

PostExilicProphets 22-02-09a

This is Wednesday, the 9th of February, 2022. We're continuing our study of post-exilic prophets. We're coming very close to the end of this study.

Very fascinating look at the period in Israel recorded in scripture. Most of this period is not recorded, but the first part of it is. And it is that time from the release and return from captivity in Babylon to the building, the initial building of the second temple, and the final words that God is going to impart to his people before the prophetic age comes to a halt.

There will be one more great prophet, but he is about 500 years in the future. And there's going to be a long dearth where there is no new revelation. And this last push is kind of like the final advice that a parent gives their child before they fly the nest and head out on their own.

So as we come to the close of our own age, these words are especially significant for us, not only in their content, but also in the emphases that they create, the priorities that they establish and encourage, and the recognition that no man knows the day or the hour. It might have been thought in Zachariah's day that the return of, actually not the return, I guess it would be the first coming of the Messiah that might be imminent. And yet there was quite a bit more history to unfold before that took place.

Well, let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our study, on our fellowship together, that our hearts will be cultivated soil in which the Holy Spirit can plant and encourage the growth of the seeds of God's word. Shall we pray? Father, what a privilege, what a comfort, what a wonderful source of stability and peace to be held in your hands, to know who we are and to know why we're here with our identity fully established in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, the privilege of coming before you and acting as our own priest under his high priesthood to represent ourselves by way of thanksgiving and praise and making our requests known to you. Our request tonight is that you would bless us with insight and understanding from this portion of your word, that the Holy Spirit will find us ready students and apt pupils, that the truths that are embedded within this great prophetic narrative will live and breathe fire into our souls to strengthen us, to direct us and to fit us for service both now and in the ages to come.

We ask these things in Jesus name, amen. We've seen this final burden. I'm not gonna review the structure of the book.

I think by now, most of you have a pretty firm grip on these symmetries and this final burden that we are now looking at, chapters 12 through 14. And in this section, there is a symmetry, chapters 12 and 14 both serve as a setting for chapter 13, which is this time of release from the presence of evil, from the communication and the practice of alternative philosophies, alternative emphases to the things of God himself. So we have seen chapter 12 and I'm only going to mention one final thought.

I've not really dwelt upon verse 12. And this is after the spirit of grace and supplication has

been poured out and there is mourning for him whom they have pierced. They mourn for him as one mourns for his only son.

This is verse 10 of chapter 12. In that day, there will be a great mourning in Jerusalem like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. We saw quite a bit of significance there, but this next verse, the land shall mourn every family by itself, the family of the house of David by itself and their wives by themselves, the family of the house of Nathan by itself and their wives by themselves, the family of the house of Levi by itself, their wives by themselves, the family of Shimei by itself and their wives by themselves.

All the families that remain, every family by itself and their wives by themselves. If I said, let's close our books, get a piece of foolscap, a half a sheet of paper and write down the significance of verse 12 and 13 with the house of David and so on, the only suggestion I have offered you thus far is that this retrospective view, we see this as in that day, looking back and seeing the opportunity that was missed with the coming of Messiah, that these families will mourn. But isn't this interesting language, a strange way to put it.

He could have just said there will be mourning in Jerusalem and they will grieve over him whom they pierced and move right on. If these verses weren't here, we would hardly miss them, but they are here and we don't want to miss them. So we have four names.

This is our first clue. And the second clue is found in verse 14. So I've been whittling away at this, thinking I would hope to solve this puzzle or at least offer a good suggestion to the solution before we move into chapter 13 and 14.

And it's a conundrum, but here's my suggestion. Think about this now, you've got the house of David is going to mourn and then the wives are mentioned. David, we know, you know, this is like the demons, Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are you? And they, you know, the seven sons of Sceva get tossed out in tatters and rags and bleeding from the nose.

We know David, right? The house of David and the wives, the family of the house of David and their wives. So this is not just Michael and Abigail and Bathsheba and the other, Ahinoam and the other wives of David. This is the wives of the family of the house of David.

Right? So this would be sons and grandsons at first blush. The longer you trace this, the more fulsome and numerous they become. I don't know, I can't remember if I told you, but I was, it was a rainy weekend and I sort of accidentally, you know how you set out and you have a task list, I'm going to do these four things.

Then you sit down and you're just going to knock out a quick email or something and something grabs your attention and you want it being completely diverted. I know you can't believe it, but this actually happened to me a few months back where I sat down at my computer and I got a notice from the family tree DNA people. I've got a piece of DNA in there that they want to compare to other people.

So I thought, well, let me just go in there and clean this up right quick. And I got to looking and what I ended up doing was spending two days entering into the family tree, the information on my forebears. And as I went back to my grandfather's wife, I found, I knew who her parents were and I put them in.

Well, then I found their parents and their parents and their parents and this particular line, just this one great grandmother ended up in an unbroken line of documentation all the way back to AD 300 and 400. And there's Norse Kings and there's a, there are some big time mucky mucks in there, Kings of Brittany and all of this. And I was thinking, you know, people would say, oh, look, here's, I'm, and I, my family is at this point on the whole side related to, you know, somebody famous back there by two different lines.

And I thought, okay, so should I look at myself differently because I'm descended from, you know, these people that were famous back in the day. And so I did a little calculation because I am an English major and I know how to do these things. And I figured that mathematically speaking, it's not physically possible, but mathematically speaking, when you go back 34 generations, which is where some of these big mucky mucks are and go on back to the Norse Sea Kings and some people that you've actually read their names in history, there are mathematically speaking 11 billion other people to whom you're equally, it's two to the 34th.

You can do the thing yourself. And it's like, you know, the first time I stubbed my toe in Barstow as a toddler, I lost whatever drop of blood related me to anybody of any note. But the house from which you come, people put stock, especially in more recent ancestors.

If you have a father or grandfather who served in World War II or in Korea or Vietnam, it's meaningful. It may be a little further back, somebody who served in World War I or served with honor or distinction in any field. Maybe they were in government.

Maybe they pioneered something in science. Or I was looking at a post where somebody was noting that here is the man that invented the stereoscope. What do you call the ones that have the round slide that something view.

Anyway, those little things, those red deals that you flip the, and it's got the round. I saw Carl's Bad Caverns and things with that. You can fill in the blank.

But people that have had an accomplishment, you tend to note. And we've looked at genealogies in the past where some generations where there really is nothing notable or maybe even something counter-notable. So they get left out.

And this is how you can end up with 14 generations from one set to another in the line of the Lord Jesus. Here's my point. When you look at these four names and they are houses, this starts with a family that is easily of note, the household of David.

And they are going to mourn and their families. David's line is going to persist from the days of Zachariah all the way down to for four and a half, five centuries, all the way down to the time of

the Lord Jesus, right? And this is the line from which the Messiah will stem. And I think Zachariah and most Israelites know this from earlier prophecy.

So the household of David mourning over him whom they had pierced is significant because we know who that household is. So these other three households, you would expect to have significance as well. There are two schools of thought.

I'll give you the first one that is widely thought to be valid. And then I'll give you the one that I think is valid. First of all, after David, you have the family of the house of Nathan by itself and their wives by themselves.

Who is Nathan? Well, you have two very famous Nathans that are contemporary with David. Once you've invoked the house of David, there is the prophet Nathan, and there is the son of David who was probably named for that prophet, who is the branch of the family of David from which Mary's genealogy in Luke is going to come, right? So Nathan, Nathan the prophet. And you say, well, isn't it interesting because if David is a king and let's say this is Nathan the prophet, you have the household of the king is going to mourn with their wives.

The household of the prophet Nathan is going to mourn with their wives. Then the next name you have is the family of the house of Levi. Well, Levi is pretty much unique in notoriety in terms of the house of Levi being the priests, the Levites.

And so you have a kingly house, a prophetic house, a priestly house, and that just leaves Shimei as the fourth notation here, the family of Shimei by itself. And this may also be Simeon, but people generally look at him as a wise man or a source of counsel. And I had a little trouble figuring out why they think that Shimei is representative.

If it was Hushai or Ahithophel or someone else who was noted for his wisdom, maybe Solomon himself, that would be of note. But the two Shimeis, there are really three Shimeis that you can find in the Bible that have their name pretty much spelled this way. And I thought this model kind of fell apart on Shimei.

I am attracted to the idea of prophet, priest, and king. And it may be one of these both-and ideas. And we'll talk about, well, if you figure that out, then so what, in just a moment.

But what it would mean is that the song of David at the end of his life, if you get to the end of 2 Samuel, and you remember the song of David, and he says, a lot of the things that I thought would spring forth in my kingdom and in my family have not come to pass, but I have a hope in the resurrection that God is going to eventually fulfill his promises and remember his covenant and so on. But David expresses a bit of disappointment that not everything he had hoped for, he would love to have lived long enough to see the establishment of the throne of his son Solomon and the building of the temple, which was his heart's dream. He didn't live to see that.

He said, many of these things I really hope for, I'm not going to live to see. And so you could say, well, in the sense of mourning that those things did not happen and weren't accomplished

in the lifetime of King David, and they weren't accomplished in the lifetime of the prophet Nathan, and they weren't accomplished through or in or by the Levites. The Levites are really hardly in view by the time you get to Jesus' day.

And the chief priests are implicated in the crucifixion rather than in working in a positive way. So you could say, well, they're going to recognize with this spirit of grace and supplication that the kingship and the prophetic role and the priestly role are fulfilled in Christ. And looking at the beauty of that compared to the failure and the shortcoming in the human realm creates this mourning and a spirit of repentance and a seeking of grace.

I think that has some traction. I think it may be so, but I'll tell you why I have a slightly different view. And it's verse 14.

What does verse 14 say? After mentioning these four households, all the families that remain, these are remnant families, remnant families. Ah, interesting, interesting clue. Every family by itself and the wives by themselves.

Talk about the wives here momentarily. But let's lay aside, at least temporarily, the prophet, priest, and king motif, which is tempting and which has some attractive and persuasive features. But the household of David, instead of the prophet Nathan, let's take the son, Nathan.

And this is borne out by the genealogies in Matthew chapter one and in Luke, where the distinction between the line of Nathan and the line of Solomon is made clear in chapter three. You'd look at Luke chapter three, verse 23. Jesus himself began at about 30 years of age, being as was supposed, the son of Joseph.

But he wasn't the son of Joseph. And so as soon as you say the son of Heli, the son of Maphat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jana, the son of Joseph, the son of Mattithiah, and you trace all the way back, and you end up getting back to, in verse 30, the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonah, and the son of Eliakim. And remember the Coniah curse, which said that no descendant of his would sit on the throne of Israel.

And this is avoided because this does not come through the line that includes Jeconiah or Coniah. Instead, Eliakim, the son of Meleah, the son of Menan, the son of Mattathah, the son of Nathan, the son of David. So there is the general house of David, but then there is particularization of the house of Nathan.

Of all of the families and all of the wives and all of the sons, there is a remnant, if you will, through Nathan that is going to be that faithful line, so to speak, from whom will result Mary, who is going to be the mother of the humanity of the Lord. Right? So if you say the household of David, but of the families that remain, when the dust settles, when the people have passed under the rod and those who are allowed into the kingdom, who's going to be there? And symbolically speaking of the house of David and the family of David, it is going to be the house and family of Nathan that is going to come in and be the representative next generation. Kind

of make sense? So then when you come to the second set, we'll see if this pans out.

In verse 12, you move on to 13, the family of the house of Levi by itself, their wives by themselves, the family of Shimei. Well, if you go back to numbers, you find, and even earlier, you find that the sons of Levi in the house of Aaron, you have the Kohathites, the Merariites, and so on, and then the grandson of Levi is Shimei. He isn't called out as notable, but there is the suggestion here that with the house of Levi, and you go back to who is contemporary with Levi and with the Levites, well, his grandson Shimei is going to be the line, the remnant, the remainder.

Why bring this out? Why try to figure it out? Well, it's here and it means something. And I think that the clue, because there's a lot of people that wouldn't have a copy of numbers to go back and say, hey, who is Levi's grandson? Or who were the sons of David? They might not have that in their immediate recall, but it tells us the families that remain, there is a remnant. How many times have we seen the principle expressed except God had left us a remnant, we would have perished.

The nation would have been destroyed. I have reserved 7,000 that haven't bowed the knee to Baal. Except there had been a remnant, there remains this stock and seed that continues and God preserves.

We just referred to the episode in Judges 19 and 20 where the tribe of Benjamin was about to be wiped out. And the alternative here for Shimei, I mentioned that there are three of them in scripture. One of them is the grandson of Levi.

The other two are Benjamites. Remember when the Absalom rebellion takes place and David is driven out of Jerusalem and he's going across the Kidron and fleeing for the time being. And the grandson of Saul, Shimei comes out and casts curses and aspersions and is throwing dust and rocks and all kinds of things at David.

You can refer back to this in 2 Samuel. We don't have time to turn there, but this Shimei would be a Benjamite. And there is a third Shimei who is also a Benjamite.

And the idea is in a different way that of those who persisted down to the days of Jeremiah and of Ezekiel and Daniel and into the captivity, the households that were still identifiable in Judah in 586 were the house of David and the Nathanite kings and the descendants of Solomon. But in particular, in terms of representing or symbolizing the faithful, you would have the house of David and the remnant through Nathan. And then of the Levites, if it's not the Levites and it's Levi and then Shimei, there were Benjamites.

Remember Judah and Benjamin dwelt together and the kingdom of Judah, the Southern kingdom was made up of Judah and Benjamin. And because you had the survival of the Benjamites in the last two chapters of Judges, that then Shimei would represent these Benjamites who had survived the captivity to return. And so in that case, those who remain

would be these that have returned and who can still identify their roots.

If you're from the house of David or from the house of Nathan, you're gonna be able to remember your roots. There's nothing said about the family of Nathan the prophet that to me, that's kind of a problem. It doesn't say he was married or had kids or nobody knows his situation.

We know that Nathan, the son of David had children and offspring and they are significant. That's the line of Christ. But the other way to look at this is that it is the remnant of people who can still identify their roots, who have endured the captivity and have returned.

They are the remnant. And in that sense, it is sort of a picture in the present day of those who know what has happened, who see the spiritual significance. And when they look upon him whom they have pierced in the spirit of grace and supplication comes, they mourn because they are people of faith.

And even for people of faith, there is a time to mourn. So here's the wrap up. Here's my conclusion.

Personally, I think that this is a general large house and then one specific channel, one remnant subset. Not to say that Solomon wasn't a man of faith or that there were not faithful descendants after that in the line of David, but Nathan is symbolic. He's representative.

And because he's named for the prophet, it's sort of a win-win here. When you say the house of Nathan, it's David's son, Nathan, through whom is gonna come the humanity of Christ. But there is also this allusion to the prophet.

I think it could be both and, but primarily the son of David as a remnant of the house. And then Levi, there were a lot of Levites that weren't even priests. It was the Aaronites and the sons of Aaron who are the priests.

And you've got other branches of the Levites who perform different functions. But within the house of Levi, you have this one branch specified, which is Shimei. So this idea of remnant works almost no matter which way you take it.

Are they the remnant that survived the captivity and came back to the land? Are they the remnant of these houses that are distinguished by their faith? I sort of lean toward the idea that they have distinguished themselves by faith rather than more of a happenstance or a lucky accident, so to speak. In either case, what is our interpretation and application for this section? Well, the other piece we have not addressed is, and their wives by themselves. I find it interesting that not only did these houses survive, whatever it is, distraction, deflection, being persuaded away into evil, falling apart and not adhering to the covenant with God and faithfulness and obedience to God.

Whatever it is that they have survived, it could be the captivity itself. It could be both and. But

whatever it is, not only have these houses survived, the house of David, the house of Nathan, the house of Levi and the house of Shimei, but what else survived? What else is intact? Their families, their marriages, their wives are with them.

You know how sideways it's all going to go within the days of Ezra and Nehemiah when they start looking at marriages and picking them apart and saying, you've married foreign wives. When the very line of David itself has got two prominent foreign wives in it, which is Rahab and Ruth. Patty and I have gone back through the Ruth study.

Oh my goodness, is that a great book? Yeah, just a full meat platter there. There's so much to think about. There is so much anticipation, so much of the direct kind of analogy looking at the kinsman redeemer and the movement in the book, that beautiful symmetry that moves from death to life, from famine to plenty, from having no husband to having a husband, from being bitter to being pleasant.

The names in scripture, and one of the reasons I was encouraged to go back and look at these names one more time, is if you remember in that study, who are the two sons of Naomi that die in Moab? It's Malon and Kilion. You remember what those names mean? It's weak and sickly. Ruth is married to weak.

She's married to Malon, who I think is the firstborn, interestingly, but he's weakling. His name means weak. She ends up married to Boaz.

Weakling dies, Boaz lives and reproduces. And you remember what Boaz's name means? Bo is in him and Oz is strength. In him is strength.

Ruth goes from a fruitless marriage to weakling that ends in death to a fruitful marriage to Boaz that ends in life and not just immediate life, but that lines extending all the way down to the Lord Jesus Christ himself. So, application. There is an inevitable filtering.

There is a dropping in the wilderness by many who are not pursuing faith, who are not asking and seeking and knocking, who are not dedicated to God at any and all cost. And you can see people dropping at your right hand and at your left, being deflected, being distracted, being deceived, deceiving themselves. And we want to grieve over that.

We want to be ready always to give an answer to those who ask about our hope. We want to speak the truth to one another in love, but there is a point at which if someone is willfully not following the path, we have to go on. We've got to keep moving.

We want to be the faithful remnant. And the faithful remnant is faithful. You cannot drag all of the sick and dying on your shoulders across the finish line.

This is why Jesus said, there is a sword that divides households. I have come to divide families. We have so many pleas for unity, the spirit of unity, the bond of peace.

You shouldn't have wars and divisions among you, but that's wars and divisions among the faithful remnant. Those who are faithful shouldn't split up, but there is a dividing line between faith and faithless, between obedient and disobedient, between committed and apathetic. And sooner or later, we will end up leaving people behind.

And there is mourning. Now, the faithful house of David, the faithful house of Nathan is going to be represented in Jesus' day by who? Who is the living known representative of the house of Nathan in the days of Jesus? Who is it? It's Mary. Did Mary abandon the Lord? She stands there at the foot of the cross.

She is in the house church in Acts. And the half brothers of the Lord are there as well. There, they stick, they stay.

The brothers are maybe slow to come to the fountain and drink, but they are there. They're mentioned in Acts. This remnant faithful household of Nathan, they're represented by Mary and by Jesus' half brothers, probably his half sisters as well, in those early days.

Remember that there are many in the household of the priests who come to faith. It's mentioned later on in the gospels and in Acts that there are some of them who believe. So this is who we want to be.

And it is going to divide. You can lose your job. You can lose your relationships.

You can lose friendships. You can be estranged from people. Your enemies can be the members of your own household and somebody breaking bread with you can lift up their heel against you.

Jesus said, if they've hated me, they will hate you. But in many cases, we have to pick a side and we have to decide, am I going to recognize the one who was pierced, seek out and respond to the spirit of grace and supplication, mourn over that which has been lost, whether it's lost opportunities, lost relationships. Where's the rest of the household of David when the household of Nathan is mourning? But they've got their wives with them.

There is an interesting separation at the same time because the house of David mourns by itself and their wives by themselves. And there is a fraternity among sisters-in-law wherever they might have come from. To me, this is just my suggestion.

The household of David, this is hereditary. This is blood, right? Nathan is descended directly from David. Shimei is descended directly from Levi.

Where do the wives come from? Well, look at David's wives. Ahinoam comes from one place. Abishag comes from another, although she's not really a wife so much as a hot water bottle.

But you think about Bathsheba, you think about Ahinoam, you think about Saul's daughter, Michael, and these different wives come from widely different backgrounds, right? But the

wives are together. They are unified because they have married in. This brings me back to the Ruth story.

Ruth is a Moabitess, but she marries in and then she becomes one with something that she didn't start out being any part of whatsoever. She's very near to that curse on the Moabites for 10 generations. But by marriage, it doesn't matter what her bloodline is.

It doesn't matter what her heredity is. It's purely her decision. And these wives, wives plural, who come together and they are unified with each other because of their unity in marriage, unity to their husbands, and they are brought into the fold.

And I think these represent not only the hereditary rightful inheritors of the covenant, but those who are drawn to them and who fasten themselves, who covenant themselves into that community. And they're recognized, they're preserved. They are recipients of the grace of that spirit.

Well, this brings us to chapter 13 and chapter 14, which we'll look at when we come back from our break.