heaven. They pour out drink offerings to other gods that they may provoke me to anger. Do they provoke me to anger? Says the Lord, do they not provoke themselves to the shame of their own faces? Therefore, thus says the Lord, God, my anger and my fury will be poured out on this place on man and on beast trees of the field food of the ground.

It will burn and not be quenched. Of course it burned and it eventually was quenched, but it means it's not going to be quenched until God's purpose is accomplished. An unquenchable fire is unquenchable until it accomplishes its purpose and is no longer needed.

You can't stop the fire while it is doing its work. You can see that here very clearly. Thus says the Lord, God of the host, the God of Israel, add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat meat.

I did not speak to your fathers or command them in the day. I brought them out of the land of Egypt concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. This is what I commanded them.

Obey my voice and I will be your God. And you shall be my people. Walk in the ways that I have commanded you that it may be well with you.

It wasn't about sacrifice and offering. It is obedience. It is about mercy, mercy toward one another, love your neighbor and obedience, love for God.

They did not obey or incline their ear, followed the counsels and dictates of their evil hearts, went backward and not forward. Verse 25, since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I've even sent you all my servants, the prophets daily rising up and sending. They did not obey me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck.

They did worse than their fathers. Therefore you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not obey you. You shall also call to them, but they will not answer you.

You can go on and read the rest of Jeremiah chapter seven, but you can see that before and after the captivity, before the destruction of the temple and after the rebuilding of the temple, the word of God to his people is the same. It's not about the forms. It's not about the expressions.

It is about the heart. It is about the heart. What is going on in our heart? There's only two ways to know.

We can examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith and we can pray to God and ask him to judge the thoughts and intents of our hearts, to try us and see if there is any wicked way, purge us so that we can be clean, wash us. There is a fountain for cleansing that will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem in that day. We already have that fountain for cleansing.

We already have the opportunity to mourn for what we see as failures in the past, whether they are ours or those of others, but we have the opportunity to move forward and reflect the glory of God, embrace righteousness by faith, be the people that God wants us to be, to shine in the midst of our generation. That's our great opportunity. There's never been a time in history better than now for us to live a life that God can use as a witness and as a testimony to those around us.

We may have momentary light affliction, but it is working for us an eternal weight of glory. We are connected to the past and what Christ has done. Read Ephesians chapter 1. In him, all the wonderful things we have, look to the future.

What is coming up? Look to Revelation chapter 2 and 3, the overcomer blessings and promises. These are the great ropes of perspective that will lift us and prevent us from being mired and drowned in the present. The pull of the world, the pull of stimulation, the pull of so many things.

Look to the rock from which we were hewn. Our rock is Christ. Look to the future, to that rock, that white stone and the new name that the Lord Jesus can give us if we are faithful, if we're focused, if we are obedient now.

Well, much more to say here, but we're coming up on the last few lessons in Zechariah and we'll move into Malachi in the near future, but we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for the spiritual nourishment that you provide to us in every page of your word. We thank you for your Holy Spirit, the wonderful gift, the ever-present comfort and encouragement to show us where we fall short, to enable us and empower us when we seek to do better, to lead us into the truth, to give us wisdom and insight.

We pray that as we reflect on these things that we've seen tonight, that they will be a source of blessing and application in the days ahead. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.