

From Babylon to Jerusalem - (Zechariah) ch.3 - ch.5

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of forgiveness, justification, and intercession in building the body of Christ, and the call to walk in God's ways and perform His service.

Duration: 1:00:38

Topics: "From Babylon To Jerusalem"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the visions described in the book of Zechariah, specifically chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5. The first vision highlights the forgiveness and cleansing that God offers to believers through the shedding of Jesus' blood on the cross. The second vision emphasizes the importance of body ministry within the church, where individuals empty themselves for the sake of the body of Christ. The third vision depicts Joshua, the High Priest, being accused by Satan, but defended by Jesus as his advocate. The preacher highlights the significance of these visions in understanding the building of the body of Christ and the roles of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in protecting, interceding, and strengthening believers.

Transcript

We'll turn now to Zechariah and chapter 3. We considered in our last study three of the eight visions that Zechariah saw, and we saw that Haggai and Zechariah together were two prophets through whom God encouraged the Jews who had returned from Babylon to build the superstructure of the temple of which they had laid the foundation sixteen years earlier. And so we see that all these prophecies are related to the building of the body of Christ, the superstructure, the pressing on to perfection that we are called to do in our day. And in our last study we looked at verse 13 of chapter 2, a very important word, if we are to build the body of Christ, be silent all flesh before the Lord.

The church is built by those who have learned to keep their flesh silent, to keep their flesh from expressing itself, who have learned to tell the flesh to keep quiet. Then the house can be built because the Lord is arisen from his holy habitation. When the Lord is present, the flesh has no room to speak.

This is why it is a terrible sin to get up in a meeting and to speak in the flesh. Many believers do that, and that is a mark of the fact that they have no fear of God, they have no sense of God's presence. If there is a fear of God and a sense of God's presence, then they will not exercise themselves in the flesh, either in

prayer or in sharing or in anything, consciously.

Unconsciously we may do many things, I am not talking about that, but consciously we keep the flesh silent before the Lord, because he is in the midst of the church. Now the fourth vision, chapter 3, relates to the fourth vision that Zacharias saw, and remember all these visions relate to the building of the body of Christ, and this is the vision where he sees Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the Lord says to Satan, the Lord rebuke you.

Now there are two words, the Lord, here, verse 2, but the first Lord is referring to the Son of God, and the second to the Father. The Lord, Jesus Christ, he came down to earth as Jesus, at that time he was still up there in glory, said to Satan, the Lord rebuke you, Satan. It is a picture of a believer standing before God, being accused by Satan, and being defended by his advocate, Jesus Christ.

A very beautiful picture. And it's very interesting to see that one of the leaders who led God's people to rebuild the temple and who came out of Babylon in the movement back to Jerusalem was Joshua, Joshua the high priest. And it's significant that he has the same name as the Joshua who led the people of Israel out of the wilderness into Canaan's land that you read in the book of Joshua.

And it's significant that the word Joshua means exactly the same as the Greek Jesus. Joshua is Jesus, you read that in Hebrews chapter 4. And so we see that there was a Joshua who led God's people into Canaan, and there is a Joshua who was one of the leaders in leading God's people out of Babylon into Jerusalem. And both these symbolize two ministries of Jesus Christ.

One to lead us individually out of Egypt and out of the wilderness into Canaan's land of victory and rest, and the other is the ministry of Jesus Christ in leading us out of corrupt Babylonian Christianity into the body of Christ, Jerusalem, which will be his bride. And so it's significant there is a Joshua there and a Joshua here, and that the word refer means Jesus. The word is the same.

And we see here that Satan stands at his right hand to accuse him. Now the word Satan is a Hebrew word that means adversary, one who is there to attack us and to accuse us. He's an accuser and an attacker of God's people, and God allows him to do it.

But we see here Joshua is silent, which is a very wonderful thing. He doesn't really have to say anything. The Lord said to Satan, that is the advocate.

We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. And this advocate takes up Joshua's side and says to Satan, the Lord rebuke you, Satan. Indeed, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you.

Is this not a brand plucked from the fire? The Lord has chosen Jerusalem. That's why he was quick to defend Joshua, because Joshua had committed himself to be a part of this Jerusalem, which the Lord had chosen. And if we have committed ourselves also to be a part of that which God has chosen, the body of Christ, if we have forsaken Babylon, we can be sure that the advocate will defend us against Satan just as really and just as strongly.

And is this not a brand plucked from the fire? And to me that's a very beautiful picture of the sovereignty of God. That it is God who chose Joshua. And the Bible says in Ephesians 1 verse 3 and 4, that God has chosen us in Christ before the foundations of the world.

Have you ever thought that there were so many brands in the fire? Why did he pick out only one? Very often you see in families many brands in the fire and the Lord's picked just you out. It wasn't because you were specially clever or specially righteous. No, it was God's sovereign election, God's goodness and his mercy to every one of us so that no one can boast before God.

God and his sovereignty. Many of us know that. Why is it that so many others of your relatives are still in darkness? Darkness, some in Egypt, some in Babylon.

And God has chosen to grant you life. It's a brand plucked from the fire. No merit of our own.

God's sovereign choice. It says here Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel. There was a reason why Satan could accuse Joshua.

It wasn't without reason and Satan does not accuse without reason. Satan can tell lies to us, but he can't tell lies to God. And he can't accuse a person to God if there's nothing in that person to accuse him about.

So we can be sure that when Satan accuses the believers, he doesn't try to bluff God. Chapter three, verse three. There is reason why Satan can accuse us before God.

There is sin in our lives that Satan sees. And the word of God is honest. It says Joshua was clothed with filthy garments.

And God does not pretend that Joshua doesn't have filthy garments. You see, God is righteous. It says we have an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

The advocate is also righteous. But God has made provision for us that those filthy garments can be removed. Verse four, it says here.

And he spoke and said to those who were standing before him saying, remove the filthy garments from him. Now remember that Joshua was a person who came out of Babylon to Jerusalem to build the temple. Is there sin? Are there filthy garments still on those who have left Babylon? Yes, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.

In our flesh, there dwells nothing good. And it's very important for us to realize that sin dwells in our flesh. That even after we have left the wilderness and come to Canaan, and even after we have left Babylon and come to Jerusalem, sin still dwells in our flesh.

And there are so many areas where we are unaware of where sin manifests itself through our body. These are what the Bible calls the deeds of the body. And therefore, we need constantly the pleadings and the intercessions of our heavenly advocate.

Otherwise, it will be impossible for us to build the body of Christ. It will be impossible for us to overcome the accusations of Satan. And we see here, there are two things which we see in verse four, and two very important things that we must bear in mind.

First of all, remove the filthy garments from him. And that is forgiveness. The first thing God does is remove that guilt with which we are clothed, because he shed his blood for us on the cross.

Therefore, that because we come into the light and we walk in the light, we have fellowship with him and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. That is, remove the filthy garments from him, we are forgiven

and we are cleansed. But then, more than that, we see here in the last part of verse four, see, I have taken your iniquity away.

That's not all. I've taken your iniquity away from you. And now, I will clothe you with festal robes.

That is what the New Testament calls justification. That means to be declared righteous. That is, to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

These are two different things. And we need to see that God does two things for us. One, he forgives us, he takes away the filthy garments, but then he doesn't leave us naked without filthy garments.

He clothes us with the righteousness of Christ. That's the point here. Forgiven and justified.

That's why we are acceptable before God. We can come freely to him. Now, this is very important for us, if we are to build the body of Christ, that we have a clear sense of being accepted by God.

If I'm in doubt about whether God has accepted me, you know, if I'm always a bit unsure whether the devil's accusations have got some ground in me, I will not be able to build the body of Christ. That's why this vision comes here in Zechariah. That one of the important requirements for every member to build the body of Christ is you've got to be absolutely sure that the devil's got nothing to accuse you of.

That's why Paul said, I always do my best to keep my conscience clear with God and with men. That means I walk in the light. To keep your conscience clear means to walk in the light.

And we walk in the light, that means our filthy garments are exposed. Joshua is not there putting his hand over his filthy garments trying to cover up the dirt. He says, yeah, there it is, I admit it.

I come into the light. I'm honest about it. And I clear my conscience with God and men.

And God removes my filthy garments. The devil has got nothing to accuse me about. And he's clothed me with the righteousness of Christ.

And I must be 100% sure of this. Otherwise, the devil will always keep on nagging me and nagging me and nagging me and make my usefulness for God nil. There are many believers in that condition.

They think it is the conviction of the Holy Spirit. It is not. It's the condemnation of the devil.

And they are groaning under this burden. And therefore they are useless as far as being available to God for building the body of Christ. To be accepted before God, to be sure God has accepted me, I rejoice in it.

That is a very, very important qualification. And here it is. And then Zachariah said something, verse 5. He's a wonderful brother.

Here we see. He got so excited when he saw Joshua's filthy garments taken off and new garments put on him. He was a true brother.

You know, a true brother is one who rejoices when another brother's sin is taken away and he becomes righteous. A false brother is one who is secretly a bit happy when he sees a weakness in a brother and speaks about it and tries to pull him down. Now, Zachariah was not like that.

He was a true brother. He rejoiced when he saw Joshua's filthy garments taken away and new garments put on him. And he joined in this ministry with the Lord.

And he said, Lord, that's not all. Let's do something more for him. Verse 5. Put a clean turban on his head as well.

What a beautiful picture of cooperating with Jesus in this ministry of intercession. Cooperating with Jesus against the devil. Put something on his head also.

With a clean turban so the devil got nothing to accuse him even there. And that's the ministry to which the Lord calls us. You know that verse in 1 John 5, 16, which we have often looked at.

If a man sees his brother's sin, a sin which is not unto death, what should he do? He should pray. And God will grant life to that brother who has sinned. That's exactly what Zachariah did here.

He cooperated with the Lord in this ministry of intercession in praying for Joshua and saying, Lord, do something more for him. And that is a ministry which we could call the ministry of making our brother glorious. That's a ministry which less than 0.001% of believers have.

And it's a ministry which is greatly needed. The ministry of making our brother glorious. Babylonian Christianity is full of people who make themselves glorious in the eyes of others.

But to make our brother glorious, to pray that God will put a clean turban on his head if you see a dirty turban there, that's a wonderful ministry. And I tell you, there are many people who come out of Babylon who haven't got the spirit of Jerusalem in them. Who have not got this ministry of seeking to cover a brother's nakedness.

If you see your brother without a turban, pray to God that God will give him a turban so that his head will be, his nakedness will be covered. That is what Zachariah did. And that's a wonderful example from that old covenant prophet for us who claim to be in the new covenant to follow.

That if we see a nakedness in a brother, we pray that God will cover it. Here Joshua's head was naked. Zachariah said, Lord, cover it.

Wonderful. And the Lord did that. The Lord did just that.

And Zachariah knew that the Old Testament high priest had to have a turban on his head. They put a clean turban on his head, it says in verse 5, and clothed him with garments while the angel of the Lord was standing by. If you turn to Exodus chapter 28, we read there, Exodus chapter 28, that Aaron the high priest had to have, Exodus 28 and verse 36, You shall make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it engravings of a seal holy to the Lord, you shall fasten it on a blue cord and it shall be on the turban.

It shall be at the front of the turban, it shall be on Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall take away the iniquity of the holy things which the sons of Israel consecrate. The high priest had to have a turban. Joshua was the high priest.

Zachariah saw either that he didn't have a turban or he didn't have a clean one. And he joined the Lord in this ministry of intercession that is the spirit of the bride. What did God give Eve to Adam as? As a help meat.

And what has God given the bride to Jesus Christ as? As a help meat. What is the ministry he's engaged in? It says in Hebrews 7.25, Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us. And then what is the bride of Christ going to do as a help meat? To make intercession as well.

Do you want to be in the bride? Be a help meat to Jesus in the ministry of interceding for the nakedness that you see in the brothers and sisters. There are only two ministries. One is the ministry of Satan accusing.

And all those who gossip are actually accusers. They are hand in hand. We can say that they are the bride of Satan.

They are the help meat of Satan. Helping Satan by gossiping about that brother, speaking evil about the nakedness of that sister, and this brother, and that sister. They are the help meat of Satan.

And they themselves, even if they call themselves believers, are making themselves the bride and the help meat of Satan. But then there is the other ministry, which is the bride and the help meat of Jesus Christ. And that's what Zechariah engaged in.

Put a clean turban on him, Lord. And we can meditate on that profitably. Then the angel of the Lord, after he had clothed Joshua with a new dress and a turban, admonished Joshua saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts, Now listen to me.

He said to Joshua, If you will walk in my ways. Admonished means he gave him a strong exhortation. After the Lord cleanses us, he gives a strong exhortation.

Like Jesus spoke to the blind man and to the lame man whom he had healed, Go and sin no more. Lest a worse thing come upon you, he told the lame man. And to the woman whom he had forgiven, Go and sin no more.

Now we have some strong exhortations to those who are forgiven and justified. And that is, Now walk in my ways. And for us that means to walk the new and living way.

And perform my service. That means seek my kingdom first and my righteousness. We all engage in our own service.

But the Lord says, Perform my service. Walk in my ways. And if you choose to walk in my ways, and if you choose to commit yourself to building the body of Christ.

In those days it was building the temple. Today it is building the body of Christ. The Lord says, Will you commit yourself to two things? What are those two things? One, are you willing to commit yourself to walk the new and living way? Second, are you willing to commit yourself to perform my service? Which is the ministry of building the body of Christ.

Then, God says, You will govern my house. I will give you responsibility in my house. Some responsibility to the other.

God himself will give us a ministry. If God gives us a ministry, nobody can take it away. I will give you a ministry to govern my house.

And to have charge of my courts. To keep God's house holy. That was the charge which Joshua had.

And secondly, I will also grant you freedom. To come in and out of my presence with these people who are, with these who are standing here. These who are standing here are the angels.

And the Lord says to Joshua, You can come freely into my presence like these angels. Come and go from my presence. You can come before my face.

You can speak to me face to face. This is the privilege of those who are determined to walk the new and living way in their lives. Rending the veil.

And those who commit themselves to do their part in building the body of Christ. Now listen, Joshua the high priest. He says, You and your friends who are sitting in front of you.

Indeed, they are men who are a symbol. They are a sign. For behold, I am going to bring in my servant, the branch.

That is Jesus Christ. The Lord is saying, All that you are seeing in this vision here is only a picture. It's a picture of Jesus who is going to come.

My true servant. And he is called here, the branch. Why is he called the branch? Well, we got to compare scripture with scripture.

And if you turn to Isaiah chapter 11. We read there in Isaiah chapter 11 in verse 1. Why Jesus Christ is called the branch. Isaiah 11 verse 1 it says, Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse.

Jesse was the father of David, the king. And it says here, a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse. That means from the tree called Jesse will come forth.

It says here in the latter part of verse 1, A branch from his roots. From whose roots? From the roots of Jesse. A branch will come that will bear fruit.

And the spirit of the Lord will rest upon him. And all those verses, we know that it refers to Jesus Christ. But there he's called the branch.

And why is he called the branch? That has come from Jesse. It is to emphasize that which is spoken of many times in the New Testament. That Jesus was of the seed of David.

Exactly like a branch is of the same matter as the main tree. In other words, there in the Old Testament in Zachariah chapter 3 verse 8. Is a word that tells us about Jesus Christ coming in the flesh. That word, the branch, refers to Christ coming in the flesh of David.

And therefore, he can be a high priest for us. We read that in Hebrews 4, Hebrews 2 and Hebrews 4. That in order to become a high priest for us, he had to be made like his brethren in all things. He has been made like us in all things.

And therefore, he is fit to be our high priest. Now he says, behold the stone that I have set before Joshua. There are three titles given to Jesus Christ there.

In the latter part of verse 8, my servant. Second, the branch. And third, verse 9, the stone.

You remember the stone we saw in Daniel's vision. Which came and shattered the image to pieces. And the cornerstone that we read in Ephesians 2. Jesus Christ, the cornerstone.

And on one stone are seven eyes. Now we know that the seven eyes, from Revelation 5, verse 6, is a picture of the Holy Spirit. We're told in Revelation 5, 6 that the seven eyes are the seven spirits of God.

Are the sevenfold Holy Spirit. And that we don't have to interpret that. That's interpreted in Revelation 5, 6. The seven eyes are the sevenfold Holy Spirit that we saw in Isaiah 11.

The Spirit of the Lord. There are seven things mentioned about the Holy Spirit there in Isaiah 11, verses 2 and 3. The branch, mentioned in verse 1 of Isaiah 11. And the sevenfold Holy Spirit in verses 2 and 3. That's mentioned here.

That Jesus Christ is going to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Seven is the number of fullness or completion. I will engrave an inscription on it.

There is an inscription on this foundation. Do you know what that inscription is? You know, we don't have to interpret. We can compare scripture with scripture.

There is only one foundation, and that is Jesus Christ. And the inscription on that foundation is given to us in 2 Timothy 2, verse 19. It's very important for us to know this inscription.

It is on this foundation that the house of God is built. What is this inscription on the foundation? There are two things inscribed on this foundation. The firm foundation of God stands having this seal.

It says, the Lord knows those who are His. Well, that's very well. But how do I know those who are His? That's told us in the second part of that inscription.

Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from sin. That's how we know whether somebody belongs to the Lord or not. By the fact that he abstains from sin.

The Lord knows those who are His. He knows everybody's heart. But we don't know everybody's heart, but we see those who abstain from wickedness.

And it goes on to say there in verse 22, therefore seek fellowship with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Because then you can build on that same foundation together with others. So that is the point.

There is an inscription written on it, we read in Zechariah 3, verse 9. And the last part of verse 9, it says, Zechariah 3, 9, I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In one day, the iniquity of that land will be removed. That refers, I believe, not just to forgiveness, but to the taking away of sin altogether.

And that refers to the day when the veil was rent on Calvary's cross, and our old man was crucified with him, so that we should no longer serve sin. I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. When that work was finished, and the new and living way was opened up.

On that day, the way was opened. In that day, declares the Lord of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree. In other words, to sit under a vine and the fig tree is an Old Testament picture, which refers to entering into rest.

That means you sit under your own vine and your fig tree, you have come into rest. No battle, the victory is won. And you can invite others into this rest.

So we find that chapter 3 is a very important chapter, speaking about the personal qualifications of the man and the woman of God, whom God is going to use to build the body of Christ. Forgiven, justified, clear of Satan's accusations, clothed with the garments of righteousness, walking the new and living way, committed to building the body of Christ, and available to God, and being built on the foundation of departing from iniquity, entering into rest. Now we come to chapter 4. Then the angel who was speaking with me, returned and roused me as a man who is awakened from his sleep.

And he said to me, what do you see? This is the fifth vision. And I said, I see and behold a lampstand all of gold, with its bowl on the top of it, and its seven lamps on it, with seven spouts belonging to each of the lamps which are on the top of it. This lampstand, again, we don't have to interpret, we've studied that in Revelation chapter 1, refers to the church.

And it is of gold, of completely of gold. That we see in Revelation 3, to the church in Laodicea, the Lord said, I counsel you to buy of me gold fried in the fire. It speaks of that divine nature that we acquire in the fires of temptation.

And a lampstand completely of gold, a church representing the body of Christ, completely partaking of gold. It says here, with its bowl on the top of it, there were seven lamps on this lampstand, and from a bowl on top, the oil was trickling down to the seven spouts. And I want you to get this picture in your mind now, a lampstand with seven branches, and on top of it there's a bowl of oil, and from that olive oil is coming down by a little pipe into each of these seven lamps.

And where is this bowl on top getting its oil from? In the Old Testament, we read that the priest had to come and fill up the oil in the lamps every day, to see that it didn't burn out. But here, we don't see any human agency. No priests are required here.

It says here, there were two olive trees growing up by the side of this lampstand. And the olive trees, one on the right side, and the other on the left side. And the olive trees were supplying the oil through their branches to this bowl on top.

And it was an automatic, continuous supply of oil. The olive oil flowing into the bowl from the olive trees, and from the bowl through seven pipes to the seven branches of this lampstand, and so the light was continually burning. And then I answered and said to the angel, who was speaking, he said, what are these, my Lord? And the angel was speaking at me, answered and said, don't you know what these are? And I said, no, my Lord.

Then he answered and said to me, this is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel. You see, Joshua and Zerubbabel were the two leaders of God's people. There was a message to Joshua in chapter three, and a message to Zerubbabel in chapter four.

And what is the message to Zerubbabel? Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts. In other words, in the new covenant, it's not going to be like the old covenant where the priests, by human power and human might, keep the lampstand burning with, keep the fire burning. No, now it is going to be by the supply of the Holy Spirit.

By my spirit, says the Lord of hosts. This lampstand is going to burn. It speaks of a life which is under the power and control of the Holy Spirit.

And there are very many beautiful pictures here that we can learn about how to build a church, that we can understand from this. Now, if you remember what we studied in chapter two, there's something very beautiful that we see in chapter two, three and four. Just turn back to chapter two for a moment.

In chapter two, we read about God the Father. Verse five, I will be a wall of fire round about you. Speaks of the Father's protection of us.

And also the Father's saying in verse eight, anybody touches you is touching the apple of my eye. The Father's care and delight in us. Then chapter three is speaking about the Son of God in his ministry of intercession and overcoming the accusations of Satan, as we just considered.

And chapter four is speaking about the third person in the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, strengthening us. And so we see these three ministries in these three chapters of the Father delighting in us and protecting us, the Son interceding for us and the Holy Spirit helping us. It's somewhat similar to the last 10 or 15 verses of Romans chapter eight.

The Spirit helps us and God justifies us and the Son of God intercedes for us. We read that in Romans eight. What shall we say to these things? If God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit is for us, who can be against us? That's the point.

And therefore, verse seven of Zechariah chapter four. What are you, O great mountain? This reminds us of what Jesus said. Whoever shall say to this mountain, be removed and does not doubt in his heart, the mountain will be removed.

But he's got to be filled with the Spirit. If that mountain's not going to be removed by human might or by human power, but by the power of the Spirit. Verse seven.

What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel, you will become a plain. This is the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit that the obstacles in front of us are removed. Not only the obstacles are removed.

We read here that grace is going to be supplied to us to build a church. Zerubbabel will bring forth the top stone with shouts of grace, grace to it. Zechariah is one of the only prophets in the entire Old Testament who speaks about grace.

If you look up a concordance and look at the word grace in its New Testament meaning, you'll find it hardly mentioned in the Old Testament at all, but twice in the book of Zechariah. Here and again in chapter 12, verse 10. And in both cases, this is the interesting thing.

It is in connection with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit who communicates grace to us. And that's the point.

Zechariah is prophesying this New Testament age that's coming where the Holy Spirit supplies grace. And he says, this building that you're building, the body of Christ, the top stone, the last stone will be completed and it will all be done by the grace of God. So there we find that when we are filled with the Spirit, obstacles are removed in front of us.

Grace is supplied and the church is built. And verse 8, the word of the Lord came to me saying, the hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house and his hands will finish it. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me unto you.

Everything that Jesus does is a finished work when he came to earth and lived for 33 and a half years, he could say at the end of that time, I have finished the work you gave me to do. In exactly the same way as he builds the church today, it's going to be a finished work. He is not going to present to the Father an incomplete work.

The one who laid the foundation is going to complete it. This is the message we preach. That the Lord Jesus who said, I will build my church, he's doing it and he will continue to do it.

Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me unto you. That is the proof of God supporting a ministry, that the work is completed. And then we read further in verse 10, for who has despised the day of small things? And that's another characteristic of the body of Christ.

It's very beautiful to see this whole chapter has got so much truth about the body of Christ, that when the body of Christ begins to be built, it is small and it is despised by the world. But it should not be despised by us. There are two words there in verse 10, despised and small.

And that's always how the body of Christ is in the eyes of the world. Small and despised. The people in it are small in number and the people are the despised people, not the great people.

And the beginnings are small and it is possible for believers also to be discouraged because they see the smallness and the despised nature of this work. Who has despised the day of small things? But, listen to the contrast. These seven.

Who are these seven? That is the seven eyes which we consider in chapter three. The Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit, he will be glad.

He's not disturbed that it is small and despised. He will be glad because he sees one thing. That's very interesting to see it.

He sees that Zerubbabel is building with a plumb line. And you know what a plumb line is? Every mason who builds a wall. If you've seen masons building a wall, with every brick, every layer of bricks, they check it with a plumb line.

They don't check it after laying two, three courses of bricks. Every course of bricks, they check it with a plumb line. And that's what Zerubbabel is going to do.

As he sees the building going on, he's going to come with a plumb line. And when there's a plumb line there, a lot of bricks have got to be shifted and a lot of correction has to come. It speaks of righteousness.

You know a plumb line cannot tell lies. It is absolutely straight. There's righteousness there.

It speaks of no compromise. And that's how the body of Christ is going to be built. Now the trouble today is that many preachers don't have a plumb line.

And therefore the Holy Spirit cannot rejoice. It says the Holy Spirit rejoices when he sees a plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. And it is because we hold a plumb line that the body of Christ is small.

Because the way to life is narrow and few there be that find it. If we were to throw away the plumb line, we'd get large numbers like Babylon. Babylonian Christianity has got large numbers because they don't have a plumb line.

It's all crooked buildings, unrighteousness. But the Holy Spirit rejoices because he sees the plumb line of uncompromising straightness in all matters in the hand of Zerubbabel. Now, brothers and sisters, that is what God calls us.

If we are ever called to share a word with another or to give advice to another, it's so easy to be like Peter and to say pity yourself and to try and prevent people from having to go through suffering. And we think we are being very compassionate. And we suggest to a certain brother a certain course which is not absolutely righteous because we feel that he may have to suffer so much if he goes the absolute righteous way.

And with a false compassion, we can advise people, we can preach that way and the whole building is lopsided. And the Holy Spirit is never going to rejoice. The Holy Spirit rejoices when we use a plumb line on ourselves first of all and then on others.

We can't use it on others if we haven't used it on ourselves first. These are the eyes of the Lord which range to and fro throughout the whole earth. We've seen that in 2 Chronicles 16.9 that the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect towards him.

That means those who hold the plumb line of righteousness. Then I answered and said to him, what are these two olive trees on the right of the lampstand and on its left? And we know that those two olive trees symbolized Joshua and Zerubbabel standing on both sides. It's a very beautiful picture of ministry in the body of Christ.

One was the high priest and the other was the descendant of David, the royal line. He wasn't the king. He was the governor, but he was the legal heir to the throne.

We can say the king legally and the high priest. Both ministries that were combined in Jesus Christ. Those are the two olive trees.

And I answered the second time and said to him, what are the two olive branches? You see these two olive trees have got branches which are beside the golden pipes which empty the golden oil from themselves. And he answered me saying, don't you know what these are? And I said, no, my Lord. Then he said, these are the two anointed ones or sons of fresh oil, as it says in the margin.

Sons of fresh oil. That means those who are continuously filled with the Holy Spirit. Not day before yesterday's oil, but fresh oil.

Like the freshness of the olive oil inside that tree. There's not two tins of oil there, but two trees emptying out the fresh oil. And that's why it's pictured here as two trees supplying the oil to this candlestick.

And these are the two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth. Now, in that day, that symbolized Joshua and Zerubbabel. Later on, it symbolized Jesus Christ, who was high priest and king, supplying the Holy Spirit to the church.

And now, brothers and sisters, it applies or it should apply to you and me. Do you know what it involves? It means being constantly full of fresh oil. For what purpose? There's a very beautiful phrase there in verse 12, which tells us what these trees do.

What do these trees do? They, the last part of verse 12, they empty the golden oil from themselves into the bowl. You know what true ministry is? True ministry is to empty ourselves and all that we have into the church, to build it. There's a question of how many people are willing to do that.

To give up all that we have for the lampstand. They empty out the trees are full of oil, they pour it out for the candlestick. Now, you see, there are few people who are willing to do that.

There are a lot of people who come to the church to receive. They're coming to collect the oil, not to pour it out. They're coming to get money, not to give.

They're coming to get and not to give. It's all right in the beginning we are babies, it's like that. But the Lord wants sons of fresh oil who have learned to give.

Who have learned to be filled with the spirit and have learned to give. Let's turn to Exodus chapter 27. The Old Testament we read that the priest had to bring the oil for the lamp to burn.

And it says in Exodus 27 20, You shall charge the sons of Israel that they bring you clear oil of beaten olives for the light to make a lamp burn continually. Exodus 27 20. Notice how you get the oil by beating the olives.

By crushing the olives, you get the olive oil. And so the people who have something to give to the church are the people who have allowed something to be crushed in their private life. Who have allowed the Holy Spirit to crush their self-life, their ego, their uncontrolled tongue and there's so many other things.

They have allowed the Holy Spirit to crush it in their private life. And so some they've been able to collect a little oil during the one week of suffering that they've gone through hidden from the eyes of men. And now they can come to the church and pour out this oil that they collected in the moments of suffering into the church.

But what about the people who have not allowed themselves to be crushed in the moments of temptation? They can come to the church and they've got nothing to give. They've got nothing to give because in the moment of temptation in their private life, they did not allow the Holy Spirit to crush them or to break them. The olives were not beaten.

We can meditate on that profitably. I'd encourage everyone to read Zechariah chapter 4 and see what message the Lord has for us. To stand there by the Lord of the whole earth as an anointed son of fresh oil, as an anointed daughter of fresh oil and to pour, pour, pour into the church.

Not for ourselves. That's the principle of building the body of Christ. I do not seek my own.

Those who seek their own gain can never be a part of building the body of Christ. That's impossible. No, we cannot seek our own and build the body of Christ.

We have to learn to put that to death so that we can pour out for the candlestick that that might burn. And it is through the power of the Holy Spirit as we see in this chapter that God does his work. Through the power of God's Holy Spirit, we can never make the lampstand burn by human cleverness.

That's the folly of so many preachers. They try to make the lampstand burn with human cleverness by whipping up the emotions of people. No, brother, sister, if we have not allowed the Spirit of God to crush us, we have no oil to give to the church.

We're not filled. We've got nothing to give. Then it's only words.

Then we need to hear Zechariah 4.6, not by power, not by your cleverness, not by your intellectual power, not by your emotional might. No, but by my Spirit. There we can ask ourselves, how much am I dependent on the Holy Spirit? How much am I doing my part in my flesh for the sake of the body, allowing the Spirit to crush me that the body of Christ might be built? So that was the fourth vision, emptying everything out from oneself for the church.

Blessed are those who have this ministry, who can stand by the church, a body ministry, not one tree, but two trees. Beautiful picture. A body ministry, none seeking their own, both emptying themselves, two or three gathered together.

That's a church. Zechariah chapter four is one of the clearest Old Testament chapters, picturing the body of Christ and its ministry. It's worth meditating on.

Now we come to Zechariah chapter five, and we see two visions here. Vision number six, I lifted up my eyes again and looked and behold, there was a flying scroll. Scroll means a rolled up roll of parchment.

And he said to me, what do you see? And I answered, I see a flying scroll. Its length is 20 cubits, that's 30 feet, and its width is 10 cubits, that's 15 feet. It was a huge parchment roll, 30 feet long, 15 feet wide, rolled up.

And then he said to me, this scroll symbolizes the curse that's going forth over the face of the whole land. That means the whole land of Israel. Surely everyone who steals will be purged away according to the writing on one side, and everyone who swears will be purged away according to the writing on the other side.

There are two particular sins that have been mentioned here, among other things that are written on the scroll. One is the sin of telling lies, and the other is the sin of stealing. Those who steal and those who tell lies.

On one side it's written about stealing, on the other side it says about those who swear by the name of the Lord and who swear falsely, that is, tell lies. And I will make it go forth, declares the Lord of hosts, and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by my name. And it will spend the night within that house and consume it with its timber and its stones.

Now the question is this, is this referring to liars and thieves in the world, or is it referring to liars and thieves in the church? It's a very important question. And that we can see from verse three. It says, this is the curse that's going forth over the face of the whole land, and that refers to the land of Israel.

It's not referring to the whole earth, it's to the land of Israel, and therefore it refers to God's people. This reminds us of a New Testament verse in 1 Peter 4.17 which says, the time has come for judgment, the scroll speaks of judgment against sin. God's judgment written on that scroll against sin.

But where must it begin? It does not begin in the world. It begins where? In the house of God. And in the house of God, if there is a thief sitting there, what do we mean by a thief? By a thief I mean a man who has not paid his income tax properly.

By a thief I mean a man who has borrowed money and not returned it. By a thief I mean a man who has got some money in his account which doesn't belong to him, who has not paid his servants properly, who has not paid his workers. A thief, a man who has got money in his possession which doesn't belong to him, money or property or something which he has borrowed and perhaps forgotten to return, conveniently forgotten, that's a thief.

Are there such people in God's house? I'm sorry to say there are. They have not made restitution. There's judgment on the house of such a person.

And what about the liars? The liars are those who are giving wrong impressions to people, pretending to be holy. Like Ananias and Sapphira. Pretending to be dedicated and consecrated and sitting in God's house.

Well, the Bible says God's judgment is coming forth. And it's going to come upon the house, not just the individual. The house, the house is going to suffer.

The house of the man who has stolen, who has not made restitution. The house of the man who is living a lie and who is telling lies. The wearer of these two sins.

Yeah, and it says here it's a flying scroll, which means that, verse 1, which means that judgment is going to come pretty quickly. In the last days, like it came on Ananias and Sapphira, it's going to come quickly on those who have not cleansed themselves of known sin. We're not now talking about unconscious sin.

We're talking about what we clearly know, unrighteousness in money matters, and that is stealing and telling lies, giving a wrong impression to people. Beware of these two things, brothers and sisters. That is why we speak about these two things much in the church, because it is through these two things that Babylon is built.

When Christians engage in these two things, the judgment comes not only on those Christians, but on their household. The household suffer, the wife and children suffer, because the man in the house is unrighteous and he's lying and he's stealing. Let's be careful.

That is the fifth vision he saw, sorry, the sixth one. He saw judgment beginning in God's house among God's people who are allowing unrighteousness in their life. Then we come to the seventh vision in verses 5 to 11.

He says, now lift up your eyes and see what this is. And I said, what is it? This is the ifa, or as the Mahajan says, a bushel measure, a picture of business, of commerce. You know, it's the weight.

It's the measure, the weight which is put on the balance. And this is the measure, a measure by which you measure a grain, and this is their eye, as it says, in all the land. And there was a lead cover on top of it, verse 7, and when the lead cover was lifted, there was a woman sitting inside.

This bushel measure was like a, like a liter jug, a huge one, you know. And it was unrighteous, just knocked in at the bottom so that it's not, doesn't have a full measure. And there's a woman sitting inside it.

Do you know what her name is? Babylon, the mother of harlots. And then he said, this is wickedness. And he threw her down into the middle of the ifa, and cast the lead weight on its opening.

Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, there were two women coming out with a wind in their wings, and they had wings like the wings of a stork. Stork was one of the unclean animals in the Old Testament. And they lifted up the ifa between the earth and the heavens.

These are unclean spirits carrying this business principle of Babylon, with Babylon the harlot sitting inside. And I said to the angel who was speaking with me, where are they going to take this ifa? Then he said to me, to build a temple, to build a church in the land of Shinar. I just want to tell you that the land of Shinar is just another name for Babylon.

It's an Old Testament name for Babylon. The land of Shinar, you can read that in Genesis 10 and Genesis 11. We don't have time to refer to it.

And when it is prepared, she will be set there on her own pedestal. Here is a picture of Babylon. The false church.

But she's hidden. She's hidden inside this bushel measure. It's like these priests in the temple who were changing money and selling doves in the days of Jesus.

Jesus turned them all out. Why did Jesus turn them all out? Because he could see what was inside this bushel measure. The other people who came to the temple could not see because there was this lead weight on top.

They couldn't see what was inside. But Jesus could see through it that Babylon is sitting inside this. And so he turned out all those people.

And sometimes when we are strict with these people who make money in the name of religion, others cannot understand it because they don't see this woman sitting inside the bushel measure. Do you remember what Jesus said in Luke chapter 11 and verse 33? Luke 11, 33 he said, No one after lighting a lamp puts it under a bushel measure. No.

How can you light a lamp and put it inside a bushel measure? A bushel measure is for this woman Babylon to sit in. And if you've got the light of God in you, you shouldn't be inside this bushel measure. No.

You must be on the lamp stand, Jesus said. In other words, what Jesus was saying there is, if you've got the light of God in you, you shouldn't be in Babylon. You should be in the grave.

You should be in the lamp stand. And then he said the lamp of your body is the eye. That is your conscience.

If your eye is unclean, your whole body is full of darkness. But if your eye is clear, your whole body is full of light. Jerusalem is of those who've got a clear conscience and money matters.

Who have not mixed God and mammon. Turn back to Zechariah 5 and you see this in the margin of verse 6. This is the bushel measure going forth and this is their eye, it says in the margin, in all the land. This is their eye.

Their eye is evil. Their eye is set on this bushel measure. It is God plus mammon mixed up.

That is Babylon. And the evil spirits described in verse 9 by the wings of a stork, the unclean bird, take them to the place they deserve to go to. And we praise God that Jesus has opened our eyes to see what

is under this lead weight.

In a sense, we can say this lead weight is what it says in 2 Thessalonians 2, 6. There is a power that is restraining the spirit of the Antichrist from manifesting itself fully. The power of the Holy Spirit restraining it. But we see through the woman sitting inside.

All this money making that is going on in the name of religion today. Come out of her, my people. Have nothing to do with those who make money in the name of religion.

A lot of Christian organizations. If you could lift the leaden lid on top, you would see this woman sitting inside. Many Christian organizations with beautiful spiritual titles.

Lift up the lid and see and you will see the woman inside. That's happening even today. But there is a place prepared for her.

It says in verse 11, and she...

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