

Through the Bible - Zechariah

by Zac Poonen

The book of Zechariah emphasizes the importance of fellowship, intergenerational ministry, and the Lord's love for Jerusalem, as well as the need for leaders to acknowledge and confess their sin to be cleansed and crowned by God.

Duration: 57:39

Scripture: Zechariah 8:1-2, Zechariah 8:4-5, Zechariah 8:14, Zechariah 8:16, Zechariah 10:2-4, Zechariah 10:6, Zechariah 11:4, Zechariah 11:11, Zechariah 14:4, Zechariah 14:6, Zechariah 14:11, Zechariah 14:21

Topics: "True Worship", "Gods Judgment"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses various visions and messages from the Lord. He emphasizes the importance of true fasting and worship that is focused on pleasing God rather than oneself. The preacher also highlights the Lord's requirements for His people, which include showing mercy, kindness, and not oppressing the poor and vulnerable. The sermon further explores visions of judgment upon those who disobey God's word and the assurance of God's love and protection for His church.

Transcript

Okay, let's turn to God's word in the book of Zachariah in chapter 1. Zachariah was a young man who prophesied along with Haggai when the people came back from Babylon and those who came back as a remnant to build the temple. Haggai and Zachariah prophesied together. It's very rarely in the Old Testament that we see two prophets working together.

Elijah was alone, Elisha was alone, Jonah was alone. And even if Jeremiah and Habakkuk and all lived around the same time, we never see them working together. In that sense, Haggai and Zachariah are different.

And I believe it was as it were, God was slowly preparing people for the New Covenant where nobody works alone. Jesus, as soon as he began his ministry, he sent out his disciples two by two. Fellowship is the essential thing in the New Covenant.

And as we approach the end of that Old Covenant period, here we find a wonderful example of an older man like Haggai and a much younger man like Zachariah working together. And Zachariah has a much larger prophecy than even Haggai, even though he was a very young man. We read about that in chapter 2 verse 4, that he was a young man when God gave him these visions and he began to prophesy.

It's a great encouragement for all of us who are young, that God can pick you up when you are a young man or a young woman, anoint you with his Holy Spirit, and even team you up with an older godly brother like Haggai. And ultimately, you may have a larger ministry than him. And Haggai was such a gracious godly old man that he not only pushed Zerubbabel forward, but he also pushed Zachariah forward.

A true man of God is always like this. He wants to push up other young people and pull back, and certainly in a country like ours, where the need is so great, I believe we need older people who train younger people to take over that ministry, pull out and go and do something else. Train up young people there, pull out, go and do something else.

This is how it should always be. It's not God's will that a man should just settle down and forever live comfortably in one particular place. And Haggai is a wonderful example of that.

As we know, we are moving towards the new covenant here. And he was a person who tried to encourage these discouraged people. See, you got to get a picture of these people who come back from poverty, from Babylon.

Seventy years ago, their forefathers had come as slaves, and they have come back beaten. It's like, in a sense, descendants of slaves, not very cultured or refined or rich or any such thing. And Zachariah was encouraging them.

And because the people received Haggai's message, God sent them further messages through Zachariah. If you receive the message of one prophet, then God will send you another. But if you don't receive the message of one prophet, then God says there's no need for you to listen to another.

So that's how Zachariah begins. And we could divide the book of Zachariah into three parts. First of all, chapters one to six, you have eight visions that he has.

And each of those visions has a spiritual meaning. And then we have chapters seven and eight, messages that he gives on different subjects like hypocrisy, disobedience, Israel's restoration. And then from nine to fourteen, we have the last section, which is about the Messiah.

The Messiah rejected. That's the coming of Christ. And finally, the second coming of the Lord and the Messiah reigning over all the earth.

Again, the burden is from Babylon to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the burden of these prophets. Haggai's burden was the temple.

Zacharias is not just the temple, but Jerusalem itself. The house of God, the church of God. And we look at these visions.

The first vision is, first of all, the Lord says in verse two, I was very angry with your ancestors. He's telling the people who whose ancestors 70 years ago were taken captive. Therefore, say to the people, return to me and I will return to you.

And don't be like your ancestors 70 years ago. One for who did not listen when the prophets spoke to them. And your ancestors and their prophets are both dead now.

We're six. But the things that I said through my servants, the prophets to your ancestors have all been fulfilled, just like I said. As a result, they repented.

These people repented and they said, we have received what we deserve from the Lord. He has done what we said we should do. And then begins the visions.

The first vision is from verse eight onwards, a man sitting on a red horse among some myrtle trees. Myrtle trees speak of humility, low trees in the valley. Behind him were red, brown and white horses.

And he asked, what are these for? And they said, we have patrolled the earth. They report to the angel of the Lord and the whole earth is at peace. And this is a picture of a picture of God watching everything that happens on the earth.

We have patrolled the earth and the whole earth is at peace. Upon hearing this, the angel of the Lord prayed this prayer. Lord, 70 years you've been angry with Jerusalem.

How long will it be until you show the mercy? And the Lord spoke kind, comforting words to the angel who talked with me. And the angel said, shout this message for everyone to hear, verse 14. My love for Jerusalem, and remember when you read Jerusalem and Mount Zion, it's a picture of the church, the body of Jesus Christ on earth, people.

My love for the church is passionate and strong. Therefore, I have returned to show mercy to Jerusalem, verse 16. My church will be built.

This is what the Lord Almighty says. So, the message that comes through from here is, even though we are in a shady place, it says here that in a small valley, that's a picture of God's people in a shaded small valley, there is someone watching over the whole earth, interested in this small group of people in this shaded area, in a small valley, trying to build God's house. That's the message of the first vision.

Sometimes you can be in a very lonely place. It's not a big city or anything, small place, small valley. You feel, well, what am I doing here? The Lord is watching.

The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth. Like it says here in verse 11, we patrol the whole earth. And He's working on your behalf.

And He says, be encouraged. My love for building for the church is passionate and strong. These are words of encouragement.

That's how Zacharias sought to encourage the people. And now we come to verse 18. Then I looked up and saw four animal horns.

And these are speaks of the enemies of the church. What are these? These horns represent the world powers that scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. And we can say in those days it represented, say, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and Medo-Persia, the four nations that before Zacharias' time had persecuted Israel.

In our time, we could refer it to the forces of darkness that come against the church from four sides, north, south, east, west. Forces like horns. Horns in the Bible are always a picture of strength.

The gates of Hades. The powers of death. And these are the ones, it says, who scattered.

See, the work of the devil is always to come into the church and scatter. Divide the church. Divide this brother from that brother, this sister from that sister.

Make this one gossip against that person. Make this one have a misunderstanding with that person. Scatter them.

This is what the devil does. North, south, east, west. He's always in this business.

Four sides. Four horns. And against these four horns, we read in verse 20, the Lord showed me four blacksmiths.

Blacksmiths are the people who are going to destroy these horns. You know, these people who got huge hammers. They deal with iron.

Blacksmiths. And the Lord, he asked, Zechariah asked, what are these men coming to do? The blacksmiths have come to terrify the four horns that scattered and humbled Judah. They will throw them down and destroy them.

These are God's servants. And in that day, it was Haggai, Zechariah, Joshua, and Zerubbabel. Today, God's prophets on all sides.

God raises up one here, one here, one here, one there. North, south, east, and west. To terrify Satan.

God's servants. It applies to you, my brother, my sister. You are to be a servant of God who terrifies Satan.

Verse 21. Most believers are terrified by Satan. By demons.

I remember once when I encountered a demon-possessed person. And they are so fiery and furious that I got a bit taken aback. And I asked myself one question.

Immediately, to strengthen my own faith. I said, was this demon conquered on Calvary? Or was this one of those demons who somehow managed to escape? No. I said to myself, this demon was also conquered on Calvary along with Satan.

Then I had faith to cast that demon out immediately. So, whenever you see something terrifying. A demon-possessed person.

Ask yourself, is that conquered on Calvary? When you see Satan working intensely in one area. When he stirred up people against you. Ask yourself this question.

Was Satan defeated on the cross? You are to terrify Satan. Can you imagine how it was when Jesus was on this earth? Wherever he went, Satan got scared. Oh, Jesus is coming.

All the demons. Jesus is coming here. He is moving in this direction.

We better run. And the Bible says, 1 John 4.18 As Jesus is, so are we in this world. As he is, so are we in this world.

That means, if you are walking with a clear conscience. You are walking in humility. You have no ambition on earth.

But to glorify God. No desire for anything on earth. Except to glorify God in your life.

Wherever you go. The demons will begin to tell. Hey, he is coming.

He is coming. This is not like anybody else. This man is a man with a clear conscience.

This man is a humble man. He is not like these other fellows. We are in danger.

Isn't it something, my brother, sister? To be one like that? A blacksmith in God's hands. To hammer the devil's work. And to destroy it.

And to be stronger and stronger. As you grow older. Instead of the way it is with so many preachers nowadays.

Who only become fatter. And richer. And less anointed.

Don't go that way. Become thinner. And more anointed.

And poorer, perhaps. That's how true servants of God are. Just think of it.

Don't go the way Christendom is going. And its leaders are going. Decide to go in another direction.

The way Jesus went. And the early apostles went. They went from strength to strength to strength.

There is a lovely promise in Deuteronomy. Is it 33, 27? I am not sure. I think it is.

As your days, so shall your strength be. In the King James Version, I think it is like that. That's a lovely verse.

I want to claim that in my life. As your days, so shall your spiritual power be. I want all of you to, from your youth, to claim that.

Say, Lord, I want my spiritual strength to grow more and more. With every year as I grow up as a young man. I want to be one who terrifies Satan.

Okay, that's the second vision. We go to the third one. Which is chapter 2, verses 1 to 13.

It says, I see a man who is measuring Jerusalem. With a measuring line in his hand. And he asked, where are you going? And he said, I am going to measure Jerusalem.

To see how wide and how long it is. You know, the Lord is trying to teach people how to measure the church. And to me, this is a picture of, you know, getting a membership list.

And seeing how strong our church is. And the wonderful thing is, that for the church, there is only one membership list. That is up in heaven.

The book of life. Any membership list that you keep here on earth is useless. That one is the only one that is going to matter in the final day.

And all these earthly membership lists. Why would you measure how big your church is? It is worth nothing. And the angel came to me.

Went to meet a second angel who was coming toward him. And the angel said, hurry up and tell this young man, Zachariah. Jerusalem will someday be so full of people.

That it won't have any room for everyone. Many will live outside the city walls. Yet they will be safe.

You know, there was a small group of people then. And they were thinking, who is going to come to this despised group of ours? All the people are living comfortably in Babylon. It is much comfortable there.

Here we are a small despised group trying to be a testimony for the Lord. Trying to build this temple. Build Jerusalem again.

Who is interested? And the angel came to encourage him. Said, don't worry. People from here and there will hear about you.

And will come and join you one day. Today you may be small. All of God's work starts very small.

But if God can find leaders who will hang on and not compromise his principles. Even if they are small, one day from north and south and east and west. Those who have a hunger for godliness.

Those who have a hunger for reality. Will gradually hear of this group. And come and meet with you.

Because they say, here is where God is. Here is where life is. Because I myself will be a wall of fire.

Round about the church. It is not going to have any earthly walls. It is not denominational walls.

You please sign this doctrinal statement. Come and join this church. Those are all denominational walls.

God says, I will be a wall of fire. Round about this church. You are not going to get somebody's signature and make him a member.

I am going to be a wall of fire. You are not even going to just baptize him and make him a member. The man has to come through the wall of fire.

With all his earthly ambitions burnt up. With all his desire to live for himself burnt up. Then he can come through to this church.

Can you imagine, if a city is surrounded by a wall of fire. How do you get through to that city? You got to go through the fire. God says, I will be a wall of fire round about the church.

And anybody who wants to come in has to come through that wall of fire. And only what cannot be burnt will come through. Everything that can be burnt will be burnt up by God at that entrance itself.

There is no gate. You got to come through the wall of fire. Who can dwell with the consuming fire we saw in Isaiah chapter 33.

Hebrews 12 it says, our God is a consuming fire. And so whenever preachers try to lower the temperature of the fire. Till it's not shooting up with big flames and bring it down to almost nothing.

So that anybody can walk into the church with all their worldly ideas. And worldly ambitions and love of the world. You can be pretty sure that's not a church where God is.

Because it says, if you allow me to be a wall of fire round about your church. It says, I will be the glory inside it. You want the glory of God to be inside the church.

Then let him be a wall of fire outside the church. The two go together. You don't want him to be a wall of fire outside the church.

You say, oh these are too high standards. We can't have all that. Okay.

When he goes away, the glory in the midst of the church will also go. The two go together. I want to be a part of a church which has got a wall of fire round about it.

No earthly membership lists or doctrinal statements primarily. But God as a wall of fire. I'm not saying doctrine is not important.

All I'm saying is that alone is not enough. A doctrine is not a wall of fire. God is a wall of fire.

And when God is there, there will be right doctrine. But the most important thing will be more important than the doctrine. Is the glory of God will be in the midst of the church.

So that's what Zachariah saw in this vision. God is a wall. And so the exiles are called in verse 6. Come away from Babylon.

Escape to Jerusalem. What a word that we need to proclaim today. You come out of Babylon yourself.

The glory of God is not going to catch you by the neck and pull you out of Babylon and say come here. No. The responsibility is yours.

You decide. I don't want to be in a system that doesn't honor God. I want to be with God's people.

I want to be with those who are wholehearted. I want to be with those who are gathering around inside a wall of fire where the glory of God is seen in the midst. And those of you who are seeking to build a church, build a church like this.

Everything else is useless. You have to pay a price. Don't think you can just get a doctrine, get a pattern, look somewhere else where somebody else has done it that way and reproduce the same thing yourself.

If God has not burnt up everything that is combustible, that can be burnt in your life, you're not going to be able to build that church. Make sure that every earthly ambition is burnt up in your life. Make sure that everything that God does not love, you don't love.

And everything that God hates, you hate. I'm not going to make a list of that. You ask God to show you the thing that he hates and you hate it.

And the things that God loves, love with a fiery love. And then you can be used of God, man or woman, to build a church of Jesus Christ. And the Lord says, verse 10, Shout and rejoice, for I am coming to live among you, many nations, not just individuals, from many, many countries.

People will come from many, many countries. They will come to hear what you have to say because they have heard that God is with you. And the land of Judah, he will choose and be silent before the Lord, for he is springing into action, verse 13, from his holy dwelling.

And then we come to the third vision, here in chapter 3. And that's the vision of cleansing, of the crowning, the cleansing and the crowning of Joshua, the servant of God. It's very interesting that I told you there are two movements in the Old Testament. One is Egypt to Canaan, speaking about the individual life.

And from Babylon to Jerusalem, speaking about church life. And in both of them, there is a Joshua. There's a Joshua to Canaan and there's a Joshua to Jerusalem.

Here he is. And Joshua is just the Hebrew word for Jesus, Savior. That's not just a coincidence, it's more meaningful than a coincidence.

And Joshua was the high priest. Today Christ is a high priest with one difference, that this Joshua was a sinner. And just like the other Joshua who led people into Canaan was deceived by the Gibeonites.

They were human beings. In one way they were types of Christ, but they were human and they had their limitations and they had sin. Whereas Jesus is absolutely pure and sinless.

But other than that, Joshua is a picture of Christ. But what I want to show you here is not Joshua as a picture of Christ, but Joshua as a picture of a leader. He was the leader, one of the leaders, one of these four blacksmiths, and the four leaders who was leading the people into building God's temple in Jerusalem.

And this leader has got sin in his life. Not deliberate known sin. If it was deliberate known sin, it would be a very serious thing.

Paul could only say in 1 Corinthians 4.4, I don't know anything against myself, my conscience is clear. But the one who judges me is the Lord. And there are many things that he sees which I cannot see.

And as and when God shows it to me, I confess it and cleanse it. There is conscious sin in our life and unconscious. And even in leaders, there will be unconscious sin.

There is no leader anywhere in the world who is Christ-like. Not even the apostle Paul. When they slapped Jesus, he did not threaten the high priest.

When they slapped Paul, he said, God will smite you, you whitewashed wall. You know there is a difference between Christ and even Paul. Paul fell into sin at that time.

He was a bit upset. But then he immediately confessed it and asked forgiveness and set it right. So let me tell you this, you will never find a leader anywhere in the world who is Christ-like.

We become like Jesus only when he comes again. We will never be sinlessly perfect on this earth. Not even the greatest leader.

And that is why sometimes you may look at a leader and you may see some defect in him. There are defects in the greatest leaders. Nobody is perfect.

You will find defects in the greatest prophet in the world when he speaks. There will be defects in his speech. Don't worry about those defects.

Some of those defects may be very minor. So here it teaches us that the greatest of leaders on earth can still have some deficiency in their life. And what should you do when you see that defect? I'm not talking about... Now you should not misunderstand this to apply to a leader living in adultery or leader running after money or... I'm not talking about these things.

I'm talking about, you know, little defects which are not serious but which are still un-Christ likenesses. That's the theme here. Joshua the high priest was standing before the Lord and Satan was there to accuse him.

Satan targets leaders. He's always looking for leaders. Targeting them, targeting their wives, targeting their children.

Remember this. Don't be harsh to judge a leader because he's a bigger target of Satan than you are. His children are bigger targets of Satan than your children are.

His wife is a bigger target of Satan than your wife is. And he's there to accuse Joshua to the Lord. And here is the great encouragement that the Lord said, I the Lord, verse 2, reject your accusations.

We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. We don't only have an accuser, Satan, accusing us. We have an advocate.

Sometimes we are so taken up with the accuser that we forget the advocate who is praying for us. There are two ministries going on in heaven right now. One is Satan's, like in the book of Job you read, accusing, look at Job, he's like this, this, this, this, this.

Look at Joshua, he's like this. Accusing and accusing you, accusing me. And there's another ministry going on in heaven at the same time and it says in Hebrews 7.25, Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us.

A ministry of accusation and a ministry of intercession. And those who are in fellowship with Satan will accuse believers on earth also. Every time you gossip against another believer, speak evil against another believer, whether you know it or not, you're holding hands with Satan there.

Yeah, yeah, I agree with you Satan, he's like that. And every time you pray for somebody, you pray for some brother, maybe who's weak, you're holding hands with Jesus and saying, Lord I agree with you, we gotta pray for that brother and deliver him from that problem. How many times have you held hands with Satan and how many times have you held hands with Jesus? You know.

At least it can be different in the future. And there we see Joshua was standing there, the Lord says, I reject your accusations, and that is what I also say when people come to me with accusations. I know I've had people come to my house and say, Brother Zach, I want to tell you about so and so, so and so, this, this, this, this.

I say, thank you very much. I'm going to call him up or meet him today itself and tell him that you told me all this. He says, no, no, no, no, brother, please don't go and tell.

I say, no, I have to tell. I am faithful to all my brothers. If somebody comes and tells me about you, I will come and tell you also.

And if you tell me about somebody else, I will go and tell about somebody else. You know what is the result? My house has been protected from gossiping for a long, long time. Because people don't come with all their stories now because they know I'll go and tell the other person.

And they also know that I will not speak against the person behind his back. I will tell him straight to his face. Be like that.

The Lord says, I reject your accusations. I'm sorry, maybe what you say is right, but this man is a child of God. He's a burning stick snatched from the fire.

Now Joshua was having filthy garments. And so the angel said, take away his filthy clothes. This is Jesus pleading for us.

Take away his filthy clothes. Put on new clothes on him. And he stands there, clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

That is the way we must see God's children. Clothed in the righteousness of Christ. And then, Zachariah.

This is the best part. See it and follow the example of Zachariah. He says, Lord, this is wonderful.

Put a good turban on his head also. He cooperates with Jesus in making his filthy brother glorious. Do you want this ministry? To cooperate with Jesus that when Jesus puts a robe of righteousness on that brother, you cooperate with him and say, Lord, not only a robe, put a turban on his head, make him really glorious.

What does this mean in practical terms? Somebody comes and tells me something bad about a brother and I say, but you know, he's got some good qualities. And suddenly the fellow, his mouth is shut. Yeah, it's wonderful to have this ministry, particularly in prayer.

When you go before God, I never forget what I read about John Hyde, that great missionary who came to North India, was known as Praying Hyde. He says how one day he was kneeling down and praying and Lord, he was saying, Lord, you know that pastor, he is like this. And suddenly he felt as if he was being choked.

The Holy Spirit was choking him and said, don't get into a ministry of accusation. Pray for him. And he learned something that day, not to accuse even in prayer, but to pray.

So that's what Zachariah did. And then we read Joshua is crowned. And he continues in his ministry.

I want to say to you, pray for God's leaders. Don't join the devil in criticizing them. They've got enough people to criticize them.

Whenever you think of them, offer a brief prayer. Whenever the Lord reminds you of a true servant of God, please spend one minute or half a minute or 15 seconds praying for him. Lord, you reminded me of that person.

I don't know what he's going through. I don't know how the devil is attacking him. I want to pray for him.

Hold him up. Protect his family. Bless his ministry.

Chapter 4. Here we see a fifth vision. We've seen one of the horses. We've seen one of the horns and the measuring line in Jerusalem and crowning of Joshua.

The fifth one is the golden lampstand. The Lord shows Zachariah a picture of a solid gold lampstand, verse 3, with a bowl of oil on top. And on the side of the lampstand were two trees.

This is automatically, in the temple, the priest had to go and put the oil in the lampstand every day because it would burn up. But this is automatic. There were olive trees growing by the side of the lampstand and there were pipes connected to this lampstand.

And as the olive trees produced oil, it was automatically pouring it into the lampstand. And the lampstand was burning all the time. This is a picture of the church.

Revelation chapter 1, you read the lampstand is a picture of the church. And this is the ministry of the Holy Spirit, continuous ministry. And these two branches are a picture, verse 14, Zachariah asked him, what are these two branches? These two trees, verse 11.

And they said, these are two anointed servants of mine, verse 14, who are assisting the Lord in keeping the church fresh, spirit-filled all the time. That means two anointed servants of the Lord who are spirit-filled all the time, who are fresh all the time. Anytime you meet them, they are in touch with the spirit.

Anytime you meet them, there's some oil coming out of them to bless you. Oh, what a picture! Don't you think the church needs people like that? Two, like Haggai and Zachariah, cooperating together. Not one person trying to get all the glory to himself.

One here, one here. This servant of God needs a balance from that servant of God. This person pours oil from here, that person pours oil from there.

And both together make this lampstand of the church burn. When two brothers together can work together for the building of the church without competition, without jealousy, both filled with the Holy Spirit, both seeking that the lampstand should burn, no personal ambitions, no desire to show that I'm a better olive tree than the other one on the other side. Only interested in the lampstand to burn.

I believe we can build a church there which the gates of hell will never be able to prevail against. And that's what the Lord says here. When you find something like this, this could be a picture of Joshua and Zerubbabel.

It could be a picture of Haggai and Zachariah. It could be anyone. Two people working together.

This is new covenant ministry. This is what the Lord says to Zerubbabel, verse 6. It's not by might, not by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord, every mighty mountain will be flattened in front of you. When the church moves out like this, the gates of hell will never be able to prevail against it because it is filled with the spirit.

Now notice what we have seen in chapter 2, chapter 3, chapter 4. In chapter 2, we see the ministry of God the Father being a wall of fire round about the church. In chapter 3, we see the ministry of God the Son as the advocate of God's people and God's leaders. And in chapter 4, we see God the Holy Spirit filling and anointing the church.

It's a whole trinity here. It's beautiful. What Zachariah saw.

And then we come to the next vision in chapter 6. It's always like this. We saw in the Old Testament when the rivers began to flow from the rock, immediately Amalek came. And here we see in a little while.

First of all, chapter 5, we have a vision of a flying scroll. About 30 feet long. Chapter 5, verse 2, 15 feet wide.

30 feet long, 15 feet wide. A scroll. A scroll is like a book.

In those days, they didn't have books like this. They had scrolls. And he says, this scroll contains a curse.

The curse of the law that is going to go upon all those who tell lies and who steal. Particularly two things. And I'm sending the curse into verse 4 to the house of every thief and every liar.

And my curse will remain in that house till it is completely destroyed. This is a picture of judgment upon those who disobey God's word. It will go into every house and expose sin.

Swiftly. It's flying. And it's going to bring judgment.

That's the other vision. As Jared Zechariah saw about the fact that God's law will come forth and bring judgment in every little corner wherever it's hidden. And then we see the sixth, sorry the seventh vision is about Babylon.

It's a woman. Similar to the woman you read in Revelation chapter 17. And she's a business woman.

Babylon is a business system as you read in Revelation 18. It's a vision verse 5, chapter 5 verse 5 to 11 of a basket which is used for measuring grain. It's a measure.

It's called a bushel. A basket by which you measure grain. You put the grain in and wipe it off and that's one measure.

And it's filled with the sins verse 6 of everyone in the land. And there's a lead cover verse 7 on top. That means the real motivating force is hidden.

Today in a lot of Christian systems we don't realize the motivating force is the devil. For example, when you gossip how many of you recognize that the motivating force behind your gossip and backbiting is the devil? It's hidden under a lead cover. Lead is a very heavy metal.

Underneath that when you lift it up there's a woman sitting inside. And that woman is mystery Babylon. The woman's name is wickedness.

And he pushed her back into the basket and closed the heavy lead. He just showed it to you. Zechariah, I'll show you.

Most of these other people don't see it. They think we are just doing business. You know a lot of people who are involved in business.

There's a lot of things underneath that lead cover which is black money, cheating, lying. And the Lord shows his prophet look inside. It's all corrupt.

Put it back in. These fellows can't see it. Be careful.

And when that comes into the church like in the days of Jesus people were making business inside the church. Others couldn't see. Yeah, we need sheep.

We need doves. These people are doing a good ministry. But Jesus could see underneath the lead cover what was going on behind all this selling of doves and sheep in the temple.

These fellows were making money in the name of religion. The same thing today. When lot of preachers make money in the name of religion and the verse they use is the laborer is worthy of his hire.

The Lord has ordained those who preach the gospel should live by the gospel. You lift up the lead cover and look inside. It's Babylon through and through.

God gives his servants discernment. And that's why other people can't see it because there's a lead cover on it. A spirit which is motivating this type of business.

Particularly when it is done in the Lord's name. And it says here I looked up and I saw two women flying toward us. Verse 9 And their wings were like those of a stork.

A stork was one of those unclean animals listed in Leviticus chapter 11 verse 19. An unclean animal. And this is a picture of something unclean picking up the basket.

Pick up this basket and flew off in the sky. And I asked where are they taking this basket. Verse 11 To the land of Babylon.

Shinar is another word for Babylon. You read about it in Genesis 11 with the Tower of Babel. Shinar is taking him to the land of Babylon where they will build a temple.

They are going to build a church in Babylon also for this basket. Where business and religion will go hand in hand. They will do business and they will do the Lord's work.

And when the temple is ready this basket will be set on its pedestal. Their fundamental aim in Christian work will be to make a name for themselves and to make money because they didn't get any other job. They went to the Lord's work and they are going to do God's work here.

This is happening today. That's the other vision God gave Zachariah. Then we come to the last vision that he had.

His chapter is actually in chapter 6 verses 1 to 8. He says there he saw four chariots come between two bronze mountains. Now bronze in the Bible always speaks of judgment. Do you know the brazen altar? The altar made of bronze where the animals were sacrificed, judged.

So bronze always speaks of judgment. And between these bronze mountains these chariots they look like uncontrolled horses. But God has got the control of the reins.

Red horses, black horses, white horses, gray horses. Something like Revelation chapter 6. He asked what are these? These are the four spirits of heaven who stand before the Lord and they are going out to do his work. And the chariot with the black horses going some are going north, west and south.

And we read in verse 7 they went to and fro across the earth. They patrolled the earth and they ministered God's judgment. In some way God judged.

Maybe he sent a flood somewhere, a famine somewhere. They did something because of God's anger against sin and they came back and the Lord said to me those who went north have vented the anger of my spirit over there. That means my anger has been exhausted by my judgment upon those people.

So that's the other thing we see here of this vision of God's final judgment. That's also going to go over the earth. So these are the visions that Zachariah got.

And then we find here some words of encouragement that Zachariah gets here in chapter 6 in verse 9 onwards. I received another message from the Lord saying some people will bring some silver and gold to you and as soon as they arrive meet them, accept their gifts. Does God tell his servants to accept gifts? Yes he does.

When godly people come and give you a gift take it. Even Zachariah accepted it. Elisha refused it from Naaman, but he didn't refuse it from everybody.

And when you take it, don't use it all for yourself. Make a crown of silver and gold and give it to Joshua. Some of the gifts God gives us are not for ourselves.

They are for others. To bless others. And tell Joshua, give him a word of encouragement when you meet Joshua and you go to him with this gift.

Tell him that the Lord almighty says, here is the man called the branch. It's a picture of Jesus. And he will build the real church.

He will build the Lord's temple and he will receive honor. He will rule as a king from his throne. And he will also serve as a priest from his throne.

In the old testament, nobody was allowed to be a king and a priest. Uzziah tried to be that and he brought calamity upon himself, he got leprosy. Saul tried to be that and he brought calamity upon himself, lost the kingdom.

Jesus is the only one who could be a king and a priest. And once he became a king and a priest, he has made us, we read in Revelation 1, kings and priests. And many, verse 15, will come from distant lands to celebrate and to build a church along with you.

That's a prophecy that from many, many places people will come and build a church along with you. Okay, now we go to chapter 7 and he tells them about, say to the people in verse 4, he's telling them about rituals that they had which the Lord had not commanded. See, now the visions are over, now the Lord gives him certain messages on fasting and hypocrisy and disobedience in the next two chapters.

He says, say to those people that all those years when you fasted and mourned in the summer and the early autumn, verse 4, was it really to me? And even now in your holy festivals, do you think about me but only of pleasing yourselves? Isn't this the same message the Lord proclaimed through the prophets years ago? This is what the Lord says, verse 8. Judge fairly, honestly, just like Micah said, what does the Lord require of you? Show mercy and kindness to other people. Don't oppress poor people like widows, orphans, foreigners and poor people. Don't make evil harms to harm each other.

Then all your fasting and your breaking of bread and everything will be of value. Otherwise it's no use. Do you know how much God cares for the poor people in a church? I feel sorry when a preacher or a pastor or a shepherd does not care for the poor.

I remember when I was a young Christian and I had just come out of my job to serve the Lord and I was in a particular group of assemblies and I went there with great hopes and I saw the full-time workers there always visiting the homes of the rich people because the rich people would give them gifts and envelopes that they could put in their pocket and I saw all this as a young Christian and I said, Lord, I'll never live for this. I did not give up my job to do all this and I made it a policy in that church to visit the poorest of the

poor in their huts, in their homes. I would go visiting the poorest villages where only poor people were, where the great preachers would never go.

And as I continued to grow, I said, Lord, the great preachers come to the great cities. Please send me to the villages of India, to the poorest of the poor villages, to illiterate people, that I can give them this wonderful news of the gospel and God has granted me my heart's desire that today we have churches in villages where there was no church for 2000 years. People who are, some of them illiterate, who live on one meal a day, who come to love the Lord.

I want to tell you, my brothers and sisters, God cares for the poor. He cares for the widows. He cares for the orphans and He cares for the helpless, the foreigners, the strangers.

Be like God yourself. He says, your ancestors, verse 11, would not listen to this message. They turned away, verse 11, 7-11.

And so, they did not listen to the Spirit and that's why they were punished and I scattered them. We come to chapter 8 and there, God is a jealous God, as we read in verse 1 and 2. My love for Mount Zion is passionate and strong. I'm consumed with a passion for Jerusalem, which means, I'm jealous that Jerusalem should never be corrupted.

Like a husband who wants to keep his wife pure. And verse 4 and 5, I like this verse. In the church, this is Jerusalem, there will be old men and old women and there will be boys and girls and there will be no generation gap between them.

I don't care how old I am, I want to be at the level of the smallest boys and girls in the church. I love to speak to the little boys and girls in a church and the little boys and girls in a home when I go. I think Jesus was like that.

Sometimes you go visiting a home and you only talk to the older people. Learn to talk to the little children, my brothers and sisters. Jesus was like that.

It'll keep your own spirit young. I believe in my spirit. I'm only in my twenties, perhaps, because I'm I love to mingle with children and young people.

This is how the church is. There should never be a generation gap between older people and young people. Never.

A godly man will be down at the level even of the children. And the wonderful thing is, another thing I see here is that in Jerusalem, in the streets of the city, the boys and girls are playing. They're not fasting and praying necessarily.

There's a time for that. But they're playing. I don't know, maybe they're playing football.

Can we play football in the church? Well, I'm a little old to run around so much now, but in my spirit, I love to play any game I can play. Because there's a fellowship. A unity that comes together when we play together and mingle in ordinary earthly things.

That builds bonds of friendship and fellowship. Boys and girls playing. This is how it's going to be in the millennium.

Praise God for that. And chapter 9, we read of a number of messages in chapter 9 onwards that are messages that are after completing the temple. There are so many excellent things here in all these chapters.

I wouldn't have time to go into all of them. Here he speaks about a burden. A burden is something that weighs me down.

And what it says here, the Amplified Bible says in verse 1, the Lord has got His eye on all men. And he speaks about the judgment against Israel's enemies, Ashkelon, Tyre, Gaza, different people. He speaks about judgment against all of them.

And in chapter 10, he speaks about judgment against false prophets. Verse 2, many of these false prophets are fortune tellers. They predict things about the future and actually tell you lies.

They say, this is what's going to happen to you. There are so-called prophets nowadays to whom believers go. What do you think will happen to me if I go this place, take this job or go to this country? It's all about material things.

Where are the prophets who tell them about their sin, like the Old Testament prophets? No, these are fortune tellers. Just like in the world there are fortune tellers. There are fortune tellers in every religion.

And there are fortune tellers in Christianity too. Those fortune tellers of other religions also collect money. And the fortune tellers in Christendom who call themselves prophets also collect money.

Don't be deceived by them. Don't be frightened by their threats and their warnings. And don't be deceived by their promises of prosperity.

Go to a prophet who will tell you about your sin and make you like Christ. That's the one who can help you. It's because you listen to these false prophets that my people, verse 2, are wandering like lost sheep without any shepherd to protect them.

Therefore the Lord says, my anger burns against these shepherds and I will punish these leaders. Always the prophets were hitting out against the leaders. And the Lord Almighty has come to look after the flock himself.

Verse 3, from Judah will come the cornerstone, a prophecy about Christ. Beautiful passage which I'd encourage you to study more deeply about Jesus. I will strengthen Judah and save Israel.

Verse 6, He's going to make them into one body. These separated groups, He's going to bring them together and make them one body like Jew and Gentile, Judah and Israel. He'll make them one.

He's going to unite them. Chapter 11, again He speaks in verse 4 onwards about good shepherds and evil shepherds. And there are two things He mentions here.

In verse 7, He speaks about grace. I took two shepherd staffs and named them one grace and the other unity. You know what are the two most important messages required in the church today? Grace and unity.

Not unity without grace and not grace without unity. Both. What do I mean? What is the manifestation of grace? Romans 6, 14.

Sin shall not be the master over you when you're under grace. That is the proof that you've really come under grace. When you got forgiveness of sins, you got a little bit of grace.

But when you come under grace, one is like a cup of water, the other is like a river of water. When you come under grace, sin does not rule over you. That's one of the most important messages to be proclaimed in the church today.

And those who have come to this experience of grace and the Holy Spirit being poured upon them must be united and become one with each other. It's not unity with every Tom, Dick and Harry who calls himself a Christian, but with those who seek for victory over sin. And then we come to chapter 12.

Again, we read about the burden of the Lord and it says in verse 10 that God will pour out the spirit of grace and supplication or the spirit of grace and groaning upon God's people. Romans 6 speaks about the spirit of grace. Romans 8 speaks about the spirit of groaning.

The spirit groans within us in prayer. The Holy Spirit when He comes upon us, comes upon us as a spirit of grace helping us to overcome and also comes within us as a spirit of groaning making us pray and cry out to God for the building of the church. And in that day, Romans, sorry, Zechariah chapter 13, you speak about, you read about the fountain that's going to be opened and the sword that will strike the shepherd.

Verse 7 with Jesus quoted before He went to the cross, He said, all will be offended because the sword will strike the shepherd. He quoted that in Mark 14, 27. And then about the remnant.

I will bring, verse 9, that small group, two-thirds of the people will be cut off, verse 8, but a small remnant will be left behind who will choose this way and I'll bring that group through the fire, through the wall of fire, make them pure and they will call upon my name. And then we come to chapter 14 which speaks about the coming day of the Lord when Jesus will come, verse 4, and will stand on the Mount of Olives and the Mount of Olives, verse, will be split into two and in that day the ordinary sources of light, verse 6, will stop shining. The sun and moon will stop shining.

It won't be a normal day. The enemies of Jerusalem will be destroyed. And the last verse, in the church there will be no more businessmen.

It's a beautiful verse. No Canaanite or as some translations put it, there'll be no more businessmen in the church. There'll be nobody coming to the church to make profit, to make gain for himself.

Business is the principle of Babylon but sacrifice is the principle of Jerusalem. To gain as much as I can is the principle of Babylon. To give, to build a church is the principle of Jerusalem.

There'll be no more businessmen in that day when the Lord purifies His church finally. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank You for this wonderful book and the encouragement that it brings us in our day to build the church of Jesus Christ as the body of Christ.

We thank You. Encourage us through it in the days to come. We ask in Jesus' name.

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