

PostExilicProphets 22-02-09b

We're ready now to pick up our study in Zachariah here. We're going to pick up the pace a little bit. Also the conclusion, once again, here in the center of this introduction, if you will, in the, in the second burden, after having talked about the deliverance of Judah, there's both deliverance and judgment intermingled.

And you can see that the occasion is foreshadowing the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is at the same time, the occasion of deliverance for the entire human race, for those who believe, and at the same time, it tips the balance into judgment for Israel, for the Jews who reject the Lord Jesus Christ when he comes to his own and they do not receive him. In the very act of rejecting him, God works out salvation. So it is both.

And you see that intermingling of themes of deliverance and judgment in this final burden, which is going to focus primarily on the second coming. The first coming is the suffering servant. The second coming is the conquering king.

And so looking back at the first coming is going to be the occasion for this morning. And this is, for us, looking back at the cross, recognizing what the cost of sin is, what the penalty required from the Lord Jesus Christ, so that we could be freed from bondage, so that we could be redeemed and delivered and made new and given new life and given the opportunity to spend eternal life in the presence of God. It was a heavy price, heavy price.

And when these remnant households look back on him, whom they pierced, it will result in mourning. And this is often something that is done in intimate settings. The wives are going to do it by themselves.

The houses are going to do it by themselves. They're not going to have a great big stadium size memorial service for him whom they pierced. The strong suggestion here is that this is individual and this is personal.

Instead of saying, like the Pharisees that Jesus is condemning, and which we will see a week from this Sunday, when the Pharisees say, well, we would not have slain the prophets the way our fathers did. And Jesus says, you indict yourselves because you claim to be the sons of those who slew the prophets. Well, we wouldn't have done it if we had been there.

This is not the attitude of the house of David, the house of Nathan, the house of Levi and the house of Shimei. They look upon him whom they pierced. And they recognize that there is a kind of corporate guilt such as Daniel recognizes in the early part of chapter nine when he goes to God and confesses the sins of the nation.

And Daniel is one of the most righteous men of the Old Testament. And yet he humbles himself in sackcloth and ashes, as it were, to come before God, recognizing that we are all as an unclean thing. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.

We do fade as a leaf and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away and we need deliverance. And it is that recognition of need and that change of mind and the supplication that comes with the spirit of grace that distinguishes these families as the remnant and their wives who joined to them for the same reason that Ruth comes to Israel and ultimately comes to Boaz because of faith in God. So it's a strong reminder of how precious our faith is, how important it is to cultivate the humility and the repentant heart that God can then fill with love, love for him and love for one another.

Love is the fulfillment of the law, but that love cannot function. It cannot operate in its divine power and its divine origination in the presence of sin. We have to recognize our need.

We have to be cleansed, be sanctified before we can be filled. Being filled with the spirit, we will exhibit the fruit of the spirit, which begins with love. And you can make the case that all of the other elements of the fruit of the spirit are aspects of love that you find in 1 Corinthians 13 and elsewhere.

That brings us to chapter 13. In that day, a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. And I think because you didn't have chapter and verse divisions in the original scrolls of Zachariah, when we have just mentioned that the house of David is going to mourn and be representative of the land that mourns.

The land is going to mourn in verse 12, every family by itself. And then the family of David is mentioned. And so in summary, giving the first element of the list, you see this same technique used in Hebrews chapter six.

Let us go on to maturity and not laying again the foundation of repentance. And then he goes on and he says, these who are disobedient, it is impossible to renew them to repentance. And he just gives the first element in the list.

They can't be renewed to repentance from dead works and faith toward God of baptisms and the laying on of hands and all the other things in the list. He just uses the first element as the title. And in this context, in that day, a fountain shall be open for the house of David by implication and for the house of Nathan, for the house of Levi, for the house of Shimei, for those wives, for all in the land who mourn, both inside and potentially outside those families.

But they are representative of those who mourn. They are the prominent symbolic families in the land. So this fountain shall be open for the house of David.

Notice the order in which these things take place. I won't rehearse our oft observed notion that you can't start with sovereign election. You can't start with God arbitrarily saving people and filling in the blanks later.

The spirit is poured out. There is mourning. Then there is a fountain opened.

In that day, a fountain shall be open for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, these other mourning families for sin and for uncleanness. When they recognize their need, when they mourn over their loss and the failure of the past, which is emblematic and representative of our own personal failures, this fountain will be open for cleansing, for sin and for uncleanness. This fountain wasn't previously available.

We're looking now at the millennial kingdom where the record and the fact of the work of Christ on the cross is going to be the basis for a fulsome cleansing and renewal. It shall be in that day, verse two, says the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land. They shall no longer be remembered.

I will also cause the prophets." When you look at this in the Jewish Publication Society version, they put prophets in quotes, which I think is good. These so-called prophets, alleged self-described prophets. And we looked at this last time.

These guys are going to be so unpopular that their own families will beat them and kick them out if they try to act like a prophet, because the truth of God will be available. It will be clear, and anyone who tries to add to it, anyone who tries to modify it, anyone who tries to act like they are an expert in it is going to be roundly and soundly kicked out. And they'll stop identifying as a prophet.

In verse five, they'll say, I'm a farmer, what are these wounds between your arms? Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. They don't want me talking Bible. We don't need new prophecy.

There is a strong element within the current movements among younger Christians, especially, that because we have the Holy Spirit, what we think is the Spirit leading us into all truth. And we can basically author our own inspired word of God. And it is dangerous, Jeremiah 17, nine territory.

Verse seven, awake, O sword against my shepherd, against the man who is my companion, says the Lord of hosts, strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered. Then I will turn my hand against the little ones. It shall come to pass in all the land, says the Lord.

Two thirds in it shall be cut off and die. A third shall be left in it. I will bring the third through the fire, refine them as silver is refined, test them as gold is tested.

They will call on my name. I will answer them. I will say, this is my people.

Each one will say, the Lord is my God. If you were going to sum up those three verses in one word that started with R and ended with ant, what would it be? If only a third survive, what would you call them? A remnant, a faithful remnant. They pass through the fire, they are tried.

The dross is removed. They are weighed in the balance and found acceptable. I will bring the third through the fire, verse nine.

I will refine them as silver is refined. The fire of judgment is the means by which the dross is removed and the metal is refined. Remember that Alferma Foundation, and it says at the end of one verse, God says, I only design by dross to consume and my gold to refine.

The hymns of the faith, you just can't beat them. It was the Bible for people that couldn't read for centuries. Well, this third will be brought through the fire and refined and tested.

They will call on my name and I will answer them. Those who have that elemental attraction toward God, who have a positive response toward God are going to be preserved. They will call on his name and he will answer them.

The two thirds that fall by the wayside, this is the chaff. This is the dross, this is the wood, hay and stubble. Each one will say the Lord, my God.

And once again, any time of tribulation, we look around the world today and it's kind of depressing. It seems like many of the things that we have valued and appreciated in earlier days that are eroding, deteriorating, being willfully attacked and dismantled. It's hard to be cheerful if you watch the news.

And so my suggestion is watch less news, but a little of that goes a long way. It's good to be aware. We need to know what's happening, but we're not defined by the news.

I'm not defined by what goes on in Washington, DC or overseas decisions that are made, policies that are adopted, the way they spend the money I am levied for taxation and so on. We invest in what God has placed before us. Whatever has been handed to us by way of talents, if you've been given two talents, try to make two more.

If you've been given five talents, try to make five more. You've just been given the one talent, kind of a limited potential. Well, do something with it.

Don't just wrap it in a rag and shove it in your pocket the way the unfaithful servant did. He that is faithful in that which is least. We're not really able to influence or change the larger pieces that are moving in and on the world stage, but where we do have influence, where we are listened to by way of conversation, where we can offer a word fitly spoken like apples of gold and pictures of silver, that's our opportunity to ensure that our soul is a preview of the coming kingdom where the idols and the false prophets have been cast out, where righteousness is at home, where there is peace and there is security, and there is the calling on God's name and naming him the Lord my God.

That's our opportunity. And we've talked about many, many times that as goes the nation of Israel in the Old Testament, so goes the believer. Remember that there is a symmetry there.

And as goes the nation of Israel in the millennium, so goes the preview form of the kingdom in our own souls. We can have the dwelling of Christ within us just as he's going to dwell in the land and in Jerusalem with the sons of David ruling for a thousand years. If we have his words

and keep them, if we love him, he and the father will come and make their home with us.

This is the presence in the Holy of Holies. This is the Lord Jesus on the steps of the temple teaching. This is the Lord Jesus on the throne of his father, David.

We have a spiritual adumbration, an anticipation of that now. And rather than worrying about the kingdoms of this world, these kingdoms are going to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. And we're not going to engineer that.

We don't build it. And then he comes, as so many think, in God's time. And after a period of testing, after a period of refinement, a period of sorting those who have genuine faith, who are committed in their faith, no matter what, those are going to prevail.

They are going to be recognized. They're going to be honored. And they're that fountain of cleansing that washes away the filth of the world, the road dirt from passing through the world, and refreshes us, the oasis of spiritual renewal, the washing of water by the word.

These are our heritage right now. There will be a more literal fulfillment of those potentials for Israel in the kingdom. But don't miss the fact that the lessons of the Old Testament are pertinent for us, but the promises of the millennial kingdom, the new kingdom, are also pertinent for us.

And I don't know about you, but I find that kingdom a much more fruitful and peaceable and substantial place to dwell than the world. Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. Greater is that environment of spiritual prosperity than anything you can find in the world.

But the contrast is certainly getting sharper by the day. Chapter 14, behold, the day of the Lord is coming. And your spoil will be divided in your midst for I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem.

The city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Whoa, wait a minute, wait a minute. I thought back in chapter 12, Jerusalem's going to be a cup of drunkenness.

By the way, I saw another exegetical analysis of this, and there's some traction for the idea that the word translated cup is actually, it has a secondary meaning of threshold, and that a threshold of drunkenness or a stone of stumbling that, you know, a drunk when he tries to come into the house, he trips over the threshold and falls on his face, you know, day gone with his hands being broken off on the threshold because it is a raised stone. And it can be a threshold of stumbling or a stone of stumbling here. And parallel to the stone in verse three of chapter 12, a very heavy stone for all peoples that maybe this is all sort of a rock hard surface.

And that appeals to me because of either falling on the stone to be broken or having the stone fall on you and being ground to powder. And this stone imagery, the stone cut without hands in Daniel that smashes all the kingdoms. So it's possible you can just circle cup and put stone

question mark.

In either case, the result is the same. It is going to trip those who try to ignore it and pass over it. And it's going to be a discomfiture as they used to say.

Back to chapter 14. What about the deliverance? Well, different times. There is a time for war and there is a time for peace.

There is a time for deliverance and there is a time to allow defeat. We've seen this over and over again. The Lord Jesus Christ is the son of God.

Never did anything wrong. How could he possibly be defeated? But he allowed himself to be taken. He allowed himself to be arrested, scorned, mocked, vilified, crucified.

He allowed it. And it brackets with what he says in the baptismal waters of the Jordan with John, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it is necessary to fulfill all righteousness." Sometimes God's plan advances through suffering, through seeming setbacks, through a temporary victory. In chess, it is called a gambit.

You put a piece out there and allow it to be sacrificed. You allow your opponent to take it and temporarily you are down. But strategically, if your opponent takes the bait and runs his bishop over to kill your queen, and on the next move, you run your rook down to the final row, and the king is trapped behind his pawns and there's no way to block that checkmate, the sacrifice was worth it.

And over and over again in scripture, we are told this momentary light affliction is working for us an eternal weight of glory. So there is a necessary judgment. Judgment, his winnowing fan is in his hand.

He will burn the chaff. What does a winnowing fan do? It separates the wheat from the chaff. The wheat is heavy and falls right back down underneath the fan.

The chaff is caught by the wind because it is lightweight. It doesn't have substance like the wheat does. And it is carried some distance and then you sweep it up and burn it.

He will gather the wheat into his barn. The chaff will be burned with unquenchable fire, meaning the fire is not going to be quenched until all the chaff is fully destroyed. If all the chaff is destroyed, guess what? There's no more fire.

It doesn't mean the fire will never go out, but during the time that it is doing its work, nothing is going to stop it. It's kind of like on the second day of the flood, could Noah have prayed and God would say, oh, okay, well, I'll stop the flood and not everybody's going to drown. There's some of the higher elevations and mountaintops where people are clinging to life and okay, I'll stop the flood.

Once the flood starts, there is no stopping it. It is an unstoppable flood until it does its work,

but it eventually stops. Unquenchable fire, that's what it is, but there is a necessary separation.

And how do you separate wheat from chaff? In the ancient world, before there were machines to do so, but the machines essentially do the same thing. How do you separate wheat from chaff? You beat it with sticks. It is afflicted and the beating shakes apart, distinguishes between, causes a division between the wheat and the chaff.

Many figures for this. I've not come to bring peace, but a sword. Many turned back from following Jesus when he talked about eating his flesh and drinking his blood.

It's a discriminator. It is a filter. It is a test.

It is a tribulation. It's a hard thing. Are you going to turn back also? Jesus asks his disciples.

Peter says, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of life. The Lord is my God. Verse nine of chapter 13 here.

You are the Christ, the son of the living God. You have the words of life. Where would we go? The fact that we don't understand what's happening at the present is no reason to peel away.

We don't have to understand everything to trust. In fact, the very nature of faith is not understanding all of the wise and wherefores. But I know whom I have believed.

I'm persuaded he is able to keep. My confidence is in his character and in his nature and in his word and his promise. I don't pretend to understand the things that God understands.

His inscrutable purposes, his divine understanding will always greatly exceed our own. But we place our confidence in him. The one who comes to God must believe that he is and believe in what he is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek.

I don't know how, I don't know when, I don't know why, but how many times have we seen that these tribulations must come, these tests, these winnowing events, and these difficult times must come. Jesus had to suffer. Remember the road to Emmaus? And he opened the scriptures and shows them how the whole Old Testament demonstrated that the Christ had to suffer, had to, no choice.

Think about the two witnesses in Revelation. They're gonna have the power over everything. They're invincible.

And yet at a certain time, God is going to allow them to be defeated. And their defeat accomplishes a purpose. Many times we are set back.

Many times we are seemingly defeated, seemingly overcome by the world and the evil within it. But God has his ways. God has his means.

Many times the evil, when brothers sell you into slavery and you are taken down to Egypt, and

you're wrongly accused in the house of Potiphar and placed in Pharaoh's prison, and forgotten by the baker and forgotten by the wine steward and so on. God's time in God's way. Those things will be worked together for good.

Joseph could not have known. I am sure he had many hours in slavery and in prison to think about those early dreams of the sheaves bowing down to his sheaf and the sun and the moon and the stars dream. And to think about what could that possibly mean? Look at me.

I am the farthest thing from being bowed down to by anybody. But God could not have done what he did by way of deliverance. And what a beautiful picture.

You think about Joseph and the honor he has of his entire experience from his bloody coat and seeming death, his being essentially slain by his brothers to the culmination of that, to have your entire life serve as a picture of Jesus Christ. You think about Ruth in Moab being bereaved and bereft and Naomi losing her entire nuclear family, her husband and her two sons. She is completely without family.

Even when she comes back to the land, that people are scratching their head saying, who's the nearest next of kin? Is there a cousin or a second cousin who wants to meet? You know, who's the next of kin? We don't really know. There's nobody close by to take her in. But God works these things together for good.

And they become such powerful foreshadowings and wonderful spiritual food for the soul for just millions and millions and millions of believers. They could not possibly have known at the time. You and I cannot possibly know at the time that our afflictions, our suffering, our setbacks, our difficulties are woven into the plan of God for good.

You think, well, but I'm not a Ruth. I'm not a Boaz. I'm not a Joseph.

I'm not David. I'm not this. I'm not that.

Sorry. Yes, you are. We have all been purchased with the precious blood of Christ and that makes us valuable in God's sight.

And Jesus said, "He who is faithful in that which is least, the last shall be first." If we are unknown and unnotable and unseen and unheard, that's great. Our faith is going to result in the same kind of thing that when Jesus humbled himself and took on the form of a servant, for this reason, God has highly exalted him. Submit yourself under the mighty hand of God.

Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God in order that he may exalt you in due time. Jerusalem is another picture here. The day of the Lord is coming.

You're spoiled. He's talking to Jerusalem. We'll be divided in your midst.

I will gather all nations to battle against Jerusalem. The city shall be taken. The houses rifled.

The women ravished. Yikes. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

By the way, all of your preterists can't make sense out of this because half the city wasn't delivered in the days of Titus. They like to say that all these things were fulfilled no later than 70 AD. There has been no conquest of Jerusalem after the return from captivity such as this.

Alexander didn't do it. The Romans didn't do it. The rebellion didn't do it.

It doesn't match these details. And they have to just throw these passages away or spiritualize them. I don't know how they account for them.

I don't think they really pay much attention to the Old Testament. Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations. This didn't happen in 70 AD.

The Lord didn't come forth and stomp Rome into a big mud puddle. The Lord will go forth and fight against those nations as he fights in the day of battle. In that day, his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east.

The Mount of Olives shall be split in two. Tell me when this ever happened. Tell me how you can spiritualize this and get anything out of it whatsoever.

What spiritual analogy, what sort of metaphor can you put on cutting the Mount of Olives in half? It is not there. There's nothing else in scripture you can tie it to. You can't find a warp and woof.

You can't make any sense out of this. This is a literal future prophetic event. And preterists die on this point and many others.

Split in two from east to west, making a very large valley. Half the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south. Then you shall flee through my mountain valley for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal.

You shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah. Thus the Lord my God will come. Never happened in history that the Lord came after a valley was split through the Mount of Olives.

And there is a freshen that comes. There will be no light. The day lights will diminish.

Verse seven, it shall be one day, which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night. At evening time, it shall happen that it will be light. It's going to be like being up north around the Arctic circle if you've ever been to Alaska and day after day, the sun never sets.

It just kind of circles the horizon. It's real interesting thing. It makes kind of a, it'll descend and get close to the horizon, but it never goes down.

And then it goes up and gets pretty high in the sky. And then it just circles around. You can watch the sun 24 hours a day.

Never gets below the horizon. It's the weirdest thing. I was in Alaska in July and saw this for myself.

Come out 2 a.m., the sun is up. 4 a.m., the sun is up. The light will diminish.

It shall be one day, which is known to the Lord. Jesus says, no one knows the day or the hour, only the Father. In that day, verse eight, living water shall flow from Jerusalem.

This rearrangement of the topography is going to result in this giant crack through the Mount of Olives. And half of the waters that flow from Jerusalem will go toward the Eastern Sea and half of them toward the Western Sea. In both summer and winter, it shall occur.

This is going to be permanent. It's not a wadi that goes dry during certain seasons. It's not fed by rain.

Because it occurs in summer and winter, this is a spring of water. And it originates in Jerusalem. And Jerusalem is going to be a harbor town, a seaport.

It's like coming up the Mississippi and delivering goods. And it'll be a part of the commerce picture in that day that ship-borne traffic that used to go to Babylon and all the merchants were crying because it's all gone up in smoke. Well, there will be a whole new economy and ships will come and go from Jerusalem.

It will no longer be landlocked. The Lord shall be king over all the earth. In that day, it shall be done.

The Lord is one and his name is one. All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem. This is so interesting.

Rimmon has not left the picture yet. We've got more to say about that. We're going to stop here for tonight.

Let me just offer a couple of concluding thoughts by way of application. The days in this nation are dark and darkening. We look both back and forward as believers.

We look back to the completed work of Christ in his first coming. We look forward to the completion of the work of Christ in his second coming. The first time as the suffering servant, the second time as the conquering king.

And these things have all been written for our instruction. What kind of instruction do we take from it? You and I are not defined by the present. We are not defined by what people say about Christians, about scripture, about evangelicals, about fundamentalists.

We are not defined by what social media says, about judgments they make about scripture and the morality and the ethics that we learn from scripture, the character that we develop as we soak our souls in the word of God and are cleansed and enabled to love God more fully, more completely with heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love each other as ourselves, to love as Christ loved, sacrificially and beneficially. This is our priority. We are defined by the movement of history as revealed in this book.

Every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God enables us to live. Just rearrange that sentence. We don't live, even though we ask God for our daily bread, our daily bread isn't what enables us to live.

Man doesn't live by his daily bread. It's sustenance. It keeps us going.

It has its place, but we are defined. We live, we think, we anticipate, we do what we do on the basis of every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Not every word that proceeds from the mouth of the news or social media or somebody's Facebook feed or conversations or viewpoints or policies that get passed in and by the government.

That is not us. We are in this world, but we are not of it. I am just a stranger here.

The old gospel song goes, heaven is my home. Paul says, our citizenship is in heaven from which we await the return of our savior, our Lord and the future coming King of Israel. So these dark days are the test.

What kind of people are we gonna be? We can certainly mourn. We look for opportunities to change our minds and repent and be cleansed at the fountain of that which needs removal so that we can do Romans 12, one and two. To not be conformed to the world.

Anybody can be blown about by the winds of what's going on. In the information age, it has never been more difficult to have our anchor hold and grip the solid rock. That rock is Jesus.

It's another great hymn of the faith. Be sure, be very sure your anchor holds and grips the solid rock. It's immovable, it's unchangeable.

The Lord Jesus is revealed from faith to faith in scripture and he is the same yesterday, today and la olam. I own us under the ages. He is the same in a world of shifting sand and winds that blow many Christians about in every direction.

We need that solidarity. Our house needs to be built on the rock and it is going to endure and we have this wonderful expectation. So I want to end on a happy note, looking at the woes of the Pharisees on Sunday, it was a little bit dismal, but you look at the fact that God has his inviolable and indestructible plan.

And in this plan, the people of God, those who are faithful, those who trust him, those who love him, those who listen to him and seek to live by his word are going to end up in such a

tremendous status, such a tremendous future. It is literally unimaginable. The things that God has prepared for us are just beyond imagination, but we know who God is.

We know whom we have believed. And when we commit ourselves to him, he is faithful. So let them pass whatever laws, let them change whatever language, let them charge whatever confiscatory tax, let them destroy the economy, let them destroy the ethics and the morals in our society.

That doesn't define me and it doesn't define you. The truth contained in these pages that reveals Jesus Christ as the culmination, the alpha and the omega, he is at the beginning, he is at the end and he is at the very center with the cross of our salvation. If God before us, who can be against us? Even if God chooses to involve us in a momentary setback or a defeat, he's gonna work it together for good.

Do you think Joseph would go back and change God's plan and say, Lord, if you could just warn me ahead of time so my brothers don't throw me in the pit, I'd really appreciate it. At the end, would Joseph change any of that? You meant it for evil, he tells his brothers. God meant it for good.

I'll go with the plan of God anytime, anyway, anyhow. What a privilege, what a blessing to be so related to God through Christ that we are held in his hand and nobody can pluck us out. It's great, we live in exciting times and it's gonna be wonderful to see how God does work these things out and how close we may be to the next phase of his plan and purpose in human history.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the hope and assurance that we have, the confidence we have through Jesus Christ, your son, our savior. We pray that as we reflect on these truths, your Holy Spirit will motivate us, encourage us, and help us to see clearly the immediate and available opportunities that we have to live in the light of these truths, to make a difference in our attitudes, in our thoughts, in our actions, in our words with one another and before the world so that we can truly shine as a light and be notable and noticeable in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, which you know like no one else our generation truly is and darkening by the day.

But we rest in your promises, we rest in your grace, and we thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ in whose name we pray, amen.